Nationalist multiculturalism in late imperial Austria as a critique of contemporary liberalism: the case of Bauer and Renner[1]

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ABSTRACT   *This article evaluates Bauer's theory of the nation and the debate on national–cultural autonomy in late imperial Austria. It finds important similarities with contemporary liberal debates on multiculturalism and the rights of ethnic and national minorities. It argues that the debate on national–cultural autonomy went in some respects beyond the contemporary debate on multiculturalism. National–cultural autonomy rejects the idea of the nation-state and proposes instead a multi-nation-state that recognises differential rights for ethnic and national minorities. It seeks to break the limitations of liberal democracy and the territorial principle of the nation-state by organising national communities as deterritorialised national corporations, and multi-nation-states as territorialised non-national identities.*

Contemporary liberal democracy is caught in a dilemma: how should it adapt to national and ethnic minority demands for differential rights while sustaining the principle of equality of rights and obligations for individuals? The dual impact of the politics of difference and the demands for political recognition for national and ethnic minorities is pushing liberalism beyond its traditional conceptual limits. The question is whether liberalism—a political ideology that demands equality in autonomy and freedom of choice for individuals—can accommodate demands for differential collective rights for national and ethnic minorities. Earlier, the liberal solution was to advocate the principle of self-determination (meaning self-government in separate nation-states) as a solution to the predicament of oppressed peoples. It is however, no longer possible—and one doubts whether it ever was possible—surgically to isolate ethno-national communities into single territorial spaces. This conventional vision of self determination also runs into difficulties, when, as in the case of Northern Ireland and Israel–Palestine, one community wants one identity for the nation-state and the other wants another.[2]

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Within the boundaries of existing nation-states, ethnic and national minorities increasingly demand some form of political recognition. Here begins the liberal democratic predicament, which is well expressed by Amy Gutmann: '... Can citizens with diverse identities be represented as equals if public institutions do not recognise their identities ...?'.[3] Gutmann further argues that this challenge is 'endemic' to liberal democracies because they are committed in principle to the notion of equal representation. Here is the 'Gordian knot' of the liberal problem. Classical liberalism has difficulties in accepting the segmental representation of ethnic communities precisely because it is committed to the principle of equal representation for individuals. Whatever the method employed, the ideological goal of liberalism is the erosion of ethnic solidarities in the public domain and the promotion of a more 'rational' state based on equal individual rights.[4] It is in this principled and uncompromising demand for individual equality that the need for the recognition of communal diversity is lost.

There are, however, some influential liberal attempts to tackle the thorny issue of minority representation and the nation-state. In the introduction to his important book *Multicultural Citizenship*,[5] Will Kymlicka argues that ethnic and cultural diversity is the norm for most contemporary states. This diversity, Kymlicka contends, gives rise to some important and potentially divisive questions, such as language rights, regional autonomy, political representation, educational curriculum, land claims and, last but not least, immigration and citizenship. While Kymlicka is aware of the historical dimensions of ethnic diversity, other 'post-national' writers with short memories[6] argue instead that the post-war internationalisation of labour markets, decolonisation, and the expansion of the discourse of human rights, make diversity the hallmark of our period, the characteristic of an era when the politics of difference overrides classical forms of nation-state citizenship. But is this really the case? As Calhoun[7] argues, nationalism and ethnic diversity have been big news on and off for 200 years. Many problems perceived today as novel and sometimes intractable were systematically part of prior discussions on nationalism. Such are, for example, the period of the apogée of the nation-state, and the period coinciding with the disintegration of imperial Austria around the turn of the twentieth century.

A re-examination of the nationalities debate in Austria during this period reveals surprising analogies to contemporary liberal democratic debates on minority rights and multiculturalism. At the time of its publication and over subsequent years, Otto Bauer's book[8] was considered a very important contribution to the Austrian debate on nationalism, minority rights and the state. Hence, despite important differences in time and circumstances, Bauer's book has something important to offer to the contemporary debate in Western liberal democracies on ethnic rights, citizenship, migration and multiculturalism. Given its theoretical and empirical importance for a problem that continues to beset contemporary states, it is indeed difficult to understand, as Eric Hobsbawm[9] argues, why this book had not been previously translated into English in its entirety, a serious theoretical neglect according to Nicolao Merker, the editor of

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Early twentieth century Vienna, like contemporary London, Paris, Berlin, Toronto and Sydney, experienced an influx of noticeably diverse ethno-national communities. Differential development in late imperial Austria pushed many different ethnic groups into Vienna and into the more affluent and predominantly German-speaking areas of the Empire. Just as there is a reaction against 'alien' migration in Paris, Berlin, Rome and Sydney today, so too there was a strong reaction in Vienna. Much in the same way as the contemporary challenge of accommodating diverse ethnic cultures within one territorial unit has proved fertile ground for novel interpretations of democratic politics (politics of differ- ence, multiculturalism), so too did the nationalities conflict in late imperial Austria generate novel attempts to redefine democratic politics and accommodate ethnic diversity. On of the most daring and original models was Bauer and Renner's project of national–cultural autonomy. Karl Renner was one of the most important Socialist politicians in twentieth century Austria. Twice State President, immediately after the First and Second World Wars, and an accom- plished constitutional jurist, he first sketched the model for national–cultural autonomy. This was an ingenious model for a two-tier system of government that devolved considerable non-territorial autonomy to national communities, while keeping the administrative unity of the multinational state. There are unfortunately no English translations of Renner's writings on national–cultural autonomy. His key argument will be discussed below.

In recent years, the term 'multiculturalism' has been invoked as a possible remedy for the nation-state's quandary of whether to assimilate or integrate its minorities. If contemporary multiculturalism is a by-product of the need to accommodate ethnic diversity, and if the contemporary politics of identity is an assertion of minority distinctiveness, then so too was Bauer and Renner's model of national–cultural autonomy. However, multiculturalism is a neologism; the Oxford Dictionary traces it back to the 1960s and its origins lie in Quebec. But does it designate a new idea? If contemporary multiculturalism is concerned with including, recognising, and representing ethnically diverse social segments in one political unit, then it is surely not wrong to see Bauer and Renner as the precursors of multiculturalism. They were, however, operating in an environ- ment far more hostile to the political expression of ethnic diversity. This was the 'golden age' of the nation-state, a time when the ideology of the nation-state reigned supreme, and when the optimal political unit was understood to be a monocultural nation-state. This was a time when J. Stuart Mill's famous motto 'Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities'[12] was a truth taken for granted by both liberal and illiberal nationalists.

On the eve of the twentieth century, the volatility of nationalism disconcerted two of the most formidable ideological protagonists—liberal democracy and Marxism. Too often, the radical social movements engendered by these ideolo-

gies judged nationalism to be a powerful tool for achieving their political projects, only to discover that, like the Trojan horse, the nationalism of nation-states led to their own undoing. In the liberal case, faith in human reason and the cast-iron belief that individual freedom must be enshrined in basic individual rights went hand in hand with the struggle for national emancipation, even if the connection here is not self-evident. Such movements invariably aimed at the establishment of separate nation-states for aggrieved national and ethnic communities. After World War One, the very liberal democratic 'right of nations to self determination'—then interpreted to mean the creation of separate national states—was one of the most influential political demands of the day. In spite of Marx's arguments to the contrary,[13] the competing Marxist tradition was unable to resist the seductiveness of the slogan; much to the consternation of Rosa Luxemburg, it became the cornerstone of the Leninist theory on the national question. If Lenin and Woodrow Wilson held diametrically opposed views on many key issues, there was between them a most remarkable agreement on the need to implement in Europe the right of nations to self-determination. Liberals and Marxist-Leninists enthusiastically supported the creation of new nation-states out the ruins of imperial Austria.

But pivotal socialist and liberal democratic principles were soon to be jettisoned in the dynamic interplay between nation-states. First, there was the question of minorities. Most of the nation-states emerging out of collapsing empires included significant pockets of ethnically diverse peoples. Minorities contradicted the aim to have a culturally homogeneous state and were treated with distrust. In the best case scenario, minorities were given precarious rights or were asked to assimilate 'with democracy as compensation'. In the worst, they were ethnically cleansed. In imperial Austria the residential areas of several national communities overlapped, and this meant that the exercise of the Wilsonian–Leninist right to self-determination by some meant the oppression of others. In the rush to build nation-states, ethnic nationalisms were compelled to compete brutally with each other for pieces of real estate.

Bauer and Renner were not abstract universalists. On the contrary, in their writings they discuss time and again the pivotal importance of ethnic and national dispositions. However, this recognition was not extended to the nation-state. They showed almost a century ago that at the very least in theory, the idea of the nation-state and the political representation of ethnic diversity are diametrically opposed. They proposed instead the deconstruction of the duo 'nation' and 'state'. Their model attempted to organise nations into non-territorial public corporations with comprehensive autonomous rights, operating within de-nationalised territorial states. However, when they wrote, the ideology of the liberal democratic nation-state was an uncontested hegemonic principle. Nowadays that ideology has lost a great deal of its shine, and, considering the example of the European Union, the idea of transnational political organisations is no longer a distant utopia. Yet the problem of ethnic and national minorities is as agonising as it was when Renner and Bauer wrote their thought-provoking pieces nearly a century ago. Indeed, the current debate on multiculturalism could

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be seriously advanced by re-examining the old idea of non-territorial national–cultural autonomy, and adapting it to contemporary circumstances.

However, to attribute to Bauer and Renner the role of precursors of multiculturalism is an over-simplification. As explained by Yuval-Davis,[14] multiculturalism in contemporary liberal democracies is subject to limits, many of which Renner and Bauer would have found unacceptable. State sovereignty, the predominance of existing nation-state languages, the legitimation of ruling cultural practices, and the hegemony of official political cultures, constrain multiculturalism. In sharp contrast, such barriers did not limit Bauer and Renner's theories. Renner specifically demanded the recognition of national communities as autonomous corporations within the multinational state. The idea was not to subordinate these communities to some undivided sovereign power, but to sanction legally the inviolability of the areas of competence of national corporations. For Renner, the principal problem was how to break with the limitations of liberal democracy and the territorial principle of the nation-state, or, as he put it, how to organise ethnic communities as juridical entities.[15]

Bauer's and Renner's argument is more comprehensive than most contemporary liberal discussions of multiculturalism, whose interpretation of multiculturalism is based on their observation of the undesirable cleavages created by the presence of minority ethnic and cultural groups in homogenising nation-states. Bauer attempted to go beyond that specific observation, common enough in his contemporary Austria, to produce a theory of nationhood and nationalism in multi-national and multi-ethnic states. His idea was to overcome the very notion of majorities and minorities by guaranteeing collective representation of sovereign corporations with specific and exclusive competences within the administration and governance of the multi-national state. Bauer's book also develops an original theory of nationhood. Much of it is expressed in a language that is seen as dated and problematic today (Social Darwinism, excessive emphasis on evolutionary paradigms), yet it also represents a highly accomplished theory of national formation. In a reference to Bauer's introduction to the 1924 edition of the work, Stargardt[16] argues that the greatest merit of Bauer's theory of the nation was that it was sufficiently sophisticated and meticulous to explain the failure of its own practical programme!

Analogies of past and present

At the turn of the twentieth century, Austria was a dual monarchy with a total population of 53 million made up of more than 15 different nationalities, occupying an area smaller than South Australia, Texas or the Iberian peninsula.[17] Rapid industrialisation brought about a process of differential development within the dual monarchy, and this fuelled internal migration and the dilution of the territorial concentration of many national and ethnic groups. In particular, an increasing number of Czech workers migrated outside the historical boundaries of Bohemia. Pan-Germanic nationalists resented the presence of Czechs in the German part of the Empire, and Czech nationalists resented the presence of

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German industrialists in Bohemia. Similar processes affected Slovenes and Ukrainians in the Austrian part of the Empire and Serbs and Romanians in the Hungarian part. While Austro-Germans and Magyars (Hungarians) were the most numerous national communities in their respective halves of the Empire, they did not constitute the majority of the population.[18]

In Vienna, changes due to internal migration were dramatic. The population of the capital increased more than fourfold in fifty-three years. Vienna was converted into a cosmopolitan city, and experienced a cultural renaissance with few parallels in the history of the West. But turn-of-the-century Vienna also witnessed the erosion of the values that had paved the way for its extraordinary cultural renaissance. The development of the multi-ethnic and multicultural environment that made possible this cultural and intellectual renaissance was deeply resented by conservative Pan-Germans. This generated protracted controversies over schools instructing in languages other than German (particularly Czech), bilingual notices, and place names.[19]

The Austrian Socialist Party was one of the very few multinational organisations in imperial Austria that survived the tense atmosphere of ethnic and national confrontation more or less intact. To avoid the ever-present threat of ethnic and national disintegration, the Austrian socialists invested considerable intellectual and political effort in overcoming national and ethnic mistrust. The Socialist Party was transformed into a federation of national parties and, subsequently, programmatic proposals were drafted that attempted to maintain the unity of the Austrian state, while giving maximum institutional, political and cultural recognition to national and ethnic diversity. The problem has a clear contemporary resonance: the main themes of the contemporary debate initiated by Charles Taylor's seminal work on the politics of recognition[20] are already present in the protocols of the convention of the Austrian Socialist Party in the Moravian city of Brno (Brünn) in 1899.[21] For many delegates to the socialist convention, the recognition of the equal value of minority cultures in the public domain was a key political demand. The objections they encountered are surprisingly similar to the objections encountered by Taylor's politics of recognition.[22]

The Socialist party had to come to terms with complex ethno-national divisions within its ranks. Empty slogans such as 'the victory of the working class will solve the national question' proved inadequate. There was a pressing need to establish clearly the position and programme of the party in relation to the rising tide of nationalism.[23] This impelled Austrian socialists to relinquish the simplistic and misleading formulae that prevailed in most turn-of-the-century socialist parties. They were obliged to assess difficult questions of minority rights and ethnic political representation in detail, and were compelled to adopt more nuanced positions that displayed greater sensitivity and provided concrete answers to strident national demands.

In the same way as doctrinaire socialists of the Second International were dismissive of national and ethnic identities in their struggle for social emancipation, so too doctrinaire liberals (Rawls and Habermas for example) are, in

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Taylor's words,[24] inhospitable to ethnic difference in their normative assertion of individual freedom. Just as a new generation of liberal thinkers is affronted by the inability of the liberal tradition politically to recognise and accommodate ethnic diversity, so too a group of Austrian socialists was affronted by the inability of the socialist tradition politically to recognise and accommodate ethnic and national diversity. Kymlicka argues today that the liberal idea of 'benign neglect' of minority cultures is not benign but incoherent, and reflects a shallow understanding of the relation between states and nations.[25] Similarly, Bauer and Renner criticised the well established socialist truth that the nation-state is a necessary and unavoidable stage in the development of the socialist revolution, and that minorities should assimilate and embrace democracy as compensation.[26]

From the Austrian Socialist Party's reluctant engagement in an intellectual and political debate with nationalism, and from its no less reluctant but concerted effort to come to grips with nationalism and ethnic diversity, a theoretical and political analysis of unparalleled sophistication emerged. This was not the result of unqualified support for the national causes, as Communist detractors were quick to argue—there was, in fact, no love lost between the Austrian socialists and ethno-nationalist movements. It was rather the case that the Socialist Party of Austria realised that without developing a thorough political and intellectual understanding of the national phenomenon—an understanding that was so conspicuously absent in the classical Marxist tradition—it would be condemned to political paralysis and oblivion in the face of the rising tide of nationalism.

Here again, one encounters parallels with contemporary liberal debates. It is the challenge to classical liberalism of the politics of difference and the inability of classical liberalism to respond to the challenge that has pushed Charles Taylor, Michael Walzer, Will Kymlicka and Yael Tamir to question the alleged 'procedural neutrality' of liberalism and its 'benign neglect' of ethnic questions. Like Bauer and Renner in relation to Marxism, their aim is to make liberalism more sensitive to ethnic and national diversity, and they too have been strenuously rebuked by doctrinaires. In both cases, the development of these ideas involves a confrontation with the conceptual limits of Marxism and liberalism respectively, and the attempt to break out of normative straitjackets results in an original and sophisticated discussion of nationalism and ethnicity.

A few years after the Brno Congress, Bauer and Renner were recognised as the leading Austrian socialist theoreticians on the national question and nationalism. Bauer's theoretical position was perceived to be located on the 'left' of the socialist party, while Renner was seen as a spokesman of its 'right' wing. While the accuracy of such demarcation may be open to question, the two men did not see eye to eye on a number of political issues, including those relating to their understanding of nationhood. However, despite their conceptual differences, they complemented each other well in the discussion of nationalism, even if, as Marramao[27] argues, Bauer's definition of the nation as a community of fate has to be contrasted with Renner's understanding of the nation as a juridical subject. Renner was a constitutional jurist, whereas Bauer's main strength lay in his

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ability to grasp the theoretical implications of a wide range of issues.[28] It was Renner who sketched the concept of national–cultural autonomy. Bauer then adopted this concept, integrated it to his theory of the nation, and advanced an ingenious and coherent model, which drew on the ideas of both men in spite of their differences.

Cultural–national autonomy and the personality principle

The model of cultural–national autonomy proposed by Bauer and Renner is based on the premise that ethnic and national communities can be organised as autonomous units in multinational states without considering residential location. The singularity of this model can be understood when contrasted to most other theories of national autonomy. In most conventional theories, national autonomy requires a territorial base for the autonomous national community, or at least the intention to build some kind of 'autonomous homeland' that will serve as the territorial base. In contrast, Bauer and Renner's theory rests on the idea of 'non-territorial national autonomy'. This means that autonomous communities are organised as sovereign collectives whatever their residential location within a multi-national state. As in the millet system in the Ottoman Empire, peoples of different ethnic identities can co-exist in the same territory without straining the principle of national autonomy. The *crucial* difference from the millet system is, however, that the autonomous communities are organised democratically and based on internal democracy and the individual consent to belong. Much in the same way as Catholics, Protestants and Jews could coexist in the same city, Renner argued, so members of different national communities could coexist with their own distinct institutions and national organisations, provided they did not claim territorial exclusivity. The model of national–cultural autonomy acknowledges that national communities require recognition of their specificity and difference in the public domain, and this is achieved through the existence of legally guaranteed autonomous and sovereign corporations. Unlike more conventional forms of autonomy and self-determination, it rejects the idea of ethnically or nationally exclusive control over territory.[29]

Bauer and Renner agreed that the central issue was how to convert a decaying empire of squabbling nationalities into a democratic federation of national communities. In their view the solution lay in the model of national–cultural non territorial autonomy or the 'personality principle'. The term is derived from the work of the leading German historian Friedrich Meinecke, who was influential in shaping Renner's ideas. In his work *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat* (Cosmopolitanism and the National State),[30] he criticised the notion of the sovereign state as the embodiment of ethical values and of *realpolitik* as justifying the breaking of moral laws. Here Renner specifically cites Meinecke when he argues that personality is not only the highest form of autonomy, but that it is also the highest level of personal autarky and the harmonic unity of all forces and qualities.[31] Drawing on Meinecke, Renner called the system he envisaged the 'personality principle' because it referred to the

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widest personal choice of its members to partake in a particular national association. Renner contrasted this with the 'territorial principle' characteristic of the modern nation-state, which he described as follows: 'If you live in my territory you are subjected to my domination, my law and my language' (Renner, 1994, p. 29, my own translation). This, according to Renner, suggests not equality of rights, but the dominance of the ethnic majority over the ethnic minority, of settled populations over immigrants, and of settlers over indigenous peoples.

The model proposed by Renner and Bauer is well suited to minorities that demand significant autonomy but for a variety of reasons cannot have separate states. Prime examples of such minorities are indigenous peoples in liberal settler societies, who rarely demand separate nation-states. It is far more often the case that, faced with a state ultimately based on an alien and violent intrusion into their ancestral homelands—an intrusion that made them scattered minorities in the first place—indigenous peoples demand national autonomy and public recognition of their way of life. Renner's proposal would certainly meet most if not all of their needs. This form of recognition of cultural rights enables different ethnic and national communities to have a form of organic sovereignty and their identity publicly acknowledged and affirmed in the basic institutions of the state. In an argument that closely resembles Bauer and Renner's ideas, James Tully argues that the political recognition of diversity is one of the most important ways to ensure constitutional allegiance in culturally diverse states.[32]

Renner is fond of comparing ethnic conflict with the religious wars that plagued early modern Europe, when absolutist German states imposed a particular religion on their subjects in the wake of the Peace of Augsburg. Here the organisational principle *cuius regio illus religio*[33] decided religious beliefs and led to countless wars. This problem was settled, according to Renner, when religion was separated from territorial sovereignty and the right of religious groups to co-exist side by side became the norm. In the modern nation-state, however, he argues, the organisational principle is *cuius regio illus lingua*.[34] The personality principle, according to Renner, would separate the question of governance from the issue of protecting national and cultural identities, just as religious freedom separated church from state.

The model of national autonomy requires that all citizens declare their nationality when they reach voting age. Members of each national community, whatever their territory of residence, would form a single public body or association endowed with legal personality and sovereignty and competent to deal with all national–cultural affairs. These corporations would organise the educational system of their members, the legal system, and all other issues that are national in character.[35] The idea here is to eliminate competition between national communities by ensuring a strict separation of competences. Renner and Bauer do not clarify, however, how the model would deal with issues that concern bilateral relations between national communities, and how litigation would be dealt with in the case of parties belonging to different national communities. There are also many ethnic or national communities that may be

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satisfied with a narrower range of autonomous competences. The problems are not insurmountable, but require a careful balance of different cultural and political priorities and criteria. This model is based on the premise that the most controversial issues in the relationship between ethnic and national groups concern language, education and the recognition of cultural rights in the public domain. Here, networks of communication across cultural boundaries are crucial because the model recognises both communities and individuals as legitimate interlocutors. Change is a constant feature of cultural practices. A continuous dialogue within and between communities and between individuals of different communities is the only way to secure and formalise a negotiated public space across ethnic boundaries.[36]

In an interesting recent study on Bauer, Forman[37] argues that Bauer's (and Renner's) positions have deep roots in the liberal tradition that proposes the free association of persons as the basis for common social and political life. However, the national–cultural autonomy model is controversial, not because of its conventional radicalism (many Catholic–conservative politicians in Austria supported this model even if it was originally conceived by socialist thinkers), but because it calls into question the main assumptions of the contemporary world of nation-states. Forman calls the model 'complex and counterintuitive'. The intuitive assumptions challenged by Bauer and Renner are that sovereignty is unitary and indivisible, that self-determination of nations requires the constitution of separate nation-states, and that nation-states are the only recognised international players. On the other hand, the model addresses a key weakness of other models of territorial autonomy: national territorial boundaries always create minorities and propensities for ethnic discrimination. Contemporary Western European experience shows that, in a world of migration and differential development, territorial boundaries are porous, and population movements tend to upset neat schemes for fortress states. This situation inevitably results in ethnic and national minorities constituting unwelcome pockets in any autonomous or sovereign territories. The second advantage of the model is that it does away with the idea of national minorities and the need for specific minority protection. In Bauer and Renner's model, even if the citizen lives in a territory where the majority belongs to a different national group, in questions of national and ethnic interest, citizens of different ethnies are not subject to the cultural practices of the majority, but can rely on their own, trans-territorial national organisation, which has the status of a public corporation.[38]

Some social democratic groups among national minorities in pre-Soviet Russia adopted that model for national–cultural autonomy. The most prominent of these was the Jewish Bund, and the intellectual leader of the party, Vladimir Medem, articulated its principles. This contradicted Bolshevik policy on state centralisation and led to concerted attacks by Lenin and the nationalities commissar—a young Georgian by the name of Joseph Stalin—on Medem, Bauer and Renner.[39] Bauer, however, was hostile to the demands of the Bund and, in contradiction to his theoretical argument about the awakening of 'non-historical' nations, enigmatically advocated Jewish assimilation. Bauer attributed the per-

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sistence of a Yiddish–Jewish national community in Eastern Europe to the relative 'underdevelopment' of that part of the world, particularly when compared with Western Europe. Here Jews no longer constituted a national community because they had lost a common language and therefore had in many cases become 'assimilated' through a greater interactive relationship with the national communities with which they lived. While Bauer's description of the differences between Eastern and Western European Jews is correct, it does not follow, particularly in view of his own insightful conceptualisation, that the Yiddish-speaking Eastern European Jews should, in theory, experience the same developmental path as the Western Jews and cease to be a national community. This characterisation of Jewish national life in Eastern Europe should, of course, be carefully confined to the geographical area and the period under consideration.

The atomist–centralist principle and the limits of liberalism

The work of Renner contains a powerful critique of the contemporary notion of liberal democratic sovereignty, one that certainly echoes contemporary debates about national sovereignty and minority rights. Bauer, who argues that the liberal democratic state is organised according to the 'atomist–centralist' principle, adopts this critique. The centralising principle was initially developed by the absolutist state, and the progressive centralisation of the state which followed had the effect of reducing society to its smallest parts, in Bauer's words to atoms, i.e. to single individuals.

> This idea of the state was inherited by liberalism and taken to its logical conclusion. The bourgeois-revolutionary theoreticians of the eighteenth century already declared their support for the centralist–atomist conception of the state; in this respect there is no fundamental difference between Rousseau and Hobbes. Following its victory, liberalism swept away the last remains of the ancient autonomous associations of individuals by eliminating the guilds in the towns, and by dissolving the seigniorial–peasant relationship in the countryside. The work which absolutism had begun was thereby completed. [40]

In liberal democracies, there are two recognised politico-juridical entities. One is the individual and the other is the sovereign will of the undivided collective. This is what Bauer and Renner call the atomistic–centralist structure of modern nation-states. This totalising tendency fails to acknowledge meaningful intermediate locations, like the ones occupied by ethnic and national minorities.

The atomist approach easily relates to the Western idea of the democratic nation-state. The inhabitants of the state are nationally identified with the state through habitation and citizenship, irrespectively of ethnic affiliations. States are thus seen as nation-states whether or not they are ethnically homogeneous.[41] In the liberal nation-state the cultural practice of the dominant nation (the official ethnicity of the state) is disguised by a procedural practice that claims neutrality but is derived from the cultural experiences of the dominant national community. Furthermore, a liberal view of culture is by definition grounded in liberal theory

and cannot avoid seeing every culture from a liberal angle. This creates in some cases serious distortions.[42] This is why in liberal democracies, multiculturalism is always limited by the hegemony of the dominant nation, and why contemporary liberal theories find it very difficult to construct a multi-ethnic and multinational state out of the practice of liberal democracy. As Parekh[43] argues in another context, the liberal response to the cultural pluralism of nation-states does little more than carve out a precarious area of diversity on the margins of a predominantly assimilationist structure. Atomistic states, however much consideration they might show for individual democratic rights and however equalitarian their practices, are by definition adverse to recognising intermediate and constitutionally enshrined entities.[44] On this subject, the liberal silence is deafening. Defenders of liberal nationalism have ignored this issue because it puts them in an acute dilemma. If liberal nationalists consider that it is desirable for states to be nation-states, then multi-nation-states face two ugly options: a) to split the state along national lines, or b) to empower the larger national group to assimilate the weaker ones.[45] Both strategies have been tried in the West with equally catastrophic results.

The example from Quebec explored in Charles Taylor's seminal essay clarifies the problem. Here, the issue is Quebec's government directive that compels children of French speakers and immigrants to study in French schools. If Quebec were a nation-state, it would have been seen as normal to compel citizens to study in the national language (French) in much the same way as Anglo-Canadian citizens study in English and citizens of the French Republic study in French. Here there is no violation of the liberal principle. Procedural equality is established within the framework of the dominant culture of the nation-state. If however, the *autonomous* Quebec government compels migrants and francophone citizens to study in French, then, at the very least, there is a considerable discussion if this violates individual rights. What the nation-state does as a matter of fact is perceived as a violation of human rights if carried out by an autonomous national government within a larger state. The discriminatory absurdity of the atomist–centralist principle is thus shown. Because of the principle's paralysing effect, the liberal democratic nation-state is caught in the conceptual dilemma outlined in the opening paragraphs of this article: how should it adapt to national and ethnic minority demands for differential rights while sustaining the principle of procedural equality of rights and obligations for all citizens?

Bauer also argues that in a federal state, the atomist–centralist organisational model also applies.

> Let us suppose that the territorial principle has been consistently implemented. Within the individual national administrative territories the centralist–atomist form of organization applies. The national minorities can only ensure the satisfaction of their cultural needs by gaining power in the legislative and administrative arms of the territorial corporation. But they are always excluded from this power precisely because they are minorities; therefore, if the territorial principle is applied consistently, it appears that they are completely at the mercy of the majority. The territorial principle on the one hand exaggerates the significance

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of national diversity in that it wants to separate states and administrative territories from one another completely according to linguistic boundaries; on the other hand, however, it expects the nation simply to abandon considerable parts of its people to other nations.[46]

The territorial principle assumes the eventual assimilation of minorities. From this Bauer concludes that if it is applied consistently, minorities will be at the mercy of the majority, with all the ambiguities implied by the idea of toleration.

The condition of being an ethnic or national minority is dependent on the presumption that sovereign national or ethnic majorities rule nation-states. Without this comparative referent, the proper name 'minority' is meaningless. Equally, the term 'minorities' has a numerical referent that confuses the issue, for the key difference is cultural, not numerical.[47] National (and ethnic) minorities are collectivities that possess attributes of nationhood, but do not possess an independent state.[48] Often, the same principle that legitimises the existing nation-state—the principle of self-determination—is used by disaffected minorities to demand a state where they could become a majority. Thus, many contemporary nation-states are threatened with dismemberment by the very same principle that sustains their claim to independent existence. Often it is not practical or possible to dismember existing national states or, where this might at least be considered, the territorial mix of populations makes it impossible for disaffected minorities to build territorial states that will enable them to become majorities. Under these circumstances, the principle of national autonomy can provide political recognition for the demand of national and ethnic minority groups for self-determination.

Austro-Marxism and critical liberalism

The North American socialist Louis Boudin coined the term 'Austro-Marxism'. It must not be confused with the Austrian Socialist Party. After the death of Friedrich Engels, the most respected figure in the Marxist movement was Karl Kautsky. His orthodox interpretation of Marxism shaped the position of socialist parties of the period, including that of the Austrian party.[49] The emergence of Austro-Marxism as a distinct intellectual approach was in part a generational reaction against Marxist orthodoxy, in part a critical reaction against revisionism and the intellectual critique of orthodox Marxism formulated by the neo-Kantian 'ethical socialists' of the Marburg School. Bauer described the group as a 'group of young Austrian comrades active in scholarly research', adding that they 'were united not so much by a specific political orientation as by the particular nature of their scholarly work'. In debating the ideas and coming to terms with the impact of the humanism of the neo-Kantian tradition, Bauer further argued that they had to 'apply the Marxist conception of history to very complicated phenomena that defied analysis by any superficial or schematic application of the Marxist method'.[50] On of the most important issues that defied the schematic application of the 'Marxist method' was how to come to terms with nationalism,

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the nation-state, and the demands for recognition of ethnic and national minorities.

Here again, and in spite of the considerable difference in circumstances, interesting parallels can be drawn with contemporary debates in the liberal tradition. Walzer's 'liberalism two', and Taylor's version of a liberalism that is 'hospitable' to difference, are in fact criticisms of traditional liberal orthodoxy ('liberalism one'), which, in Walzer's opinion, is committed in the strongest possible way to individual rights and to a rigorously neutral state.[51] What Walzer and Taylor are saying, and Kymlicka puts even more emphatically, is that the prevailing liberal orthodoxy cannot explain or accommodate the political exercise of difference and that the liberal tradition must be reworked to accommodate the political expression of minority cultures. This is, *mutatis mutandis*, what the Austro-Marxists were saying in relation to orthodox Marxism, and what Bauer set out to do *specifically* in his book.

Bauer's theory of the nation

Bauer's theoretical analysis of the nation is rich, complex, and full of ideas that invite detailed discussion. I shall review some of the most salient conceptual arguments in what is necessarily a selective and abbreviated discussion. This review quite consciously downplays the Marxist dimension of Bauer's ideas, in particular in *The Question of Nationalities*, which he saw above all as a contribution to a Marxist educational enterprise and a Marxist debate, and which generated the most comprehensive polemic on nations and nationalism ever witnessed in the Marxist tradition. As Ananiadis contends,[52] the bulk of Bauer's book consists of a theoretically informed set of historical analyses. The aim of the work is to develop concretely a number of theoretical and historical arguments that implicitly validate the multinational state as a superior form of political organisation. In the struggle of nationalities for supremacy in late imperial Austria, Bauer estimated that there could be no winners, and that without some form of political recognition of the sovereign rights of the various national communities of the Empire, the state would be condemned to constant paralysis or worse.[53]

The vibrant milieu of late imperial Vienna was at the forefront of the intellectual and philosophical debate of the period, and the young Bauer was exposed to lively philosophical and political debates that cut across the boundaries of established theories and disciplines. One such debate was that between Austro-Marxism and neo-Kantianism, and was decisive in generating the analytical categories that permitted Bauer to think his original conceptualisation of the nation. At the centre of Bauer's argument is a clear distinction between nation and state, and a refusal to support the model of the nation-state as a solution to national conflicts. This was highly unusual for his period.

Max Adler's book *Causality and Teleology*,[54] the first volume of the *Marx Studien* series, was centred around an epistemological debate with neo-Kantians,

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and was crucial in shaping Bauer's view of nationalism.[55] To contextualise Bauer's theoretical arguments, it is necessary briefly to sketch Adler's critique of neo-Kantianism.[56] In defending his argument about the irreducibility of the forms of the social, Adler argues that an 'absolute prerequisite' in conceptualis- ing 'man's existence, preservation and development' is the existence of a human community.[57] Adler's concepts of 'societalised humanity' or 'social association' are to be understood in the neo-Kantian fashion as being 'transcendentally given as a category of knowledge'.[58] The neo-Kantian distinction between 'is' and 'ought' is refuted by Adler through a strict reference to relations of causality, thereby rejecting any teleological inference. The 'iron laws of necessity' of classical Marxism are also rejected using the same logic, because they postulate unacceptable forms of metaphysical essentialism. Relations of causality are to be identified by way of what we today recognise as a strict 'deconstruction' of social phenomena and not through ontologically privileged relations of determination.[59]

Adler's *Causality and Teleology* engages with the neo-Kantians of the Marburg and Baden schools as well as the orthodoxy of classical Marxism. With the demise of orthodox Marxism, the second point has only historical value and will not be discussed here. Adler criticises the idealist transcendentalism of the neo-Kantians by sustaining the non-reducible specificity of social processes. He argues that the fundamental neo-Kantian concepts of 'truth' and 'value' are meaningless outside an 'a priori' societalised existence. Adler contended that every essentialist definition of the social arena, be it 'materialist' or 'spiritual', is arbitrary and teleological, because neither 'matter' nor 'spirit' in themselves can be known outside the realm of societalised experience. In a direct rebuff to neo-Kantianism, Adler argues that experience is not an 'a priori', because it is unthinkable outside societalised existence and is therefore 'causally dependent' on social relations. Adler turns the neo-Kantian accusation of Marxism as 'philosophical monism' against the neo-Kantians themselves by maintaining that they fall into the very forms of essentialism they criticise in Marxism when they try to separate the problem of 'objective validity' from the 'reality of experience'.

For Adler, social experience is a condition of human existence because it is based on a form of human cognitive capacity, the 'formal existence' of which is not amenable to causal explanations. A non-societalised individuality is meaningless because individuals always require social referents to assume autonomous existence. 'Forms of individuality' are inherent to the 'form of the social' and the formal relation between the two cannot be deduced causally, in the same way as no causal explanations can clarify general notions of time and space.[60] In the analysis of the social arena, the Adler's point of departure is neither 'abstract individuals' nor 'society', which he considers 'empty abstrac- tions', but what he calls 'societalised men', i.e. the idea that the basis for all sociation is to be found in 'individual consciousness'.[61] For Adler, if human consciousness only manifests itself in the I-form, then this implies that con- sciousness as such is not-I. The totalising effect of consciousness in general is

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only possible through this self-conscious difference in consciousness. It is the bifurcation between the I and content which encounters the I as an object.[62]

It is, then, from Adler's *Causality and Teleology* that Bauer derives the notion of the irreducibility of the forms of the social. Bauer argues that the process of common reciprocal interaction lived in a permanent reciprocal relation generates a national community and expresses itself in an inter-subjective bond that shapes each 'individual national identity'. His purpose is to understand the national community as a discrete unity, one that results from a multi-dimensional ensemble of social forces. National characteristics and differences result from complex processes of differentiation and integration of cultures. The aim is to elaborate a theory which he believes can be argued from a Marxist standpoint and is capable of comprehending nations as a dynamic process of transformation and continuous change.[63] The nation is considered by doctrinaire Marxists and rational liberal individualists as illusory, and by doctrinaire nationalists as natural. Bauer wishes to dispel both misinterpretations by regarding nations and ethnic groups as historical and social constructs.[64]

Bauer begins from what he considers to be the 'concrete expression' of the existence of the national community in each individual member of the nation, namely 'national character'. The concept of 'national character' does not, according to Bauer, exhaust all the possibilities of grouping human beings. Besides national characteristics, all human beings share an awareness of being human, belong to classes, professional groups, interest groups, oppressed groups, etc. All have common characteristics that transcend national differences. He also argues, in the spirit of Marxism, that ties of solidarity unite workers from different nations, but carefully differentiates this solidarity from the concept of 'national character'. For Bauer, the question of cultural bonds between the working class and the bourgeoisie of any given nation is not connected with the question of the attitude of workers to their own bourgeoisie, or to the workers of other national communities.

Bauer recognises that one of the main difficulties with the evasive concept of 'national character' is its monopolisation by ethnocentric and racialist theories, converting it into a metaphysical essence. To avoid what he considers 'transcendentalist·distortions' in employing the concept of national character, Bauer argues that it is always necessary to locate this notion in a historical perspective. National character has been ascribed a transcendental durability that, according to Bauer, must be refuted by historical evidence.

National character is understood, then, as a historically modifiable characteristic, which links members of a national community over a given historical period. That link is not the immutable transference of a national spirit, but the fact that contemporary generations do not operate in a vacuum. They enter a social arena shaped by the circumstances of previous generations. National character can be *modified* by historical forces but also by contemporary experiences, which can result in changes to the culture of the group. For this reason, it cannot simply be referred to the experience of previous generations. The

intersection of both dimensions, the historical and the contemporary, are the central ingredients in determining the present configuration of the national character. National character is, then, a discrete unit of contemporary and historical forces, neither of which can be seen in isolation as a determinant factor, since both are always present in forming national identities.[65] An important misinterpretation of the idea of national character is that even explanations that accept the historical relativity of the term refer to it as a causal explanatory concept. Bauer claims that when he describes a national character, he is not explaining the causes of given actions, but merely accounting for their characteristics.

One immediate problem is that Bauer does not show the difference between 'national character' and what we call today ethnic or national identity. He refers to a form of 'subjective selectivity', but this is not an 'identity' in the sense of a subjective positional definition. Bauer's attempt to relativise 'national character' is not yet sufficient to explain its fluidity. It is also important to recognise the permanent unfixity of relations of causality between national existence, national identity and national character, and the likelihood of an autonomous configuration of the elements involved. This includes the need to redefine the relation between the elements in such a way that permits the development of an analytical logic, which transcends the originally defined relations of causality. Once national character has been identified, Bauer argues that it must be explained in terms of the social and historical conditions that lead to its emergence. To do this, Bauer narrows the descriptiveness of the term by arguing that national character is a determining factor in the sphere of what he calls 'will' (*Wille*). For Bauer, 'will' is exteriorised in every cognitive process through which subjects commonly perceive certain characteristics of a given observable phenomenon, attaching importance only to commonly perceived characteristics and ignoring or giving secondary importance to others. 'Will' is the concrete expression in every subject of the 'societalised' quality of human experience. Human subjectivity is constituted out of social forms of existence (interaction). In this sense, individuality is strictly unthinkable outside the social arena.

This is an interesting concept, rich in associations with Wittgenstein's psychology and with the post-structuralist (Lacanian) notion of liminality. In interpreting Wittgenstein's ideas on perception and interpretation Budd[66] argues that, for Wittgenstein, seeing an aspect is subject to the will, as an object can possess a number of aspects. It is precisely because seeing an aspect, like forming an image, is subject to the will, that it does not teach us something about the external world. This Wittgensteinian idea encapsulates with surprising accuracy Bauer's idea of *Wille* as a cognitive process, which is at the centre of his theory of the nation. For Wittgenstein, 'seeing an aspect' is always a socialised reaction. This argument sits comfortably with Bauer's idea that *Wille* is the societalised expression of human existence. Connolly too articulates a similar idea when he argues that in sharing culture we share, albeit variably and imperfectly, a set of preliminary understandings that infiltrate the structure of perception, judgement and decision.[67] Bhabha also argues that complex strate-

gies of cultural identification and discursive address function in the name of the people or the nation and make then immanent subjects and objects of social narratives.[68]

Bauer links *Wille* with the Kantian notion of 'apperception', which implies the original unity of consciousness as a condition for all objective experience. Yet there is here a transcendental dimension of consciousness, which is precisely what Adler (and Bauer) criticise the neo-Kantians for. Adler and Bauer resolve the issue by strictly relativising this notion of apperception by making it subject to the historical circumstances of each society. *Wille*, or 'national apperception', is a liminal volitional orientation, conditioned by the historical circumstances of every national community. Ananiadis also suggests that Bauer's use of the notion of national apperception is derived from the psychological theories of Johann Friedrich Herbart, for whom apperception is 'the process by which a new experience is assimilated and transformed by the residium of past experiences of an individual to form a new whole'.[69] This may well have provided the link with Wittgenstein's psychology, as Herbart was influential in the Viennese university milieu that nourished both Wittgenstein and Bauer. There is also in Bauer's work a curious anticipation of contemporary arguments about 'hybridity' and the 'third space'.[70] While discussing the case of an individual that participates in two or more nations to an equal degree, Bauer argues that such individuals do not completely belong to any nation, but are an in-between category. These individuals not only possess the culture of two or more nations, but are something distinct – 'cultural hybrids', as it were. Bauer further warns the reader not to be misled by the aversion to such individuals, because often individuals of the greatest stature, including scholars such as Karl Marx and great artists, have been impacted by the cultural spheres of several nations. The argument is not, unfortunately, developed any further.

Once the definition of the sphere of 'will' has been established, Bauer proceeds to conceptualise the notion of 'national character' in a less descriptive manner. The notion that national character is the set of physical and spiritual connotations that characterise co-nationals is then enlarged by the idea that the mechanism which permits the presence of the national character in every member of the national community is a common orientation of 'will'. Consequently, the empirical generalisation called 'national character' is the tangible expression of a 'collective will' resulting from the historical experience of the national community, and exteriorised in each member through a societalised selective perception of external reality. This, according to Bauer, explains the fact that different national communities have different criteria of perception, develop different forms of morality and law, different aesthetic criteria, different notions of 'beautiful' and 'ugly', different ways of perceiving religion, and even different ways of understanding scientific thought.

In the new introduction written to the 1924 edition, Bauer finally breaks away from the neo-Kantian residues in his work, describing them as a 'childhood malady', and expands this notion of the perceptual differences of different national communities. After arguing that it is not difficult to understand the

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'strong resistance' that his use of the notion of national character generates in the Marxist tradition and beyond, Bauer goes on to justify the use of the concept with a number of examples. Here, he heavily relies on what he describes as a 'highly stimulating' book by the anti-republican, devout Catholic and conservative French philosopher of science Pierre Duhem. Duhem compares the way in which the most important 'English' (British) and French physicists conduct their research and finds, in Bauer's words, 'remarkable national differences'. He then defines his main task as being to explain and derive national specificities from the very history of the national community. We can only understand national peculiarities by stripping national character of its essentialised appearance, and by showing that it is nothing but a precipitate of historical experiences which will be modified by subsequent events. Bauer hopes to debunk nationalist myths by strictly contextualising the idea of national character. [71]

However, the national community is not only the result of the historical determination of the conditions of existence; but above all a form of both 'common' and 'communitarian' experience emanating from these conditions. Here Bauer introduces a second conceptual element to his definition of the nation. To capture the contemporary dimensions of historical legacies that have shaped the various national communities, he introduces the idea that the nation is a 'community of fate' (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*). This concept was not invented by Bauer; it was used by Nietzsche[72] and by the philosopher of the unconscious Eduard von Hartmann. In Nietzsche and Hartmann it denotes a series of events not actively sought or desired, but which take place outside or beyond the wilful action of subjects who are nevertheless influenced by its outcome.[73] For Bauer, the term has a related meaning: it implies the liminal presence of historical circumstances which precede and influence awareness and is consequently 'given' to subjects. These subjects can, however, exercise some form of transformative control that results from their contemporary experiences.

It is necessary to discuss the somewhat idiosyncratic use of the term 'community'. Bauer sharply distinguishes two related concepts, that of *community* and that of *homogeneity*, illustrating the difference with a historical example. In the nineteenth century, England and Germany underwent a similar process of capitalist development. The same historical forces crucially influenced the collective experiences of both national communities, but despite similar experiences England and Germany remained separate national communities. The term 'homogeneity of fate' implies a set of social agents being subjected to the same historical forces without necessarily interacting with each other. Bauer uses the example of the working class to clarify this point. Wherever the capitalist mode of production becomes dominant, an industrial proletariat emerges which experiences *the same* conditions of exploitation under capitalism regardless of national location. But in this case it is the *homogeneity of fate* and not the *community of fate* which generated the common character.

A class is not, in Bauer's terminology, a community of fate. Being part of a community of fate is not the same as being subjected to the same fate. A community of fate signifies not only the experience of the same historical

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circumstances, but the experience of those circumstances in a situation of *common reciprocal interaction* This is derived, as Bauer acknowledges, from Kant's Third Analogy of Experience: the principle of community. *All substances so far as they coexist, stand in thoroughgoing community, that is, in mutual interaction.*[74] The Kantian influence as well as the impact of Adler's ideas on this crucial aspect of Bauer's work—the definition of community—is clear, and Bauer still sustained the validity of this Kantian terminology in the new 1924 introduction, where he describes the neo-Kantian influence as a childhood malady.

A national community is a form of communitarian life that has a specific configuration, where the identity of the collective is constituted by the interactive relation of its members, which is then replicated in individual identities. The element of 'interactive reciprocity' is what distinguishes a 'community of fate' from any other form of communitarian life. Garcia Pelayo and Agnelli[75] argue that the concept of *Gemeinschaft* Bauer uses is of Kantian origin, denoting two different dimensions of community life. One of these dimensions is the existence of 'common homogeneous characteristics', best denoted by the Latin term *Communio*, which means a quality of equality of circumstances and homogeneity. The other, which can be denoted by the term *Commercium*, is the existence of a dynamic process of interaction. For Bauer, the nation is to be understood as a community of character in that it is not born out of a homogeneity of fate, but out of a community of fate. This also underlies the significance of language for the nation. With the human beings with which I am in closest communication I manufacture a language and with the human beings with which I have a common language I am in the closest communication.

This unusual way of understanding the concept of community is influenced by Adler's claim that social links logically precede the existence of 'individuality' and 'society'. Consequently, it is the process of interaction that determines the configuration of the social arena as well as the constitution of subjective identities. Bauer argues that the process of common reciprocal interaction lived in a permanent reciprocal relation generates the national community and expresses itself in an intersubjective bond that shapes each 'individual national identity'. For Bauer, language is not a determinant factor in the formation of national communities. In most cases it becomes the communicative medium through which the national community is constituted, but language alone is not an indicator of the presence or absence of a national community.[76]

Bauer's definition of national communities

Having considered several aspects of the process of national development in Bauer's theory, it is possible now to see how the various dimensions of the problematic of national formation are put together in his definition of the nation. It is important to remember that the aim of the earlier work of Adler in the *Marx-Studien* series was directed towards rejecting the forms of essentialism present in both classical Marxism and the transcendentalist essentialism of the

neo-Kantians. Bauer strongly emphasises that his understanding of the formation of the national community is as an *ongoing* and *unfinished* process, and not a classification derived from what he calls the 'materialist' or the 'spiritualist' theories of history.

Refusing to accept any essentialist principle in his conceptualisation of the national question, Bauer opened the way for a multi-dimensional understanding of the national community. This is perhaps another important reason why Bauer's theory has been so consistently misinterpreted. A superficial reading of Bauer's theoretical chapter of his voluminous work is not enough to understand the intellectual aim of his analysis. There are no clichés and ready-made formulae applicable to every circumstance. Bauer's definition of the nation as *the totality of human beings bound together through a community of fate into a community of character* is meaningless unless one follows the painstaking process of reviewing the different dimensions of the complex and not well understood process of national formation.

Bauer locates his work in direct opposition to the three main currents of thought which dominated the conceptualisation of the national question at the time. The first he calls the 'metaphysical theories', in which he includes 'national materialism' and 'national spiritualism'. The second current of thought he calls 'psychological theories'. This refers to those theories 'that seek to discover the essence of the nation in the consciousness of, or the will to, solidarity'—Renan's theory for example. These are the so-called 'voluntaristic' theories of the nation with which Bauer is often mistakenly associated. The third group of theories that Bauer analyses and rejects are the 'empirical' theories, i.e., those theories that theoretically enumerate the essential elements of a nation, and decide whether concrete national communities fit the model by discussing the presence or absence of the enumerated elements.[77]

Discussing these theories, Bauer argues that 'common descent and common culture' are basically derivative categories of the notion of 'common history' in the process of constructing the national character. A common territory is an important condition only as far as it allows for the conditions of interactive relationship to take place. Territorial separation disrupts the unity of the national community because the inter-subjective process required to develop the community of fate cannot take place.

However, 'in the age of printing, the post, telegraph and steamships, this is much less the case than formerly'. With the contemporary expansion of all means of communication it is possible to infer from Bauer's argument that the territorial dimension is even less important. A common language is 'a second order means', the medium through which the community of culture is imagined, re-creating the national community in each subjectivity through common interaction. However, Bauer qualifies this understanding of the role of language to dispel any possible interpretation that language is a 'neutral medium'. Language is not simply a means of transmitting culture, but is itself also an element of culture.

The critical review of these different theories allows Bauer to present the

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originality of his argument. The nation cannot be understood by enumerating a set of categories or by referring to some essential quality. The national community is the end result of a *systemic process* in which different dimensions are brought together, through a common historical development in dialogue with the main facets of contemporary experience. This is the meaning of Bauer's definition of the national community as *human beings bound together through a common fate into a community of character.* Subjective positionality is the expression of societalised existence, and the content of societalised existence results from the structural linkage of a process of 'common reciprocal interaction' and a process of historical development. For Bauer, the national community exists independently of national consciousness. National consciousness is, however, the result of an awareness of the existence of other nations, since the subject becomes conscious of his/her national dimension by comparison with others. This is why national consciousness became a generalised perceptive mechanism only as a result of the process of 'modernity'.

The ideology of multicultural nationalism in Bauer and Renner

In a world of nation-states, the ideologies of multiculturalism and nationalism oppose each other. Nationalists are suspicious of multiculturalism because they believe it subverts the cohesion of the nation. Nationalist writers are concerned to explore how best to ensure the unity and stability of the modern state.[78] In contrast, multiculturalists are hostile to nationalism because they see in the doctrine of the nation-state an asphyxiation of cultural diversity, even if the nation-state is liberal and democratic. Multiculturalists claim that grave injustices to national and ethnic minorities can occur in nation-states without depriving *individual* members of minorities their civil and political rights.[79]

Presented in these terms, the ideologies of multiculturalism and nationalism are antithetical. But can nationalism exist without the goal of building or protecting an independent nation-state? In some ways it is extraordinary that this question is rarely asked, considering that in Europe and the North American continent, there are several cases of successful nationalisms that have refrained from building separate nation-states. As an ideology, nationalism has been variously described as having a 'chameleon like' ability to mutate according to changes in social and ideological circumstances[80] or as a 'thin-centred' ideology that embellishes and sustains the features of its host ideologies.[81] If nationalism in the age of ideologies is suffused with ambiguities and paradoxes[82] why can it not be ambiguous and paradoxical in relation to the nation-state? Why is it that writers who perceptively show the ideological ambiguities of nationalism, nevertheless see it as unequivocally committed to sustaining nation-states?

Here lies the contribution of Bauer to contemporary discussions of nationalism. Ideological constructs are malleable, and the order of their key elements can be rearranged to reflect changing cultural and historical settings.[83] In this vein, Bauer and Renner successfully attempt to deconstruct the relation between nation and state and to reorganise the ideological priorities of nationalism. In the

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ideologies of most nineteenth and twentieth century nationalists, the relation between nation and state was seen as fixed and immutable. The originality of the Bauerian version of nationalism lies in the careful deconstruction of the duality nation–state. Most critics of the nation-state[84] develop their criticism from a cosmopolitan, i.e. 'non-national' stance. Here, nationalism is an expression of false consciousness, a fallacy that must be eradicated. In doing so, these cosmopolitan writers reinforce the fixity of the relation between nation and state, for they oppose at once the nation as a form of human segmentation, and the nation-state as the institutional expression of such undesired segmentation. In sharp contrast, Bauer's powerful indictment of the nation-state begins with a sympathetic discussion of nations and ethnies. There is in Bauer a meticulous historical analysis of the emergence and development of national communities. Contrary to most of his (and our) socialist and liberal contemporaries, he saw in the consummation of his ideological project an expansion and differentiation of national communities:

> ... no nation incorporates foreign elements in unaltered form; each adapts them to its whole being and subjects them to change in the process of assimilation, of intellectual digestion ... The levelling out of differences between the material contents of cultures in no sense means the elimination of national specificity. The consciousness of the specificity of the nation has never been more evident than in our own era, although today each nation without doubt learns a great deal more at a much greater speed from other nations than ever before.[85]

From this Bauer concludes that 'the autonomy of the national community of culture within socialism necessarily means, despite the diminishing of differences between the material contents of cultures, a growing differentiation between the intellectual cultures of the nations'. However, this is very carefully separated from any support for the nation-state. Here Bauer contends that 'the national community exists whether or not the state falls, because it lives within every single individual'. The personality principle and the model for cultural–national autonomy sustain a vigorous critique of the idea of the nation-state, one that has not yet been answered by liberal nationalists.

In spite of the differences in time and location, Bauer developed an incipient theory of multicultural nationalism that incorporates nationalist concerns for the well-being of the nation and recognises the importance of national sentiments. But there is also a sharp critique of the nation-state because it only protects the dominant nation. In contrast, Bauer's multicultural nationalism is non-territorial and therefore affords similar protections to majorities and minorities. In the model for national–cultural autonomy there is a consummation of Taylor's 'politics of recognition' by affording equal value to national majorities and ethnic minorities, and a vindication of democratic politics based on individual free choice and self-determination.

There is also in Bauer a critique of liberal theory but not a wholesale rejection of all its postulates. To be sure, Bauer starts from assuming individual choice in defining affiliation to organised national communities (the personality principle),

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but the idea of individuals rationally and reasonably deciding their national identity is incompatible with Bauer's argument, for he would have dismissed it as an essentialised transcendental a-priori. The very notion of individuality in Bauer and Adler is a historical construct that results from the interactive relation individual–community. National (ethnic) culture is not a matter of choice but of social insertion, without which there are no individuals. The multi-dimensionality of this argument finds echoes in Nira Yuval-Davis's thought-provoking work.[86]

The atomist–centralist argument provides a potent critique of liberal democratic sovereignty. It shows the impossibility of achieving a significant multiethnic and multi-national state without recognising national and ethnic communities as sovereign intermediate categories ('corporations' in Bauer's words), with legal rights and guarantees. This is incompatible with the procedural equality of all individuals in contemporary liberal democracies. It requires instead differential collective rights for ethno-national communities complementing individual rights. The personality principle not only provides a powerful critique of the ideology of the nation-state, but a suggestion of how to overcome its deficiencies. Bauer suggests a multicultural theory of nationhood and ethnicity that integrates historical sentiments, cultural specificity and contemporary circumstances. Here Bauer and Smith[87] are in complete agreement: nations (ethnies) and nationalism are likely to be here for some time to come. The nation-state is a completely different matter.

Notes and References

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