

Editorial Foreword

ETHNIC SEPARATISM. Regionalism and separatism stand among the surprises of modern society. The effectiveness of their resistance to national governments, to centralization and bureaucracy, and to uniformity requires some rethinking of old assumptions. Factors commonly separated for reasons of analytic convenience and scholarly convention – such as ethnic identity, religious loyalty, economic development, and political mobilization – turn out to be closely connected; and it may even be that the central question should be turned around so as to ask how it is that Western states succeeded in making separatism seem exceptional, its very existence a sign of weakness and backwardness.

In this issue Donald L. Horowitz seeks to establish patterns among the varieties of contemporary ethnic separatism by distinguishing between movements in relatively advanced and in backward regions, and between those based on elite and on mass discontents. The result is a model of remarkable range and clarity. Applied especially to new nations (whose borders often continue colonial boundaries indifferent to indigenous culture), it nicely complements Gourevitch's provocative analysis of "peripheral nationalisms" in contemporary Europe and Canada (21:3). Horowitz seeks to explain where separatist movements will arise and succeed or fail, accepting their ethnic identities as defined by the participants; Gourevitch focussed on problems of political mobilization. The difference in approach is important, and we need to consider whether the questions to be asked about regionalism vary with particular institutional and cultural traditions or differ between separatism in new states and older, established ones. Should peripheral nationalism and ethnic separatism be understood as essentially the same phenomenon (one term applied close to home and the other to more distant cases) or as quite distinct? Possibly separatism benefits from important peculiarities – some of them quite admirable – of modern society: The threatened identity of Mayans and medieval Jews (see Clendinnen and Sharot, 22:3) had limited opportunity for defense through political separatism; many modern states, however, apparently cannot or dare not control their minorities (see Smootha on Israel and Northern Ireland, 22:2).

Contiguous cultures, of course, are rarely so distinct as separatists pretend; and the ways of measuring differences or asserting uniqueness vary greatly from place to place. The interweaving of culture and history that demarks the German Democratic Republic (Pletsch, 21:3) seems subtler and more ideological than those factors of language, religion, culture, and place that make Quebec different from the rest of Canada. Rudy Fenwick does not need to deal so much with what the differences are or even why they have lasted but can address the question of why differences that once led to demands for

specific concessions now lead to talk of autonomy or separation. In tackling that question he finds Hechter's ideas about the cultural division of labor and internal colonialism (see the debate of Hechter and Sloan, 21:1) particularly helpful and makes use of earlier writings on consociational democracy. Both Fenwick and Horowitz are thus able to build on previous work and even to employ much of the framework of modernization in assessing political movements that were themselves largely unanticipated in the first generation of writing on modernization.

THE POLITICS OF PROTEST IN RURAL COMMUNITIES. For the synthesizing outsider – missionary, reformer, or social scientist – the political responses of peasant societies are frustrating in their complexity. Peasant political activity receives the most attention, of course, when it makes itself felt in the larger society, especially in the drama of the great revolutions of France, Russia, and China (Skocpol, 18:2). Recognition of the fateful importance of peasant politics, in a world rich in rural revolts, has led to impressive general statements about the conditions for various kinds of agrarian upheaval (see Skinner, 13:3, and Rambo, 19:2, on open and closed corporate societies, and the criticism of Jeffrey Paige's *Agrarian Revolution* by Somers and Goldfrank, 21:3). In societies with organized, national political movements, the issue becomes one of which peasants can be mobilized and how – a subject that lends itself to relatively precise comparative analysis, as in the articles on Latin America by Singelmann, Wasserstrom, and Waterbury (17:4), and on the Balkans by Denich, Mouzelis, and Ferguson (18:1). There is much to protest against, however, even in societies without a modern state, and it should not be surprising to find that the forms of resistance vary in different societies. Michael Adas identifies one of these forms as “avoidance protest,” locates it in the “contest state” of Southeast Asia, and shows how its efficiency was eroded by the development through colonialism of a more bureaucratic and centralized rule. As he notes, his picture of rural politics comes close at points to issues debated by Blok and Hobsbawm (14:4). Like them, he finds that the pattern of protest modernizes along with the state.

In a centralized, national state, however, the rural village is likely (especially in the eyes of urban politicians) to seem pathetically out of touch with the great issues of national political life. But Peter McPhee's close study of tiny Rodès shows that the broad lines of national conflict connected neatly to local competition for prestige and influence and to differences of religion, occupation, and agricultural crop among a few hundred people who knew each other well. In this sense the experience of the great Revolution (Hunt, 18:3) was repeated in milder form. Much of the vigor of national politics lies in the reality of local conflict (and vice versa), even without the aid of modern parties (note Weingrod and Morin on Sardinia, 13:3, and Davis's critique of Banfield, 12:3).