

G. Hyden

---

POLITICS AND SOCIETY

*An Introduction to Political Sociology*

---

by

MICHAEL RUSH

 HARVESTER  
WHEATSHEAF

New York London Toronto Sydney Tokyo Singapore

Chapter 2

THE STATE AND SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

For Weber the modern state was characterised by much more than power and its legitimate use: it was also distinctive in having an administrative organisation through which it maintained its day-to-day existence, leading Weber (1947) to offer a somewhat more elaborate definition of the state: 'A compulsory political association with continuous organisation will be called a "state" so long as it and insofar as its administrative staff successfully claim the monopoly of physical force in the enforcement of its orders.' This definition also makes it clear that for most individuals belonging to a particular state is not a matter of choice but of accident; only those who move, usually voluntarily, from one state to another are able to exercise any real choice. It may well be that most individuals accept their membership of a particular state with little or no question, but this in no way derogates the compulsory nature of the state, since it is in the name of the state that individuals are taxed, laws passed, and policies determined and implemented.

The emphasis that Weber (and others seeking to define the state) laid on a monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force clearly links the concept of the state with the concept of legitimacy. How far individuals subject to the domination (to use Weber's term) of the state actually accept that domination as legitimate is a matter for empirical analysis, but for non-Marxists the state is inextricably linked with legitimacy for its existence and its survival. Thus the

collapse of the regimes in Eastern Europe in 1989 is inevitably interpreted as evidence of a loss of legitimacy, not merely for those holding office but for the communist states they represented. That these regimes lacked legitimacy at the time of their collapse can hardly be doubted, but it is pertinent to ask to what extent they enjoyed legitimacy in the forty or so years of their existence. In the eyes of some of their citizens, perhaps a significant number, they may have been seen as legitimate, but it is a considerable assumption that quiescence denotes legitimacy.

Thus the acceptance of the state may rest on factors other than legitimacy, and ultimately on the individual's unwillingness to accept the consequences of not obeying the law and of defying the policies promulgated and implemented by the state. These consequences may well be fear of imprisonment, even torture or death, but also of less – a loss of employment, a decline in living standards, some form of discrimination or social stigma – but acceptance may also stem from apathy – a sheer lack of interest – or from cynicism – a feeling that resistance is useless or not worth the effort. On the other hand, the perceived material advantages of the state to the individual may also form the basis for its acceptance, so that its advantages appear to outweigh its disadvantages. Acceptance of the state may therefore be less a matter of legitimacy and more a matter of grudging acquiescence or material advantage. A major factor in the events in Eastern Europe in 1989 was, with the important exception of Romania, the ultimate unwillingness of the regimes to use force to maintain themselves in power, backed crucially by the knowledge that the Soviet Union had made it clear it would not itself use force to maintain communist rule in its satellite states, as it had done in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. The ability of the state to maintain its existence is a crucial question for political sociology, but whether it should be explained wholly in terms of legitimacy is a different matter. It would seem more sensible to suggest that legitimacy is one explanation for the persistence of the state, but not an exclusive one, a question which is explored further in Chapter 3.

Bodies like the EC may appear to challenge the traditional definition of the state in that they possess many of the attributes of the state – 'a human community' within clear territorial boundaries, with a political and bureaucratic apparatus which determines particular policies and sees to their implementation – but they lack a

monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force. Indeed, the EC possesses no coercive forces of its own, relying on the political will of its members and, occasionally, the judicial authority of the European Court of Justice to enforce its policies within the Community. However, the EC and other similar organisations differ in another crucial aspect from the state: it is a voluntary association, whereas the state, as Weber points out, is a compulsory association. Some states were in origin voluntary associations, resulting from a willing and desired coming together of individuals and territories, or a desire to break away from an existing state, or the consequence of a struggle for independence from a dominant power. The United States and Canada are clear examples of states which are the product of a willing union of a number of smaller political entities; the Republic of Ireland and Bangladesh are illustrations of successful breakaways from existing states, from the United Kingdom and Pakistan respectively; and the many former colonies of the European powers, especially Britain and France, are clear cases of states resulting from demands and, more often than not, struggles for independence. But once established such states become compulsory associations in Weber's sense of the term.

The Marxist view of the state (and therefore of power, authority and legitimacy) differs significantly from that of Weber and other non-Marxists. Marxists do not deny the territorial nature of the modern state, but they view its role very differently. For some non-Marxists the state is the necessary but politically neutral apparatus through which a society maintains order, settles internal conflicts, and achieves its economic and social goals. Marxist theory, however, assigns to the state the crucial role of representing and operating in the interests of the dominant class in a society. In the words of Engels (1990 [1884] vol. 26, p. 271) the state is the instrument by which 'the most powerful, economically dominant class . . . becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of keeping down and exploiting the oppressed class.' Similarly, and with brutal directness, Lenin defined the state as 'a special force for the suppression of a particular class' (1960 [1917], p. 52). Thus, far from being neutral, the state is the product of historical class struggles; its legitimacy and authority are irrelevant and exist only in the minds of the ruling class and the false consciousness of those unaware of its true nature. Moreover, according to Marxist theory the state will eventually 'wither away' or cease to exist, since the

classless society characteristic of communist society will, by definition, not produce a state.

However, whether conceived of in Marxist or non-Marxist terms the state is of central concern to political sociology. Its origins and development need to be explored and the place of the state in the modern world understood.

## THE ORIGINS OF THE STATE

Modern states are characterised by clearly defined geographical boundaries, within which a widely acknowledged political and administrative apparatus operates exclusively and is ultimately able to enforce its authority through the use of physical coercion. The fact that territorial or boundary disputes between states are not uncommon acknowledges the principle of clearly defined boundaries. Furthermore, modern states are largely characterised by contiguity of territory, including offshore islands. Cases such as Alaska being part of the United States are exceptions to the general rule, but historically the relationship between territory and political and administrative apparatus is less clear in pre-modern states. Indeed, many primitive societies are described as 'stateless' in that they have an ill-defined territory and lack a clearly defined political and administrative apparatus. The empires of the ancient world had much of their territory clearly defined, although its extent varied considerably and at the peripheries of imperial rule the boundaries were anything but clearly defined. However, with their elaborate political and administrative structures the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman Empires had much in common with modern states. The same was true of the ancient civilisations of the Chinese, the Hindus, the Maya, the Aztecs, and the Incas. These were all recognisably states in the Weberian sense.

Feudal societies present a more complex picture, however: they normally had clearly defined territories, but these were often scattered over a wide area in piecemeal fashion and lacked clearly defined political and administrative institutions applicable to all the territories concerned. Thus a feudal lord might control various territories, but owe allegiance to different feudal overlords for each. Norman and later kings of England, for instance, were vassals in respect of Normandy of the king of France and therefore owed allegiance to and had feudal obligations to the latter as far as

Normandy was concerned. In fact, maps showing the territorial divisions of early medieval Europe are a complex and seemingly haphazard patchwork reflecting the results of inheritance, inter-marriage and conquest characteristic of the time.

The great colonial empires that developed out of feudal Europe and the two great European empires of Austria-Hungary and Russia were all recognisably states, even though their boundaries were sometimes uncertain (especially beyond Europe) and their authority not always recognised or enforced. The relationship between the component parts of these empires differed, with varying degrees of autonomy and varying political and administrative structures. They lacked the extensive bureaucracies which Weber associated with the modern state, but appropriate if limited political and administrative structures existed.

Of the existence of these early states there is no doubt – apart from the broader historical record, many of them maintained elaborate records of their procedures and activities. What is less clear is how they came into existence and how, eventually, the modern state emerged. A good deal of research has addressed the first of these two questions and even more the second.

The concept of politics used by political anthropologists has a remarkably modern ring to it. Radcliffe-Brown (1940, pp. xiv and xxiii) argued that politics was concerned with 'the maintenance or establishment of social order' and 'the control and regulation of the use of force'. The real question is not whether primitive or early societies have politics, but whether they have government in the sense of having political and administrative structures. Lucy Mair, in her book *Primitive Government* (1977, p. 33), summarises the situation succinctly: 'People argue whether primitive societies have government. They also argue whether they have laws. But nobody questions that they have rules of some kind which everyone thinks it right to obey.' Also, there is no doubt that primitive societies had means of settling disputes or conflicts, as studies of the Nuer, with their 'leopard-skin chiefs', and the Dinka, with their 'masters of the fishing spear' illustrate. These were individuals who acted as mediators in and settlers of disputes. In addition, these and other early societies also developed rules about the circumstances in which force could legitimately be used. All these are examples, however, of what Mair calls *minimal politics* – the existence of a recognised means of settling disputes, but no more.

The next stage is that of *minimal government*, in which leadership positions emerge, whether individual or collective, sometimes for particular purposes, such as hunting, fighting, or seeking water, when different leaders emerged for different purposes, but culminating in the emergence of a single leader or group of leaders with more general authority. Territory was generally ill-defined, but extensive and supporting small groups at or about subsistence level. This did not mean that groups were constantly on the brink of starvation so much as existing in a situation which combined survival with sufficiency. To proceed beyond survival and sufficiency, other related developments were necessary.

The first was the production of a surplus to enable such societies to turn their attention to matters other than survival. Some societies lived in relative abundance, but continued to lead a nomadic or semi-nomadic life, moving as often as necessity dictated or, commonly in the case of pastoral societies, seasonally to meet the needs of their herds. The production of a surplus facilitated the second development – what Herbert Spencer called 'specialisation' and Durkheim 'a division of labour', in which different individuals or groups of individuals performed different tasks for the society more or less exclusively. This process was helped by and helped the development of the transition from small family groups to much larger, extended families and to tribes, but the crucial impact of the production of a surplus depended on the development of agricultural societies and settlement. Even before settlement societal organisation in some cases became more complex, with the emergence of lineages and age-sets providing a basis for leadership dependent on factors such as wealth, status, inheritance, and privileges. The division of labour in particular not only produced a greater surplus, since it was a more efficient means of production, but created opportunities for more extensive political activity, including the establishment of control over a particular territory and, in many cases, for territorial expansion. Thus politics and territory, never far apart, became inextricably linked.

### Theories of state formation

Much is known about the world's ancient civilisations, not least because of the elaborate and detailed records they developed and maintained. Of their specific origins less is known, partly because in

many instances this preceded any form of written records, but more particularly because each developed their own mythical and mystical account of their beginnings. The transformation from primitive society through pastoralism and agricultural settlement to nascent states is not easily traced, nor can it necessarily be explained by a single theory of state formation. However, two basic theories of state formation have emerged – conflict theories and integrative theories (see Service 1975; Claessen and Skalnik 1978; and Cohen and Service 1978).

1) Conflict theory, as the term suggests, argues that states developed as a consequence of clashes between individuals or groups of individuals or between societies. Cutting across the various conflict theories is the argument that the conflicts that gave rise to states were about the exercise of power. For example, drawing on anthropological studies some observers have argued that the transformation from stateless societies to states was initially the result of power struggles between kinship groups in settled societies, leading to a concentration of power in the hands of a particular group who then consolidated their position by setting up political and administrative structures. Not far removed is the Marxist explanation that the state is the product of an historical class struggle arising out of the prevailing means of production. Both focus on power and on intra-societal conflicts, but the anthropological argument sees power as the objective of the struggle, whereas the Marxist argument sees power as the means of the struggle. That conflicts between kinship groups have occurred, leading to the domination of one over others, is not difficult to establish. Similarly, control of the means of production is a credible basis for the possession and the exercise of power. In neither case, however, is it readily apparent that one or the other is the sole explanation of or the principal factor in explaining the development of the state.

A second type of intra-societal conflict focuses on individual conflicts. One of the oldest is contract theory: the state, it is asserted, is the product of the individual's need for protection from the inevitable conflicts found in society, a view held by both Hobbes and Locke and historically manifested most clearly in the development of feudalism, which regularised into an elaborate contractual relationship the rights and obligations between lord and vassal, resting ultimately on protection in return for agreed services. Magna Carta, for example, is essentially a feudal document reasserting in

considerable detail mutual rights and obligations, in spite of its justifiably greater historical fame as a foundation of English liberties. Another major type of individual conflict theory focuses on social Darwinism, in which the strongest individuals in society would eventually prevail and form a state to strengthen and maintain their dominance. The problem with both types of individual conflict theory is that they are plausible, but not easily tested. Except for feudalism, for which there is a good deal of supporting evidence, much is assumed and little direct evidence can be brought to bear. Even in the case of feudalism, where much is known about the contractual relationships involved, the evidence is causally extrapolated into the past. No one doubts that individual conflicts existed, as they continue to exist, nor that the 'fittest' or more powerful emerged as the dominant group, but the links with state formation are far more difficult to establish.

Inter-societal conflicts appear to offer more sustainable explanation of state formation. Simple conquest is the most obvious, but Darwinian selection again emerges as an alternative and offers a more flexible approach by encompassing conquest, but adding to it the possibility of other strengths or weaknesses – economic, leadership, ideological and geographical. However, the same sort of problems arise: one state may have replaced or subjugated another by one such means or a combination of them, but pushing back causal factors to origins is a difficult process.

Perhaps the most obvious limitation of conflict theory is the apparent unwillingness to acknowledge any cause other than conflict, so that however much co-operation and agreement may be involved in the development of the state, its origin rests solely on conflict. Integrative theories of state formation offer a different perspective, without necessarily excluding conflict as a factor. They tend to fall into two types: integration resulting from the circumscription of society and integration bringing organisational benefits. Circumscription theory argues that a society which cannot shed its surplus population through emigration because of geographical barriers such as mountains, seas and deserts, will seek to organise itself more effectively in the form of a state. Conflict may well play a part, either internally because of the pressures that the inability to expand have created, or externally from rival societies or nomadic marauders. Similarly, the benefits that may accrue from greater organisation may also, it is argued, lead to the establishment of a state. For

instance, the expansion of trade, both internally and externally, is likely to be of benefit not only to those directly involved but much more widely in a society, increasing the overall wealth available and extending the benefits of that wealth. Alternatively, benefits may accrue to particular strata or groups in society, giving them an incentive to organise more complex political and administrative structures. The building of public works, such as irrigation systems or great monuments, requires considerable organisation and mobilisation of resources normally beyond the scope of a single leader or a small, but loosely organised group, but becomes feasible with more formal and elaborate organisation. The same may be said of developing a society's military capability.

All state formation theories that seek to explain the origin of the state itself as a social and political phenomenon tend to suffer from the same problem when it comes to testing their accuracy – a reliance on largely circumstantial evidence and hindsight. Ancient civilisations, such as those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, which developed sophisticated irrigation systems and built great monuments, clearly developed complex political and administrative structures, but what was the causal relationship between such public works and the development of the state? Was the state created to facilitate public works, or did the building of public works lead to the formation of the state? The latter explanation seems more likely, so that, as irrigation schemes became more elaborate and buildings larger and more complex, the development of appropriate organisational structures became desirable, even necessary. Indeed, it is possible to suggest a degree of parallel development involving an interspersing of cause and effect, in which, for instance, developing an irrigation system demands greater organisation and greater organisation facilitates a more sophisticated irrigation system.

Theories of state formation are difficult to prove or disprove, especially in respect of societies with no written records or of states formed before the development of such records. Evidence often depends on oral history, which is invariably shrouded by mythical beliefs, often of a supernatural type obscuring rather than illuminating such oral history as may exist. Darwinian theories may help to explain the survival of states more than their formation, since they do not explain why a state was established at a particular time. Marxist theory of the class struggle offers a credible explanation of the development of the capitalist state, but in seeking to explain the

origins of the state itself it is no less reliant than other theories on little hard evidence and much speculation.

There is, however, far less difficulty in tracing and explaining the formation of later states, from those that developed in medieval Europe, through modern, capitalist states, to those of the Third World. Records are widely available and hypotheses more easily tested. Thus the development of most European states is not difficult to trace and, though specific explanations vary, they are not lacking. Two major factors were conquest and inter-marriage. The English state was expanded into the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland by the conquest of Wales and Ireland and the incorporation of Scotland through the inter-marriage of the English and Scottish royal families, which eventually resulted in a common monarch – James VI of Scotland and the I of England. The latter, however, was not by intent, but was the consequence of the marriage of the Scottish king, James IV and Margaret, daughter of England's Henry VII, and the extinction of the Tudor line with the death of Elizabeth I in 1603. Indeed, James IV died at the Battle of Flodden in 1513, following a Scottish invasion of England, and even after the uniting of the crowns Scottish incorporation was by no means inevitable and was the subject of periodic military conflict. The ability of various rulers to impose their rule by force within their territories or to extend their territory was extremely common in medieval Europe, but so also were territorial consolidation and expansion by inter-marriage, as the well-known Latin couplet makes claim in the case of Austria:

Bella gerant alii, tu, felix Austria, nube  
Nam quae Mars aliis, dat tibi regna Venus

Let others war, thou, happy Austria, wed;  
What some owe Mars, from Venus take instead.

However, the development of European states and subsequently of a world divided into states is dominated by the twin developments of the modern capitalist state and the nation-state.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN STATE

There are three key strands in the development of the modern state: the development of capitalism, the coming of the industrial

revolution, and the development of the nation-state. Together they are responsible for the world of states which characterises modern society. Whether the modern state is the inevitable product of inexorable forces in society, as Marxist theory asserts, is a matter of opinion, but there can be little doubt that the modern state is the product of the twin forces of economics and nationalism.

### The development of the capitalist state

→ Fernand Braudel, in his monumental and comprehensive study Civilisation and Capitalism (1981/1985 [1979]), argues that the capitalist economy was preceded by the development of two other economies, the market economy and the monetary economy. A market economy is one based on the widespread and regular exchange, circulation and distribution of goods and a monetary economy is economic activity based on convertible wealth rather than exchange or barter. The development of a monetary economy facilitated the accumulation of wealth from profit, in short the creation of capital. However, Braudel does not argue that the development of market and monetary economies led inevitably to the development of capitalism wherever they developed. In fact, he points out that market and monetary economies developed in various parts of the world, but that capitalism developed ultimately only in Europe – not, however, in states but in towns and cities, described by Braudel as 'outposts of modernity' (1979, vol. I, p. 512). Capitalism could have developed in other world civilisations, but did not; these included the Chinese, Islamic and Indian civilisations, which were developed significantly earlier than European civilisation and which were highly sophisticated.

→ In his study Powers and Liberties (1985) John Hall concluded that each of these civilisations developed what he called 'blocking power' (1985, pp. 22–3), in which different types of power – political, economic and ideological – conflict with each other and militate against or block societal change. China had developed a number of important innovations, especially in agriculture, but never developed market autonomy and therefore a substantial degree of social and political dynamism. No serious external challenges had confronted China before significant European penetration occurred in the nineteenth century. Its political system was feeble and lacked impetus. Hall described China as a 'capstone state' (1985, p. 51) in

which, in Braudel's words, 'the bureaucracy lay across the top of Chinese society as a single, virtually unbreakable stratum; any damage was spontaneously repaired' (1979, vol. II, p. 595).

Islamic and Indian societies presented a similar picture. Islam provided society with the powerful unifying force of religion and universal law, but with the important exception of the Ottoman Empire, only weak states developed. Even the Ottoman Empire was only a partial exception, since its economic growth was based on territorial expansion and when that expansion ceased so did economic growth. Moreover, cities in Islamic societies did not develop the economic autonomy characteristic of many of those in Europe and there was a lack of continuity amongst the upper strata in society, which also hindered economic development. Hinduism in India created rigid social stratification. In contrast to Islam, however, the Hindu religion organised social but not political life, which lacked organisation and direction, and was further undermined by the failure to develop a ruling dynasty.

By comparison, in Western Europe autonomous political units which competed with each other developed, notably but not exclusively in towns and cities. The political strength of these units rested on their development of market autonomy and, crucially, they were never fully under the control of the state.

Braudel argues that three developments were necessary for the growth of capitalism: first, the survival of dynasties and families to allow the accumulation of wealth through inheritance and marriage; second, stratified society with sufficient social mobility to allow for the regeneration of the existing upper strata and the encouragement of the lower strata in society; and third, the development of world trade to raise profit levels. However, as Braudel points out (1979, vol. II, p. 533), 'until the nineteenth century the rest of the world outweighed Europe both in population and, while the economic ancien regime lasted, in wealth ... it is virtually beyond question that Europe was less rich than the world it was exploiting.' What made the vital difference was that capital accumulation was the key to bringing about the industrial revolution.

### The industrial revolution

The industrial revolution depended on the coming together of a range of requisites in addition to capital – resources, manpower,

food, entrepreneurs, markets, and ideological support. Capital alone was not enough, but it was the key factor. It was needed in particular to exploit the resources – the raw materials and energy – without which industrial development could not take place. And it was needed also to support a workforce paid in cash, not kind; to invest in food production to feed and maintain that workforce; and to develop and maintain an infrastructure of transport and communications, and of educational and, more gradually, welfare systems. Entrepreneurs also played a vital role: the ability to recognise the possibilities of industrial development, to organise the resources and manpower, and, perhaps above all, to risk the necessary capital, was crucial. Similarly, the prevailing ideology and the political structures needed to be supportive by being open to innovation and change, at best encouraging, at worst not obstructive. Last and by no means least, markets needed to be developed and expanded, both at home and overseas.

All these requisites were present in Europe, most markedly and effectively in Britain. The shift from a subsistence and barter economy to a cash economy, opening up the way to a market economy occurred more extensively in Europe than elsewhere, especially in the wealthy cities of Italy, such as Venice and Florence, in the towns of the Hanseatic League, and various cities and ports in England. Capitalist economies could have and did develop in various parts of Europe, but England (later Britain) advanced more rapidly towards such an economy because it held a number of advantages.

The breakdown of feudalism, particularly as a form of land tenure, occurred earlier, bringing in its train enclosure – the break-up of the old open-field system and the consolidation of much larger agricultural units, new methods of cultivation and crop rotation, and the use of fertilisers; in short, what became known as the agricultural revolution. Increased crop yields facilitated population growth, but new agricultural methods were less labour intensive, creating a surplus population to provide manpower for labour-intensive industry. England and Scotland were well endowed with appropriate natural resources, such as iron ore, wool, and clay, whilst cotton was readily available from overseas. Coal and water provided the energy and were also in abundant and easily exploited supply. The development of a market economy in the towns and of England as a major trading nation provided both capital and markets, domestic and overseas.

The break-up of feudal society in England did not isolate the aristocracy, as in a number of other European countries, especially France, but led to its partial integration with the rest of society under the impact of primogeniture, its depletion through civil war during the Wars of the Roses, and a willingness on the part of monarchs to regenerate its ranks from lower strata in society. The result was a marked degree of social mobility, downwards as well as upwards. Merchants and traders were not exclusively drawn from the lower ranks of society and an innovative and enterprising middle class or bourgeoisie emerged, providing the entrepreneurial impetus necessary for the industrial revolution. The early stages of that revolution were accompanied by the building of canals, roads and railways, the telegraph, and, in due course, the development of education – the underpinning infrastructure of economic development.

England also possessed the considerable advantage of early unification and the establishment of effective political structures, while many of its rivals struggled to achieve this or were more seriously damaged by conflicts in Europe and elsewhere. England was not infrequently embroiled in Europe but, earlier than its rivals, shed its territorial commitments on the European mainland, confining itself to overseas conflicts, which were often ultimately profitable, and military activity in Europe itself.

In England the conflict between church and state was basically resolved in favour of the latter by the Reformation and, although religious conflict continued for more than a century, the state was never subordinated to religion and the established church was the church of the state. Though the English state in turn struggled for survival against the absolutist ambitions of Charles I and James II, it survived to provide a political framework within which individualism and enterprise could flourish, thus giving ideological underpinning to industrialisation.

England was undoubtedly well placed to nurture the industrial revolution, both materially and ideologically, not least as a naval and trading power based on a unified state, and well served by the accidents of history and, perhaps even more, of geography. However, what was true for England was only to a lesser extent true for many other parts of Europe and for the newly established United States, which at various intervals and varying pace followed suit. Those parts which did not, most obviously the earliest beneficiaries of European colonialism – Spain and Portugal – languished



economically, while the development of others, such as Italy and Germany, was delayed. For England, the industrial revolution was a relatively prolonged process, beginning with the age of discovery in the fifteenth century and the Reformation; for other European states it was somewhat shorter, but nevertheless spread over a number of generations. Furthermore, not all the changes occurred simultaneously and, without necessarily suggesting a causal chain of events, there was time for societal adjustment and adaptation. Even so, much of that adjustment and adaptation was socially painful and achieved at considerable human cost.

What was possible in Europe over several hundred years could not automatically be transferred to other societies at other times, for the simple reason that the industrial revolution in Europe and the United States transformed the world politically and, above all, economically. Europe, and more particularly the major European powers, came to dominate much of the world, initially through colonialism, while the western hemisphere came largely to be dominated by the United States. It remains a matter of argument whether, if left to themselves, the societies of what is commonly now called the Third World would have developed on capitalist lines; what is undisputed is that they have not done so. Marx paid only limited attention to the Third World, but later Marxists developed theories of imperialism and dependency to explain the relationship between it and capitalist societies. These theories will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 12. For the moment it is sufficient to argue that it is a considerable assumption that the European model of industrialisation is available, let alone applicable, to other societies, whether historically or contemporaneously. The development of capitalism in Europe eventually transformed the world, but it also led to the development of other models of industrialisation. These too will be discussed in Chapter 12. But European capitalism was accompanied by another force, *nationalism*, which led to the emergence of the nation-state.

### The rise of the nation-state

If one of Europe's major legacies to the world is capitalism, its other is the nation-state. Nationalism as a modern social and political force is not, of course, peculiar to Europe, but historically its origins lie in Europe. Certainly, in the later medieval period England and

France could be described as nations in the sense that the overwhelming majority of their populations belonged to common ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups. How far it is accurate to translate this commonality into a sense of community or national identity is a different matter, but appeals to patriotism were not unknown. Even so, most of the states in post-medieval Europe were not nations, even in the sense of commonality, let alone in the sense of sharing a national identity. The great conglomerate empires of the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs, Russia and Turkey occupied vast territories, while Germany and Italy consisted of a multiplicity of states. The four Scandinavian states of Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland have for most of their history been united with one or other of their neighbours and, after securing independence from Spain, modern Belgium and Holland were united until the earlier part of the nineteenth century.

As a social and political force nationalism became increasingly important from the end of the eighteenth century onwards. The internationalism of the French Revolution was fairly rapidly transformed into nationalism when revolutionary France sought to export its radical ideas, but it was the hundred years from 1815 to 1919 that was to be the century of European nationalism. In that period the map of Europe was redrawn by the break-up of the old empires, culminating in the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in October 1917, the defeat of Germany and Austria-Hungary in the First World War in 1918, and the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Long before Versailles, however, various parts of the Turkish Empire in Europe had successfully broken away – Greece early in the nineteenth century, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria somewhat later, while Belgium separated from Holland in 1830 and soon after the turn of the century, in 1905, Norway separated from Sweden.

Meanwhile, abortive nationalistic revolutions had occurred in Poland in 1830 and throughout Europe in 1848, 'the year of revolutions'. The setting up of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary in 1848 was an open acknowledgement of Austrian and Hungarian nationalism, particularly the latter, but was accompanied by a continuing refusal of Austria and Hungary to recognise the aspirations of the many other nationalities under their control. However, the most significant examples of European nationalism in the nineteenth century were the unifications of Italy and Germany, powerfully manifesting the idea that the most appropriate basis for the state is

the nation as defined ethnically, linguistically, culturally, and historically. This idea achieved its apotheosis in the Treaty of Versailles, with its enormous emphasis on the principle of national self-determination.

It was as a consequence of the chaos in Europe following the end of the First World War and the Versailles settlement that many of the states now a familiar part of Europe were created or, in cases like Poland and Finland, recreated. Drawing boundaries was a nightmare, since some ethnic minorities were invariably left the 'wrong' side of any border and the compromise states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were set up. A Yugoslav historian, Matja Duric, has described Yugoslavia as 'an ungovernable stew of two alphabets, three religions, four languages, five nationalities, and six constituent republics'. There is ample evidence that a strong sense of national identity played an important, even crucial part in the establishment of many of the states of modern Europe, in that resentment against alien rule was very strong and the political rhetoric used by those who led movements for self-determination and independence in various parts of Europe was frequently couched in nationalistic terms; but the extent to which nationalism was the ideology of the elite, on the one hand, and a grass-roots ideology, on the other, is less clear. As it is, nationalism can be seen as a unifying force in the face of a state's neighbours, providing an external identity without necessarily providing a majority of the population with an identity within the state.

Nationalism was a force which Marx and Engels acknowledged but largely underestimated. Engels, however, did argue that in cases like Poland freedom from alien rule must precede a proletarian revolution. Other Marxists acknowledged the claims of different nationalities to cultural self-determination or expression and, in a pamphlet published in 1913, Stalin defined a nation in recognisably nineteenth-century terms, in that while denying that nationality was a racial phenomenon, he argued that a nation was characterised by 'a stable, continuing community, a common language, distinct territory, economic cohesion, and a collective character' (Bottomore *et al.* 1983, p. 344). Ultimately, Marx and his successors expected that working-class consciousness would be a more powerful force than nationalism, so that on the outbreak of the First World War many socialists, Marxists and non-Marxists alike, expected the working classes of the belligerent states to reject bourgeois patriotism in favour of

proletarian solidarity; but for the most part socialist leaders were as solid in their support of the war as non-socialists. In this respect attitudes towards the First World War could be seen as strong evidence of widespread nationalism in Europe.

The essentially European concept of the nation-state thus became the model for the modern state and where a national identity did not exist it became necessary to create one. This was done nowhere more successfully than in the United States, which became what Seymour Martin Lipset (1964) called 'the first new nation'. Although the populations of the colonies which formed the first thirteen members of the United States of America were of largely common ethnic stock and had English as a common language, they were by no means united in other respects, not least in terms of religion. Historians have suggested that during the American War of Independence one-third of the colonists supported the break with Britain, one-third opposed it and the remaining third waited to see what happened. Much bitterness resulted, not a little persecution of those who had chosen the 'wrong' side ensued, and a substantial number of colonists resettled in Canada, which remained under British rule. The task of creating and sustaining a new identity was helped by the fact that independence had been won by force of arms and that the victorious colonists had brought about a 'revolution', but there followed nearly a decade of a looser, confederal association before the present federal system was adopted in 1789. Continued recognition of the states as separate entities was an important part of the American identity, and that identity was firmly established before the great waves of European immigration occurred in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The immigrants were therefore confronted with an established national identity and, coming as many of them did from circumstances of economic deprivation and, not infrequently, persecution, they tended to be receptive to adopting a new national identity as Americans. Culturally, and to a degree linguistically, the immigrants were allowed to retain their previous identities, but the United States was aptly described as a melting pot in which the newcomers were expected to become first and foremost Americans.

The pattern set by the United States was, in essence, that which the 'new nations' of the post-colonial era sought to follow. The contrast between the 'old nationalism' of Europe and the 'new nationalism' of what is now known as the Third World was aptly

summarised when 'old nationalism' was defined as 'nations seeking boundaries' and 'new nationalism' as 'boundaries seeking nations'. The boundaries of many newly independent states after 1945 were arbitrary, reflecting the ability of the colonial powers to impose their will on indigenous peoples and on each other, since the fate of particular peoples and territories often depended on events far from their location. Consequently, many of the new states lacked a common culture, language and history and were divided rather than united by ethnicity. They therefore embarked on what has been called the *nation-building* process, seeking to establish a sense of national identity where it was previously weak or non-existent (see Deutsch and Foltz 1963; Bendix 1964; and Eisenstadt and Rokkan 1973).

Wherever possible a common language was adopted, a common 'history' and 'culture' developed, and a unifying ideology embraced. A common language often meant that of the 'colonial oppressor', but in some cases alternatives were available, such as Arabic in North Africa and the Middle East, while in the case of Indonesia the nationalist leadership deliberately rejected Dutch and adopted Indonesian Bahasa, a Malay-based language. Many new states looked for roots in their pre-colonial past, claiming links with ancient cultures and civilisations untainted by the colonial experience. This was sometimes reflected in the choice of names for new states – Zimbabwe for Rhodesia and Ghana for the Gold Coast, for example. Others later adopted new, indigenous names – Zaire for the Congo, Burkina Faso for Upper Volta, Mynamar for Burma. Many also sought unity through ideology, such as Marxism or socialism, not infrequently seeking to give it an indigenous or domestic flavour – African socialism in Tanzania, Arab socialism in Nasser's Egypt, for instance, or emphasising village democracy in India – the Hindu *panchayat*, or 'guided democracy' in Indonesia – drawing on the concepts of *musyawarah* (deliberation) and *mufakat* (consensus). The most powerful ideology, however, was usually nationalism itself: the claim to be a nation and to identify the interests of the state with those of the nation.

Language, culture, history, and ideology were, and in many cases remain, the symbols of national identity, along with a national flag and national anthem. A key role in the nation-building process is invariably played by political leaders who claim to represent the 'nation' and who, in many instances, led the 'nation' in its struggle for independence from colonial rule. In some cases that struggle

involved prolonged and bitter conflict in which the colonial power was defeated, or at least pressured into conceding independence. Thus the French were decisively defeated in Indo-China in 1954, the position of the Belgians in the Congo by 1960 and the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique by 1974 rendered militarily untenable, while armed opposition and violence played a significant role in British decisions to grant independence to, for example, the Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1957, Cyprus in 1960, and to withdraw from Aden in 1965. In the event, often the reality was less important than the ability of national leaders to develop and sustain a widespread belief that victory over the colonial power had been achieved, independence won – not granted, and the new nation's 'revolution' proclaimed. The myth and reality of achieving independence became powerful symbols in the 'new nationalism'.

Nation-building also involves other means: the socialisation of the population through education and the media; the need to defend the nation against external threat, real or imagined; the use of war as a unifying force; membership of regional organisations, such as the Arab League or the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), or generic associations, such as non-aligned states, and the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC); but above all in policies of economic development. Few new states adopted policies of economic isolation in order to preserve traditional ways of life; most embarked on programmes of industrialisation and agricultural modernisation, claiming that independence would bring material benefits denied by colonial rule. Success in these areas, particularly economic development, has varied considerably, and some theorists, notably neo-Marxist and dependency theorists, have argued that the Third World has been incorporated into a world capitalist system. These views will be explored further in Chapter 12. What it is important to acknowledge is that not only has the Third World been inexorably drawn into the world of states, but also the model of nation-state has been universally adopted or imposed.

#### THE MARXIST CONCEPT OF THE STATE

It was noted earlier that the Marxist concept of the state is distinctive in that the state is defined as the product of the historical struggle between classes and as an institutional superstructure resting on the

economic base. It can therefore only operate in the interests of the dominant class. Once the class struggle has been resolved, following the proletarian revolution and the emergence of a classless society, the state will wither away. Neo-Marxists such as Gramsci (1971 [1929–35]) and Althusser (1972 and 1977 [1965]) explained the persistence of the state in capitalist societies through its ability to elicit consent from members of society, as well as the incipient threat of force. Gramsci argued that the bourgeoisie helps to maintain its dominance by making concessions to the working class, by accepting compromises which do not fundamentally undermine its position and therefore that of the state. Althusser stresses the importance of ideology and the ability of the bourgeois state to secure the acceptance of its values through what he terms 'ideological state apparatuses', such as the education system, the church, and trade unions, as distinct from repressive state apparatuses, such as the armed forces and the police.

Miliband (1969) draws a distinction between the government and the state, arguing that the government is the most visible, but not necessarily the most important, part of the state. The state also includes the bureaucracy, the police, the judiciary, regional and local authorities, various economic institutions (such as banks and public corporations), and national, local and regional representative institutions – a view with which many non-Marxists would concur. But Miliband goes on to suggest that the state has a significant degree of autonomy which helps it operate in the interests of the dominant class because it appears neutral and then, following Gramsci, argues that it is able to make concessions to subordinate classes which help preserve the position of the dominant class. However, ultimately the persistence of the state rests not on its repressive capacities, nor on its institutional pervasiveness, but on the fact that the dominant class is drawn from those with similar socio-economic characteristics and therefore similar economic and social values. Poulantzas (1969 and 1973), on the other hand, regards the socio-economic characteristics of the dominant class as irrelevant and, while agreeing with Miliband that the state develops a degree of autonomy, argues that this is so because the structures of the system reflect the extent to which the institutions of the state are embedded in society.

Once in power, however, the state presents a problem to Marxists. Lenin was quite clear in stating that the state would wither away immediately after the proletarian revolution and be replaced by the

dictatorship of the proletariat. In practice, after the October Revolution the dictatorship of the proletariat, if it ever existed, rapidly gave way to the dictatorship of the Party. Once the civil war had been won the Soviet Union certainly possessed all the characteristics of a state defined in non-Marxist terms – a clearly defined territory, a monopoly of the legitimate use of force, and an administrative apparatus to implement the policies of the state. Indeed, in 1921 Lenin himself described the Soviet Union as 'a worker state with bureaucratic distortions' (McLellan 1979, p. 101). This was taken much further by Stalin, who argued that the USSR was 'a state of a new type' (Bottomore *et al.* 1983, p. 468) representing the whole people, and although a later Soviet leader, Khrushchev, predicted the withering away of the state, it patently did not occur.

What has happened is that the communist states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have not withered away but collapsed. Economic pressures in the USSR initiated a process in which the role of the state changed, but did not disappear in the Marxist sense. In the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of *perestroika* resulted first in the Communist Party losing its 'leading role' in society and therefore in the operation of the state, and then in its collapse following an unsuccessful coup. The outcome was not a 'withering away' of the state, but the creation of a multiplicity of new states.

Marxist critics of the Soviet Union have described Soviet-style states as 'deformed workers' states' and those like the Yugoslav dissident, Milovan Djilas, have asserted that communist states became dominated by a 'new class' of party *apparatchiks* and bureaucrats, who gave themselves privileged status and better material conditions than those they ostensibly served. None the less, the concept of the state leaves Marxists with a problem, not of explaining its role and nature *prior* to a proletarian revolution, but after. It is not sufficient to explain away the state by terms like 'dictatorship of the proletariat', 'dictatorship of the Party', 'state of the whole people', or 'the administration of things'; complex modern societies require administrative structures and, whether or not these constitute a state, it remains open to question whether they, any more than the state, can be neutral.

It is, perhaps, the argument that the state is not neutral that is the most important contribution of Marxism to the debate on the role and nature of the state. Social and political institutions do not operate in a vacuum; they themselves reflect particular values, but they

can also be put to different purposes by different groups who from time to time control them.

## CONCLUSION

The state provides the basic linkage between politics and society in virtually all polities in the modern world. The development of the state in Europe provided the role model for the development of the state throughout the world, not always, of course, in the capitalist form, or in the pure form of the nation-state, but the concept of a higher authority than those currently exercising power and of the exercise of that power within an established institutional framework is almost universal. The fact that much controversy still surrounds the state and its role, not merely between Marxists and non-Marxists but more widely, is powerful evidence of its importance.

However, the role of the state is more than that of providing an institutional framework; its role is much more extensive and pervasive in some societies than others. It is therefore important to consider variations in and theories about power and its distribution within particular societies, since it is invariably through the state that power is ultimately exercised, and this is the subject of Chapters 3 and 4. Neither the state itself, nor the political and social institutions that constitute a given state, are immutable, and how societies change is dealt with in Part V.

## Chapter 3

# POWER, AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMACY

## DEFINING AND ANALYSING POWER

Much has been written about power as a concept, but there is no generally agreed definition and it remains a subject of much dispute. Media usage of the term is common: phrases like 'winning power', 'seizing power', and 'power struggle' abound. Historians frequently refer to the 'great powers' and the 'balance of power'; political analysts and others describe the United States (and formerly the Soviet Union) as 'superpowers'. All the usages fit a simple dictionary definition of power as 'an ability to do or act' in the sense that possession of power enables individuals or groups of individuals to carry out their will. 'Winning power', 'seizing power', and 'power struggle' clearly relate to acquiring the ability to act; 'great powers' or states ostensibly have a greater ability to act than lesser powers or states; a 'balance of power' implies that the ability of one state or group of states is matched by that of another state or group of states; and presumably the 'superpowers' have a much superior ability to act compared with other powers or states. Yet merely to examine the media usage in relation to what seems a concise definition of power illustrates the difficulty of conceptualising it.

'Power', argued Bertrand Russell (1938, p. 35), 'is the production of intended effects.' In the context of 'balance of power', 'great powers' and 'superpowers' Russell's definition is easily illustrated and understood. Not only has much modern history been viewed as one of alliances between different states, often involving the notion

## *5. Týden*

### **Globalizace, politika a post-národní stát**

Základní povinná četba:

Bauman, Z. 1999 (Kap. Co dál po národním státě? s.69-92)

Giddens, A. 1998 ( Kap. II, s.55-73 )