

## IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

national state, then that *means* Hungarians, all of them;<sup>35</sup> it meant a state in which the ultimate locus of sovereignty had to be the collectivity of Hungarian-speakers and readers; and, in due course, the liquidation of serfdom, the promotion of popular education, the expansion of the suffrage, and so on. Thus the 'populist' character of the early European nationalisms, even when led, demagogically, by the most backward social groups, was deeper than in the Americas: serfdom *had* to go, legal slavery was unimaginable – not least because the conceptual model was set in ineradicable place.

35. Not that this was a clear-cut matter. Half the subjects of the Kingdom of Hungary were non-Magyar. Only one third of the serfs were Magyar-speakers. In the early nineteenth century, the high Magyar aristocracy spoke French or German; the middle and lower nobility 'conversed in a dog-Latin strewn with Magyar, but also with Slovak, Serb, and Romanian expressions as well as vernacular German...'; Ignotus, *Hungary*, pp. 45–46, and 81.

## 6

## Official Nationalism and Imperialism

In the course of the nineteenth century, and especially in its latter half, the philological-lexicographic revolution and the rise of intra-European nationalist movements, themselves the products, not only of capitalism, but of the elephantiasis of the dynastic states, created increasing cultural, and therefore political, difficulties for many dynasts. For, as we have seen, the fundamental legitimacy of most of these dynasties had nothing to do with nationalness. Romanovs ruled over Tatars and Letts, Germans and Armenians, Russians and Finns. Habsburgs were perched high over Magyars and Croats, Slovaks and Italians, Ukrainians and Austro-Germans. Hanoverians presided over Bengalis and Québécois, as well as Scots and Irish, English and Welsh. On the continent, furthermore, members of the same dynastic families often ruled in different, sometimes rivalrous, states. What nationality should be assigned to Bourbons ruling in France and

1. It is nice that what eventually became the late British Empire has not been ruled by an 'English' dynasty since the early eleventh century: since then a motley parade of Normans (Plantagenets), Welsh (Tudors), Scots (Stuarts), Dutch (House of Orange) and Germans (Hanoverians) have squatted on the imperial throne. No one much cared until the philological revolution and a paroxysm of English nationalism in World War I. House of Windsor rhymes with House of Schönbrunn or House of Versailles.

## OFFICIAL NATIONALISM AND IMPERIALISM

increasingly acquired a double status: 'universal-imperial' and 'particular-national'. The more the dynasty pressed German in its first capacity, the more it appeared to be siding with its German-speaking subjects, and the more it aroused antipathy among the rest. Yet if it did not so press, indeed made concessions to other languages, above all Hungarian, not only was unification set back, but its German-speaking subjects allowed themselves to feel affronted. Thus it threatened to be hated simultaneously as champion of the Germans and traitor to them. (In much the same way, the Ottomans came to be hated by Turkish-speakers as apostates and by non-Turkish-speakers as Turkifiers.)

Insofar as all dynasts by mid-century were using *some* vernacular as language-of-state,<sup>4</sup> and also because of the rapidly rising prestige all over Europe of the national idea, there was a discernible tendency among the Euro-Mediterranean monarchies to sidle towards a beckoning national identification. Romanovs discovered they were Great Russians, Hanoverians that they were English, Hohenzollerns that they were Germans - and with rather more difficulty their cousins turned Romanian, Greek, and so forth. On the one hand, these new identifications shored up legitimacies which, in an age of capitalism, scepticism, and science, could less and less safely rest on putative sacrality and sheer antiquity. On the other hand, they posed new dangers. If Kaiser Wilhelm II cast himself as 'No. 1 German,' he implicitly conceded that he was *one among many of the same kind as himself*, that he had a representative function, and therefore could, in principle, be a *traitor* to his fellow-Germans (something inconceivable in the dynasty's heyday. Traitor to whom or to what?). In the wake of the disaster that overtook Germany in 1918, he was taken at his implied word. Acting in the name of the German nation, civilian politicians (publicly) and the General Staff (with its usual courage, secretly) sent him packing from the Fatherland to an obscure Dutch suburb. So too Mohammad-Reza Pahlavi, having cast himself, not as

4. One could argue that a long era closed in 1844, when Magyar finally replaced Latin as language-of-state in the Kingdom of Hungary. But, as we have seen, dog-Latin was in fact the *vernacular* of the Magyar middle and lower nobility until well into the nineteenth century.

## IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

Spain, Hohenzollerns in Prussia and Rumania, Wittelsbachs in Bavaria and Greece?

We have also seen that for essentially administrative purposes these dynasties had, at different speeds, settled on certain print-vernaculars as languages-of-state - with the 'choice' of language essentially a matter of unselfconscious inheritance or convenience. The lexicographic revolution in Europe, however, created, and gradually spread, the conviction that languages (in Europe at least) were, so to speak, the personal property of quite specific groups - their daily speakers and readers - and moreover that these groups, imagined as communities, were entitled to their autonomous place in a fraternity of equals. The philological incendiaries thus presented the dynasts with a disagreeable dilemma which did not fail to sharpen over time. Nowhere is this dilemma clearer than in the case of Austro-Hungary. When the enlightened absolutist Joseph II decided early in the 1780s to switch the language of state from Latin to German, 'he did not fight, for instance, against the Magyar language, but he fought against the Latin... He thought that, on the basis of the mediaeval Latin administration of the nobility, no effective work in the interest of the masses could have been carried on. The necessity of a unifying language connecting all parts of his empire seemed to him a peremptory claim. Under this necessity he could not choose any other language than German, the only one which had a vast culture and literature under its sway and which had a considerable minority in all his provinces.'<sup>2</sup> Indeed, 'the Habsburgs were *not* a consciously and consequentially Germanizing power... There were *Habsburgs who did not even speak German*. Even those Habsburg emperors who sometimes fostered a policy of Germanization were not led in their efforts by any nationalistic point of view, but their measures were dictated by the intent of unification and universalism of their empire.'<sup>3</sup> Their essential aim was *Hausmacht*. After the middle of the nineteenth century, however, German

2. Jászai, *The Dissolution*, p. 71. It is interesting that Joseph had refused to take the coronation oath as King of Hungary because this would have committed him to respecting the 'constitutional' privileges of the Magyar nobility. Ignóus, *Hungary*, p. 47.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 137. Emphasis added.

## OFFICIAL NATIONALISM AND IMPERIALISM

American and French histories, so now they became modular in turn.<sup>7</sup> It was only that a certain inventive legerdemain was required to permit the empire to appear attractive in national drag.

To gain some perspective on this whole process of reactionary, secondary modelling, we may profitably consider some parallel, yet usefully contrasting cases.

How uneasy Romanov autocracy initially felt at 'taking to the streets' is excellently shown by Seton-Watson.<sup>8</sup> As noted earlier, the language of the court of St. Petersburg in the eighteenth century was French, while that of much of the provincial nobility was German. In the aftermath of Napoleon's invasion, Count Sergei Uvarov, in an official report of 1832, proposed that the realm should be based on the three principles of Autocracy, Orthodoxy, and Nationality (*trinitatsnost*). If the first two were old, the third was quite novel – and somewhat premature in an age when half the 'nation' were still serfs, and more than half spoke a mother-tongue other than Russian. Uvarov's report won him the post of Minister of Education, but little more. For another half-century Czarism resisted Uvarovian enthusiasms. It was not until the reign of Alexander III (1881–94) that Russification became official dynastic policy: long after Ukrainian, Finnish, Lett and other nationalisms had appeared within the Empire. Ironically enough, the first Russifying measures were taken against precisely those 'nationalities' which had been most *Kaiserlich* – such as the Baltic Germans. In 1887, in the Baltic provinces, Russian was made compulsory as the language of instruction in all state schools above the lowest primary classes, a measure later extended to private schools as well. In 1893, the University of Dorpat, one of the most distinguished colleges in the imperial domains, was closed down because it used German in the lecture-rooms. (Recall that hitherto German had been a provincial language-of-state, not the voice of a popular nationalist movement

7. There is an instructive parallel to all this in the politico-military reforms of Scharnhorst, Clausewitz and Gneisenau who in a self-consciously conservative spirit adapted many of the spontaneous innovations of the French Revolution for the erection of the great modular professionally-officered, standing, conscript army of the nineteenth century.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 83–87.

## IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

Shah, but as Shah of Iran, came to be branded traitor. That he himself accepted, not the verdict, but, as it were, the jurisdiction of the national court, is shown by a small comedy at the moment of his departure into exile. Before climbing the ramp of his jet, he kissed the earth for the photographers and announced that he was taking a small quantity of sacred Iranian soil with him. This take is lifted from a film about Garibaldi, not the Sun King.<sup>5</sup>

The 'naturalizations' of Europe's dynasties – maneuvers that required in many cases some diverting acrobatics – eventually led to what Seton-Watson bitingly calls 'official nationalisms, % of which Czarist Russification is only the best-known example. These 'official nationalisms' can best be understood as a means for combining naturalization with retention of dynastic power, in particular over the huge polyglot domains accumulated since the Middle Ages, or, to put it another way, for stretching the short, tight, skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire. 'Russification' of the heterogeneous population of the Czar's subjects thus represented a violent, conscious welding of two opposing political orders, one ancient, one quite new. (While there is a certain analogy with, say, the Hispanization of the Americas and the Philippines, one central difference remains. The cultural conquistadors of late-nineteenth-century Czarism were proceeding from a self-conscious Machiavellism, while their sixteenth-century Spanish ancestors acted out of an unselfconscious everyday pragmatism. Nor was it for them really 'Hispanization' – rather it was simply *conversion* of heathens and savages.)

The key to situating 'official nationalism' – willed merger of nation and dynastic empire – is to remember that it developed *after*, and in reaction to, the popular national movements proliferating in Europe since the 1820s. If these nationalisms were modelled on

5. From Professor Chehabi of Harvard University I have learned that the Shah was in the first instance imitating his father, Reza Pahlavi, who, on being exiled by London to Mauritius in 1941, included some Iranian soil in his luggage.

6. Seton-Watson, *Nations and States*, p. 148. Alas, the bite extends only to Eastern Europe. Seton-Watson is rightly sardonic at the expense of Romanov and Soviet regimes, but overlooks analogous policies being pursued in London, Paris, Berlin, Madrid and Washington.

## OFFICIAL NATIONALISM AND IMPERIALISM

David Hume, we may be inclined to think this judgement itself a shade anachronistic.<sup>13</sup> It seems to me that the difficulties – and their resolution – lie elsewhere.

On the other hand, there is Nairn's good nationalist tendency to treat his 'Scotland' as an unproblematic, primordial given. Bloch reminds us of the chequered ancestry of this 'entity', observing that the ravages of the Danes and William the Conqueror destroyed forever the cultural hegemony of Northern, Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, symbolized by such luminaries as Alcuin and Bede.<sup>14</sup>

A part of the northern zone was detached for ever from England proper. Cut off from other populations of Anglo-Saxon speech by the settlement of the Vikings in Yorkshire, the lowlands round about the Northumbrian citadel of Edinburgh fell under the domination of the Celtic chiefs of the hills. Thus the bilingual kingdom of Scotland was by a sort of backhanded stroke a creation of the Scandinavian invasions.

And Seton-Watson, for his part, writes that the Scottish language:<sup>15</sup>

developed from the flowing together of Saxon and French, though with less of the latter and with rather more from Celtic and Scandinavian sources than in the south. This language was spoken not only in the east of Scotland but also in northern England. Scots, or 'northern English', was spoken at the Scottish court and by the social elite (who might or might not also speak Gaelic), as well as by the Lowland population as a whole. It was the language of the poets Robert Henryson and William Dunbar. It might have developed as a distinct literary language into modern times had not the union of the crowns in 1603 brought the predominance of southern English through its extension to the court, administration and upper class of Scotland.

13. In a book significantly entitled *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence*, Gary Willis argues in fact that the nationalist Jefferson's thinking was fundamentally shaped, not by Locke, but by Hume, Hutcheson, Adam Smith, and other eminences of the Scottish Enlightenment.

14. *Feudal Society*, I, p. 42.

15. *Nations and States*, pp. 30–31.

## IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

And so on. Seton-Watson even goes so far as to venture that the Revolution of 1905 was 'as much a revolution of non-Russians against Russia as it was a revolution of workers, peasants, and radical intellectuals against autocracy. The two revolts were of course connected: the social revolution was in fact most bitter in non-Russian regions, with Polish workers, Latvian peasants, and Georgian peasants as protagonists.'<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, it would be a big mistake to suppose that since Russification was a *dynastic* policy, it did not achieve one of its main purposes – marshalling a growing 'Great Russian' nationalism behind the throne. And not simply on the basis of sentiment. Enormous opportunities were after all available for Russian functionaries and entrepreneurs in the vast bureaucracy and expanding market that the empire provided.

No less interesting than Alexander III, Russifying Czar of All the Russias, is his contemporary Victoria von Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Queen of England and, late in life, Empress of India. Actually her title is more interesting than her person, for it represents emblematically the thickened metal of a weld between nation and empire.<sup>10</sup> Her reign too marks the onset of a London-style 'official nationalism' which has strong affinities with the Russification being pursued in St. Petersburg. A good way to appreciate this affinity is by longitudinal comparison.

In *The Break-up of Britain*, Tom Nairn raises the problem of why there was no Scottish nationalist movement in the late eighteenth century, in spite of a rising Scots bourgeoisie and a very distinguished Scots intelligentsia.<sup>11</sup> Hobsbawm has peremptorily dismissed Nairn's thoughtful discussion with the remark: 'It is pure anachronism to expect [the Scots] to have demanded an independent state at this time.'<sup>12</sup> Yet if we recall that Benjamin Franklin, who co-signed the American Declaration of Independence, was born five years before

9. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

10. This weld's disintegration is clocked by the procession from British Empire to British Commonwealth, to Commonwealth, to . . . ?

11. *The Break-up of Britain*, pp. 106ff.

12. 'Some Reflections', p. 5.

## OFFICIAL NATIONALISM AND IMPERIALISM

Babington Macaulay became president of this committee. Declaring that 'a single shelf of a good European library is worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia,'<sup>17</sup> he produced the following year his notorious 'Minute on Education.' Luckier than Uvarov, his recommendations went into immediate effect. A thoroughly English educational system was to be introduced which, in Macaulay's own ineffable words, would create 'a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect.'<sup>18</sup> In 1836, he wrote that:<sup>19</sup>

No Hindu who has received an English education ever remains sincerely attached to his religion. It is my firm belief [so they always were] that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence.

There is here, to be sure, a certain naive optimism, which reminds us of Fermin in Bogotá half a century earlier. But the important thing is that we see a long-range (30 years!) policy, consciously formulated and pursued, to turn 'idolaters,' not so much into Christians, as into people culturally English, despite their irremediable colour and blood. A sort of mental miscegenation is intended, which, when compared with Fermin's physical one, shows that, like so much else in the Victorian age, imperialism made enormous progress in daintiness. In any event, it can be safely said that from this point on, all over the expanding empire, if at different speeds, Macaulayism was pursued.<sup>20</sup>

Like Russification, Anglicization naturally also offered rosy

17. We can be confident that this bumptious young middle-class English Uvarov knew nothing about either 'native literature'.

18. See Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State*, pp. 337-38, and Percival Spear, *India, Pakistan and the West*, p. 163.

19. Smith, *India*, p. 339.

20. See, for example, Roff's poker-faced account of the founding in 1905 of the Kuala Kangsar Malay College, which quickly became known, wholly without irony, as 'the Malay Eton.' True to Macaulay's prescriptions, its pupils were drawn from the 'respectable classes' - i.e. the compliant Malay aristocracy. Half the early boarders were direct descendants of various Malay sultans. William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, pp. 100-105.

## IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

The key point here is that already in the early seventeenth century large parts of what would one day be imagined as Scotland were English-speaking and had immediate access to print-English, provided a minimal degree of literacy existed. Then in the early eighteenth century the English-speaking Lowlands collaborated with London in largely exterminating the Gaeltacht. In neither 'northward thrust' was a self-conscious Anglicizing policy pursued - in both cases Anglicization was essentially a byproduct. But combined, they had effectively eliminated, 'before' the age of nationalism, any possibility of a European-style vernacular-specific nationalist movement. Why not one in the American style? Part of the answer is given by Nairn in passing, when he speaks of a 'massive intellectual migration' southwards from the mid eighteenth century onwards.<sup>16</sup> But there was more than an intellectual migration. Scottish politicians came south to legislate, and Scottish businessmen had open access to London's markets. In effect, in complete contrast to the Thirteen Colonies (and to a lesser extent Ireland), *there were no barricades* on all these pilgrims' paths towards the centre. (Compare the clear highway before Latin- and German-reading Hungarians to Vienna in the eighteenth century.) English had yet to become an 'English' language.

The same point can be made from a different angle. It is true that in the seventeenth century London resumed an acquisition of overseas territories arrested since the disastrous ending to the Hundred Years War. But the 'spirit' of these conquests was still fundamentally that of a prenational age. Nothing more stunningly confirms this than the fact that 'India' only became 'British' twenty years after Victoria's accession to the throne. In other words, until after the 1857 Mutiny, 'India' was ruled by a commercial enterprise - not by a state, and certainly not by a nation-state.

But change was on the way. When the East India Company's charter came up for renewal in 1813, Parliament mandated the allocation of 100,000 rupees a year for the promotion of native education, both 'oriental' and 'Western.' In 1823, a Committee of Public Instruction was set up in Bengal, and in 1834, Thomas

16. *The Break-up of Britain*, p. 123.

## OFFICIAL NATIONALISM AND IMPERIALISM

among them . . . He was as much a *stranger in his own native land* as the European residents in the country.

So far, so Macaulay. Much more serious, however, was that such strangers in their native land were *still* condemned – no less fatally than the American creoles – to an ‘irrational’ permanent subordination to the English maturrangos. It was not simply that, no matter how Anglicized a Pal became, he was always barred from the uppermost peaks of the Raj. He was also barred from movement outside its perimeter – laterally, say, to the Gold Coast or Hong Kong, and vertically to the metropole. ‘Completely estranged from the society of his own people’ he might be, but he was under life sentence to serve among them. (To be sure, who ‘they’ included varied with the stretch of British conquests on the subcontinent.<sup>23</sup>)

We shall be looking later at the consequences of official nationalisms for the rise of twentieth-century Asian and African nationalisms. For our purposes here, what needs to be stressed is that Anglicization produced thousands of Pals all over the world. Nothing more sharply underscores the fundamental contradiction of English official nationalism, i.e. the inner incompatibility of empire and nation. I say ‘nation’ advisedly, because it is always tempting to account for these Pals in terms of racism. No one in their right mind would deny the profoundly racist character of nineteenth-century English imperialism. But the Pals also existed in the *white* colonies – Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa. English and Scottish schoolmasters also swarmed there, and Anglicization was also cultural policy. As to Pal, to them too the looping upward path still open to the Scots in the eighteenth century was closed. Anglicized Australian: did not serve in Dublin or Manchester, and not even in Ottawa or Capetown. Nor, until quite late on, could they become Governors

23. It is true that Indian officials were employed in Burma; but Burma was administratively part of British India until 1937. Indians also served in subordinate capacities – especially in the police – in British Malaya and Singapore, but the served as ‘locals and immigrants’, i.e. were not transferable ‘back’ to India’s police forces. Note that the emphasis here is on officials: Indian labourers, merchants, and even professionals, moved in sizeable numbers to British colonies in Southeast Asia, South and East Africa, and even the Caribbean.

## IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

opportunities to armies of middle-class metropolitans (not least Scotsmen!) – functionaries, schoolmasters, merchants, and planters – who quickly fanned out over the vast, permanently sunlit realm. Nonetheless there was a central difference between the empires ruled from St. Petersburg and London. Czardom remained a ‘continuous’ continental domain, confined to the temperate and arctic zones of Eurasia. One could, so to speak, walk from one end of it to the other. Linguistic kinship with the Slavic populations of Eastern Europe, and – to put it pleasantly – historical, political, religious and economic ties with many non-Slavic peoples, meant that *relatively* speaking, the barriers on the road to St. Petersburg were not impermeable.<sup>21</sup> The British Empire, on the other hand, was a grab-bag of primarily tropical possessions scattered over every continent. Only a minority of the subjected peoples had any long-standing religious, linguistic, cultural, or even political and economic ties with the metropole. Juxtaposed to one another in the Jubilee Year, they resembled those random collections of Old Masters hastily assembled by English and American millionaires which eventually turn into solemnly imperial state museums.

The consequences are well illustrated by the bitter recollections of Bipin Chandra Pal, who, in 1932, a century after Macaulay’s ‘Minute’, still felt angry enough to write that Indian Magistrates:<sup>22</sup>

had not only passed a very rigid test on the same terms as British members of the service, but had spent the very best years of the formative period of their youth in England. Upon their return to their homeland, they practically lived in the same style as their brother Civilian, and almost religiously followed the social conventions and the ethical standards of the latter. In those days the India-born [sic] compare our Spanish-American creoles] Civilian practically cut himself off from his parent society, and lived and moved and had his being in the atmosphere so beloved of his British colleagues. *In mind and manners he was as much an Englishman as any Englishman.* It was no small sacrifice for him, because in this way he completely estranged himself from the society of his own people and became socially and morally a pariah

21. The trans-Ural populations were another story.

22. See his *Memoirs of My Life and Times*, pp. 331–32. Emphases added.

men of Chōshū had such mastery that the old blood and thunder slash and cut methods were quite useless against them.<sup>26</sup>

Once in power, however, the rebels, whom we remember today as the Meiji oligarchs, found that their military prowess did not automatically guarantee political legitimacy. If the Tenno ("Emperor") could quickly be restored with the abolition of the Bakufu, the barbarians could not so easily be expelled.<sup>27</sup> Japan's geopolitical security remained just as fragile as before 1868. One of the basic means adopted for consolidating the oligarchy's domestic position was thus a variant of mid-century 'official nationalism', rather consciously modelled on Hohenzollern Prussia-Germany. Between 1868 and 1871, all residual local 'feudal' military units were dissolved, giving Tokyo a centralized monopoly of the means of violence. In 1872, an Imperial Rescript ordered the promotion of universal literacy among adult males. In 1873, well before the United Kingdom, Japan introduced conscription. At the same time, the regime liquidated the samurai as a legally-defined and privileged class, an essential step not only for (slowly) opening the officer corps to all talents, but also to fit the now 'available' nation-of-citizens model. The Japanese peasantry was freed from subjection to the feudal *han*-system and henceforth exploited directly by the state and commercial-agricultural landowners.<sup>28</sup> In 1889, there followed a Prussian-style constitution and eventually universal male suffrage. In this orderly campaign the men of Meiji were aided by three half-fortuitous factors. First was the relatively high degree of Japanese ethnocultural homogeneity resulting from two and a half centuries of isolation and internal pacification by the Bakufu. While the Japanese spoken in Kyūshū was largely incomprehensible in

26. A contemporary Japanese observer, quoted in E. Herbert Norman, *Soldier and Peasant in Japan*, p. 31.

27. They knew this from bitter personal experience. In 1862, an English squadron had levelled half the Satsuma port of Kagoshima; in 1864, a joint American, Dutch, and English naval unit destroyed the Chōshū coastal fortifications at Shimonoeki. John M. Maki, *Japanese Militarism*, pp. 146-47.

28. All this reminds one of those reforms accomplished in Prussia after 1810 in response to Blücher's impassioned plea to Berlin: 'Get us a national army! Vagis, A History of Militarism, p. 130; Cf. Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, ch. 2.

General in Canberra.<sup>24</sup> Only 'English English' did, i.e. members of a half-concealed English nation.

Three years before the East India Company lost its Indian hunting-ground, Commodore Perry with his black ships peremptorily battered down the walls that for so long had kept Japan in self-imposed isolation. After 1854, the self-confidence and inner legitimacy of the Bakufu (Tokugawa Shogunate regime) were rapidly undermined by a conspicuous impotence in the face of the penetrating West. Under the banner of Sonnō Jōi (Revere the Sovereign, Expel the Barbarians), a small band of middle-ranking samurai, primarily from the Satsuma and Chōshū *han*, finally overthrew it in 1868. Among the reasons for their success was an exceptionally creative absorption, especially after 1860, of the new Western military science systematized since 1815 by Prussian and French staff professionals. They were thus able to make effective use of 7,300 ultra-modern rifles (most of them American Civil War scrap), purchased from an English arms-merchant.<sup>25</sup> 'In the use of guns . . . the

24. To be sure, by late Edwardian times, a few 'white colonials' did migrate to London and become members of Parliament or prominent press-lords.

25. Here the key figure was Ōmura Masujirō (1824-1869), the so-called 'Father of the Japanese Army'. A low-ranking Chōshū samurai, he started his career by studying Western medicine through Dutch-language manuals. (It will be recalled that until 1854 the Dutch were the only Westerners permitted access to Japan, and this access was limited essentially to the island of Deshima off the Bakufu-controlled port of Nagasaki.) On graduating from the Tekiyuku in Osaka, then the best Dutch-language training centre in the country, he returned home to practise medicine - but without much success. In 1853, he took a position in Uwajima as instructor in Western learning, with a foray to Nagasaki to study naval science. (He designed and supervised the building of Japan's first steamship on the basis of written manuals.) His chance came after Perry's arrival; he moved to Edo in 1856 to work as an instructor at what would become the National Military Academy and at the Bakufu's top research office for the study of Western texts. His translations of European military works especially on Napoleon's innovations in strategy and tactics, won him fame and recall to Chōshū in 1860 to serve as military adviser. In 1864-65, he proved the relevance of his writing as a successful commander in the Chōshū civil war. Subsequently he became the first Meiji Minister of War, and drew up the regime's revolutionary plans for mass conscription and elimination of the samurai as a legal caste. For his pains he was assassinated by an outraged samurai. See Albert M. Craig, *Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration*, especially pp. 202-204, 267-280.

## OFFICIAL NATIONALISM AND IMPERIALISM

propagandized through schools and print, were extremely valuable in creating the general impression that the conservative oligarchy was an authentic representative of the nation of which Japanese were coming to imagine themselves members.

That this nationalism took on an aggressive imperialist character, even outside ruling circles, can best be accounted for by two factors: the legacy of Japan's long isolation and the power of the official-national model. Maruyama shrewdly points out that all nationalisms in Europe arose in the context of a traditional pluralism of interacting dynastic states — as I put it earlier, Latin's European universalism never had a political correlate.<sup>30</sup>

National consciousness in Europe therefore bore from its inception the imprint of a consciousness of international society. It was a self-evident premise that disputes among sovereign states were conflicts among independent members of this international society. Precisely for this reason war, since Grotius, has come to occupy an important and systematic place in international law.

Centuries of Japanese isolation, however, meant that.<sup>31</sup>

An awareness of equality in international affairs was totally absent. The advocates of expulsion [of the barbarians] viewed international relations from positions within the national hierarchy based on the supremacy of superiors over inferiors. Consequently, when the premises of the national hierarchy were transferred horizontally into the international sphere, international problems were reduced to a single alternative: conquer or be conquered. In the absence of any higher normative standards with which to gauge international relations, power politics is bound to be the rule and yesterday's timid defensiveness will become today's unrestrained expansionism.

Secondly, the oligarchy's prime models were the self-naturalized dynasties of Europe. Insofar as these dynasties were more and more defining themselves in national terms, while at the same time

30. Maruyama Masao, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, p. 13.  
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 139-40.

## IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

Honshū, and even Edo-Tokyo and Kyoto-Ōsaka found verbal communication problematic, the half-Sinified ideographic reading-system was long in place throughout the islands, and thus the development of mass literacy through schools and print was easy and uncontroversial. Second, the unique antiquity of the imperial house (Japan is the only country whose monarchy has been monopolized by a single dynasty throughout recorded history), and its emblematic Japanese-ness (contrast Bourbons and Habsburgs), made the exploitation of the Emperor for official-nationalist purposes rather simple.<sup>29</sup> Third, the penetration of the barbarians was abrupt, massive, and menacing enough for most elements of the politically-aware population to rally behind a programme of self-defence conceived in the new national terms. It is worth emphasizing that this possibility had everything to do with the timing of Western penetration, i.e. the 1860s as opposed to the 1760s. For by then, in dominant Europe, the 'national community' had been coming into its own for half a century, in both popular and official versions. In effect, self-defence could be fashioned along lines and in accordance with what were coming to be 'international norms.'

That the gamble paid off, in spite of the terrible sufferings imposed on the peasantry by the ruthless fiscal exactions required to pay for a munitions-based programme of industrialization, was certainly due in part to the single-minded determination of the oligarchs themselves. Fortunate to come to power in an era in which numbered accounts in Zürich lay in an undreamed-of future, they were not tempted to move the exacted surplus outside Japan. Fortunate to rule in an age when military technology was still advancing at a relative amble, they were able, with their catch-up armaments programme, to turn Japan into an independent military power by the end of the century. Spectacular successes by Japan's conscript army against China in 1894-5, and by her navy against Czardom in 1905, plus the annexation of Taiwan (1895) and Korea (1910), all consciously

29. But I have been informed by scholars of Japan that recent excavations of the earliest royal tombs suggest strongly that the family may originally have been — horrors! — Korean. The Japanese government has strongly discouraged further research on these sites.



## OFFICIAL NATIONALISM AND IMPERIALISM

and, after the outbreak of the Pacific War, Burmese, Indonesians and Filipinos, were subjected to policies for which the European model was an established working practice. And just as in the British Empire, Japanified Koreans, Taiwanese or Burmese had their passages to the metropole absolutely barred. They might speak and read Japanese perfectly, but they would never preside over prefectures in Honshū, or even be posted outside their zones of origin.

Having considered these three varied cases of 'official nationalism', it is important to stress that the model could be self-consciously followed by states with no serious great power pretensions, so long as they were states in which the ruling classes or leading elements in them felt threatened by the world-wide spread of the nationally-imagined community. A comparison between two such states, Siam and Hungary-within-Austro-Hungary, may prove instructive.

Meiji's contemporary, the long-reigning Chulalongkorn (r. 1868-1910), defended his realm from Western expansionism in a style that differed markedly from that of his Japanese opposite number.<sup>32</sup> Squeezed between British Burma and Malaya, and French Indochina he devoted himself to a shrewd manipulative diplomacy rather than attempting to build up a serious war machine. (A Ministry of War was not established until 1894.) In a way that reminds one of eighteenth-century Europe, his armed forces were primarily motley array of Vietnamese, Khmer, Lao, Malay, and Chinese mercenaries and tributaries. Nor was anything much done to push official nationalism through a modernized educational system. Indeed, primary education was not made compulsory till more than a decade after his death, and the country's first university was not set up until 1917, four decades after the founding of the Imperial University in Tokyo. Nonetheless, Chulalongkorn regarded himself as a modernizer. But his prime models were not the United Kingdom or Germany, but rather the colonial *beamtenstaaten* of the Dutch Ea-

## IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

expanding their power outside Europe, it is not surprising that the model should have been understood imperially.<sup>32</sup> As the parcellization of Africa at the Congress of Berlin (1885) showed, great nations were global conquerors. How plausible then to argue that, for Japan to be accepted as 'great', she too should turn Tennō into Emperor and launch overseas adventures, even if she was late to the game and had a lot of catching up to do. Few things give one a sharper sense of the way these restudues impinged on the consciousness of the reading population than the following formulation by the radical-nationalist ideologue and revolutionary Kita Ikki (1884-1937), in his very influential *Nihon Kaizō Hōm Taikō* [Outline for the Reconstruction of Japan], published in 1924:<sup>33</sup>

As the class struggle within a nation is waged for the readjustment of unequal distinctions, so war between nations for an honorable cause will reform the present unjust distinctions. The British Empire is a millionaire possessing wealth all over the world; and Russia is a great landowner in occupation of the northern half of the globe. Japan with her scattered fringe [sic] of islands is one of the proletariat, and she has the right to declare war on the big monopoly powers. The socialists of the West contradict themselves when they admit the right of class struggle to the proletariat at home and at the same time condemn war, waged by a proletariat among nations, as militarism and aggression . . . If it is permissible for the working class to unite to overthrow unjust authority by bloodshed, then unconditional approval should be given to Japan to perfect her army and navy and make war for the rectification of unjust international frontiers. In the name of rational social democracy Japan claims possession of Australia and Eastern Siberia.

It remains only to add that, as the empire expanded after 1900, Japanification à la Macaulay was self-consciously pursued as state policy. In the interwar years Koreans, Taiwanese and Manchurians,

32. Unluckily, the only alternative to the officially-nationalizing *dynastic* states of the time - Austro-Hungary - was not among the powers with a significant presence in the Far East.

33. As translated and cited in Richard Storry, *The Double Patriots*, p. 38.

34. The following section is a condensed version of part of my 'Studies of the Thai State: the State of Thai Studies', in Eliczer B. Ayal (ed.), *The State of Thai Studies*.