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## *Introduction*

# A RETURN TO NATIONALISM

POLITICS IN BRITAIN AND AMERICA have taken a turn toward nationalism. This has been troubling to many, especially in educated circles, where global integration has long been viewed as a requirement of sound policy and moral decency. From this perspective, Britain's vote to leave the European Union and the "America first" rhetoric coming out of Washington seem to herald a reversion to a more primitive stage in history, when war-mongering and racism were voiced openly and permitted to set the political agenda of nations. Fearing the worst, public figures, journalists, and academics have deplored the return of nationalism to American and British public life in the harshest terms.

But nationalism was not always understood to be the evil that current public discourse suggests. Until only a few decades ago, a nationalist politics was commonly associated with broad-mindedness and a generous spirit. Progressives regarded Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and the Atlantic Charter of Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill as beacons of hope for mankind—and this precisely because they were considered

expressions of nationalism, promising national independence and self-determination to enslaved peoples around the world. Conservatives from Teddy Roosevelt to Dwight Eisenhower likewise spoke of nationalism as a positive good, and in their day Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher were welcomed by conservatives for the “new nationalism” they brought to political life. In other lands, statesmen from Mahatma Gandhi to David Ben-Gurion led nationalist political movements that won widespread admiration and esteem as they steered their peoples to freedom.<sup>1</sup>

Surely, the many statesmen and intellectuals who embraced nationalism a few generations ago knew something about this subject, and were not simply trying to drag us back to a more primitive stage in our history, to war-mongering and racism. What, then, did they see in nationalism? There have been surprisingly few attempts, whether in the public sphere or in academia, to answer this question.

My own background allows me some insight into the subject. I have been a Jewish nationalist, a Zionist, all my life.<sup>2</sup> Like most Israelis, I inherited this political outlook from my parents and grandparents. My family came to Jewish Palestine in the 1920s and early 1930s with the aim of establishing an independent Jewish state there. They succeeded, and I have lived most of my life in a country that was established by nationalists, and has been governed largely by nationalists to this day. Over the years, I have known a great many nationalists, including public figures and intellectuals both from Israel and from other countries. And while not everyone among them has been to my taste, on the whole these are people I deeply admire—for their loyalty and courage, their good sense, and their moral decency. Among them, nationalism is not some unfathomable political

illness that periodically takes over countries for no good reason and to no good end, as many in America and Britain seem to think these days. It is instead a familiar political theory on which they were raised, a theory of how the political world should be ordered.

What is this nationalist political theory about? The *nationalism* I grew up with is a principled standpoint that regards the world as governed best when nations are able to chart their own independent course, cultivating their own traditions and pursuing their own interests without interference. This is opposed to *imperialism*, which seeks to bring peace and prosperity to the world by uniting mankind, as much as possible, under a single political regime. I do not suppose that the case for nationalism is unequivocal. Considerations can be mustered in favor of each of these theories. But what cannot be done without obfuscation is to avoid choosing between the two positions: Either you support, in principle, the ideal of an international government or regime that imposes its will on subject nations when its officials regard this as necessary; or you believe that nations should be free to set their own course in the absence of such an international government or regime.<sup>3</sup>

This debate between nationalism and imperialism became acutely relevant again with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. At that time, the struggle against Communism ended, and the minds of Western leaders became preoccupied with two great imperialist projects: the European Union, which has progressively relieved member nations of many of the powers usually associated with political independence; and the project of establishing an American “world order,” in which nations that do not abide by international law will be coerced into doing so, principally by means of American military might. These

are imperialist projects, even though their proponents do not like to call them that, for two reasons: First, their purpose is to remove decision-making from the hands of independent national governments and place it in the hands of international governments or bodies. And second, as you can immediately see from the literature produced by the individuals and institutions supporting these endeavors, they are consciously part of an imperialist political tradition, drawing their historical inspiration from the Roman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the British Empire. For example, Charles Krauthammer's argument for American "Universal Dominion," written at the dawn of the post-Cold War period, calls for America to create a "super-sovereign," which will preside over the permanent "depreciation . . . of the notion of sovereignty" for all nations on earth. Krauthammer adopts the Latin term *pax Americana* to describe this vision, invoking the image of the United States as the new Rome: Just as the Roman Empire supposedly established a *pax Romana* (or "Roman peace") that obtained security and quiet for all of Europe, so America would now provide security and quiet for the entire world.<sup>4</sup>

This flowering of imperialist political ideals and projects in the last generation should have sparked a rigorous debate between nationalists and imperialists over how the political world should be organized. But until very recently, a discussion of this kind was largely avoided. Since 1990, when Margaret Thatcher was deposed by her own party for expressing doubts about the European Union, virtually no one in a position of influence in either America or Europe has showed much interest in picking a fight with the broad vision at the heart of these twin empire-building projects.<sup>5</sup> This uncanny unanimity allowed both the

European Union and American "world order" to move forward without triggering an explosive public debate.

At the same time, political and intellectual spokesmen for these projects remained keenly aware that Europeans might not relish the prospect of a renewed "German empire," even one that was nominally governed from Brussels. They were mindful, too, that Americans have often balked at the idea of an "American empire." As a result, almost all public discussion of these efforts was conducted in a murky newspeak riddled with euphemisms such as "new world order," "ever-closer union," "openness," "globalization," "global governance," "pooled sovereignty," "rules-based order," "universal jurisdiction," "international community," "liberal internationalism," "transnationalism," "American leadership," "American century," "unipolar world," "indispensable nation," "hegemon," "subsidiarity," "play by the rules," "the right side of history," "the end of history," and so on.<sup>6</sup> All of this endured for a generation—until finally the meaning of these phrases began to become clear to a broad public, with the results that we see before us.

Whether the outpouring of nationalist sentiment in Britain and America will, in the end, be for the best, remains to be seen. But perhaps we can all agree on this: The time for vacuous talk is past. The debate between nationalism and imperialism is upon us. Imperialism and nationalism are formidable and opposed ideals that have contended with one another in the past, and they have resumed their old conflict in our day. Each of these points of view deserves to be thought about carefully and with due respect, which includes speaking about them in straightforward, unambiguous terms so we can all understand what we are talking about. Let us hope that this debate, so long

overdue, is conducted in a manner that is at once frank, reasoned, and clear.

I have written this book so that we have a statement of the reasons for being a nationalist.<sup>7</sup> In the interest of contributing to a discussion that is as clear and comprehensible as possible, I will understand “globalism” for what it obviously is—a version of the old imperialism. And in the same way, I will not waste time trying to make nationalism prettier by calling it “patriotism,” as many do today in circles where nationalism is considered something unseemly.<sup>8</sup> Normally, *patriotism* refers to the love or loyalty of an individual for his or her own independent nation. The term *nationalism* can be used in much this way as well, as when we speak of Mazzini as an Italian nationalist or of Gandhi as an Indian nationalist. But nationalism can also be something more than this. There is, as I have said, a long tradition of using this term to refer to a theory of the best political order—that is, to an anti-imperialist theory that seeks to establish a world of free and independent nations. That is how I will be using it in this book.

Once events are seen in light of this long-standing confrontation between two irreconcilably opposed ways of thinking about political order, the entire subject becomes much easier to understand, and a more intelligent conversation can emerge.

My argument will be as follows:

In Part One of the book, “Nationalism and Western Freedom,” I offer a basic historical framework for understanding the confrontation between imperialism and nationalism as it has developed among the Western nations. I introduce the distinction between a political order based on the *national state*, which seeks to rule over one nation alone; and one whose purpose is to bring peace and prosperity by uniting mankind

under a single political regime, which is an *imperial state*.<sup>9</sup> This distinction is central to the political thought of the Hebrew Bible (or “Old Testament”), and in the wake of the Reformation it inspired the renunciation of the authority of the Holy Roman Empire by national states such as England, the Netherlands, and France. Thus began a period of four centuries during which the peoples of Western Europe and America lived under a new Protestant construction of the political world, in which national independence and self-determination came to be regarded as foundational principles. Indeed, these things came to be viewed as among the most precious human possessions and the basis for all our freedoms. An order of independent nations would permit diverse forms of self-government, religion, and culture in a “world of experiments” that would benefit all mankind.

As late as the Second World War, many still believed that the principle of national freedom was the key to a just, diverse, and relatively peaceful world. But Hitler changed all that, and today we live in the aftermath, in which a simplistic narrative, ceaselessly repeated, asserts that “nationalism caused two world wars and the Holocaust.” And who, in fact, would want to be a nationalist if nationalism means supporting racism and bloodshed on an unimaginable scale?

With nationalism thus tarred as having caused the greatest evils of our age, it is not surprising that the old intuitions favoring national independence have been gradually attenuated and finally even discredited. Today, many have come to regard an intense personal loyalty to the national state and its independence as something not only unnecessary but morally suspect. They no longer regard national loyalties and traditions as providing a sound basis for determining the laws we live by, for

regulating the economy and making decisions about defense and security, for establishing public norms concerning religion and education, or for deciding who gets to live in what part of the world. The new world they envision is one in which liberal theories of the rule of law, the market economy, and individual rights—all of which evolved in the domestic context of national states such as Britain, the Netherlands, and America—are regarded as universal truths and considered the appropriate basis for an international regime that will make the independence of the national state unnecessary.<sup>10</sup> What is being proposed, in other words, is a new “liberal empire” that will replace the old Protestant order based on independent national states. It is an empire that is supposed to save us from the evils of nationalism.

But have supporters of the new imperialism correctly described what nationalism is and where it comes from? Are they right in attributing to nationalism the greatest evils of the last century? And is a renewed imperialism really the solution?

In my view, all these things appear exceedingly doubtful. And in Part Two, “The Case for the National State,” I argue for regarding a world based on independent national states as the best political order, in the process showing why we should reject the imperialism that is now so much in fashion. This part of the book offers a philosophy of political order based on a comparison of the three rival ways of organizing the political world that are known to us from experience: the order of tribes and clans that is found in virtually all pre-state societies; an international order under an imperial state; and an order of independent national states.

Most recent attempts to compare a “globalist” political order with a world of national states have been focused on the proposed economic and security advantages of a unified legal

regime for the entire world. But according to the view I defend here, arguments based on economics and security are too narrow to provide an adequate answer to the question of the best political order. In reality, much of what takes place in political life is motivated by concerns arising from our membership in collectives such as families, tribes, and nations. Human beings are born into such collectives or adopt them later in life, and are tied to them by powerful bonds of mutual loyalty among their members. In fact, we come to regard these collectives as an integral part of ourselves. Many, if not most, political aims are derived from responsibilities or duties that we feel we have, not to ourselves as individuals, but to an extended “self” that incorporates our family, tribe, or nation. These include a concern for the lives and property of members of the collective to which we are loyal. But we are also powerfully motivated by shared concerns that are not physical in this way: the need to maintain the internal cohesiveness of the family, tribe, or nation, and the need to strengthen its unique cultural inheritance and pass it on to the next generation.

We cannot accurately describe these dimensions of human political motivation in terms of the individual’s desire to protect his life, personal freedom, and property. Each of us in fact wants and needs something else in addition, which I suggest we call *collective self-determination*: the freedom of the family, tribe, or nation. This is the freedom that we feel when the collective to which we are loyal gains in strength, and develops those special qualities and characteristics that give it unique significance in our eyes.

In the liberal political tradition, the desire and need for such collective self-determination tends to be regarded as primitive and dispensable. It is assumed that with the advent of modernity,

individuals free themselves from motivations of this kind. But I will argue that nothing like this actually happens. British and American concepts of individual liberty are not universals that can be immediately understood and desired by everyone, as is often claimed. They are themselves the cultural inheritance of certain tribes and nations. Americans or British who seek the extension of these concepts around the world continue to give voice to the age-old desire for collective self-determination, which moves them to want to see their own cultural inheritance grow in strength and influence—even if it means destroying the inheritance of others who may see things differently.

My argument points to a number of decisive advantages of organizing the political world around independent national states. Among others, I suggest that the order of national states offers the greatest possibility of collective self-determination; that it inculcates an aversion to the conquest of foreign nations, and opens the door to a tolerance of diverse ways of life; and that it establishes a life of astonishingly productive competition among nations as each strives to attain the maximal development of its abilities and those of its individual members. In addition, I find that the powerful mutual loyalties that are at the heart of the national state give us the only known foundation for the development of free institutions and individual liberties.

These and other considerations suggest that a world of independent national states is the best political order to which we can aspire. This does not mean, however, that we should endorse a universal right to self-determination, as Woodrow Wilson proposed. Not all of the thousands of stateless peoples in the world can or will have political independence, so what place should the principle of national independence have in

the affairs of nations? I conclude Part Two by considering what can be the relevance of the order of national states for a real-world international arena in which political independence cannot be applied always and everywhere.

The argument most commonly made against a nationalist politics is that it encourages hatred and bigotry. And there is certainly some truth in this: In every nationalist movement, one finds individuals who are haters and bigots. But what conclusion should we draw from this fact? To my mind, its significance is weakened by the realization that universal political ideals—of the kind that are so prominent, for example, in the European Union—seem invariably to generate hatred and bigotry to at least the same degree as nationalist movements. In Part Three, “Anti-Nationalism and Hate,” I investigate this phenomenon, comparing the hatred between rival national or tribal groups that feel threatened by one another, with the hatred that proponents of imperialist or universalist ideologies feel toward national or tribal groups that refuse to accept their claim to be bringing salvation and peace to the world. The most famous example of the hatred generated by imperialist or universalist ideologies is perhaps Christian anti-Semitism. But Islam, Marxism, and liberalism have proved themselves quite capable of inflaming similarly vicious hatreds against groups that are determined to resist the universal doctrines they propose. In fact, I suggest that liberal-imperialist political ideals have become among the most powerful agents fomenting intolerance and hate in the Western world today. This is not itself a recommendation for nationalism. But it does suggest that hatred may be endemic to political movements in general, and that the dispute between nationalism and imperialism should be decided on other grounds.

In the Conclusion, "The Virtue of Nationalism," I offer some brief remarks on the relationship between nationalism and personal character. All my life, I have heard it said that nationalism corrupts the human personality. This is an opinion I have heard from Christians and Muslims, liberals and Marxists, all of whom consider nationalism to be a vice because it seeks to raise barriers among people, when we should be tearing them down. My own understanding is different. In my father's house I was taught that to be a nationalist is a virtue. I explain how this can be so, showing that an orientation toward an order of independent nations can pave the way for certain positive traits of character that are more difficult, if not impossible, to attain so long as one remains committed to the dream of empire.

MUCH REMAINS UNCERTAIN ABOUT the exact course that the revived nationalism in Britain, America, and other nations will take. But whatever direction the political winds may yet turn, it is certain that the fault line that has been uncovered at the heart of Western public life is not going away. The politics of nations are rearranging themselves along this fault, dividing those who wish to retain the old nationalist foundations of our political world from educated elites who have, to one degree or another, become committed to a future under an imperial order. At this time, then, there can hardly be a subject more worthy of careful attention than that of nationalism and imperialism.

In addressing this subject, I will employ and develop political concepts such as *nation*, *empire*, *independence*, *national freedom*, *self-determination*, *loyalty*, *tribe*, *tradition*, and *toleration*. Many of these terms have a somewhat antiquated feel to them, but I ask the reader's patience in this regard. It is true that these and

related concepts have been largely sidelined in recent years in favor of a discourse that seeks to understand political problems almost entirely in terms of the *state*, *equality*, *personal freedom*, *rights*, *consent*, and *race*. But this constriction in our political vision is itself one of the principal difficulties facing us today. The political world cannot be reduced to these terms, and the attempt to do so induces blindness in crucial areas—blindness, followed by disorientation when we begin colliding with things that are still quite real, even if we cannot see them any longer. A broader range of political concepts, updated for use at this time, can do much to restore the full range of our vision and dispel the confusion that has overtaken us. Once we can see the roads clearly, deciding which way to go becomes easier as well.

### VIII: Two Types of Political Philosophy

GREEK POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY IS especially attentive to the question of the best regime or the best form of government, and modern liberal political thought maintains this concern with how government should be structured. This kind of inquiry assumes that human beings will organize themselves as a *state*—that is, a community sufficiently cohesive that it can be, and in fact is, ruled by a single standing government, independent of other governments. It then proceeds to ask what form the government of the state should have: Should the state be a monarchy, an aristocratic republic, or a democracy? Should the authority of the state be concentrated in one branch of government or dispersed among several? Should the state be constrained by a written constitution, and who should determine when it has been violated? Should the state guarantee basic rights and liberties to the individual, and if so, what are they?

These and similar questions assume the existence of a cohesive and independent state. But political philosophy can also ask other, more fundamental questions—questions that recognize that human beings have not always lived in internally unified and independent states, and that do not take the existence of the state as a given. I have in mind questions such as the following: What allows a community to be sufficiently cohesive to be ordered as a state? Is the state formed when independent individuals consent to living under government, or through the

unification of previously existing cohesive communities? Is the state really the best institution for ordering human life, or are there other forms of political order, such as a clan or feudal order, that are better? And if the state is the best form of political order, should authority be in the hands of one universal state or dispersed among many competing states?

When these questions are taken into account, we see that political philosophy is naturally divided into two subjects, one more fundamental than the other. One subject is the *philosophy of government*, which seeks to determine the best form of government, given the existence of a state with a high degree of internal unity and independence. Prior to this is the *philosophy of political order*, which seeks to understand the causes of political order, and on the basis of this understanding, to determine what are the different forms of political order available to us and which of them is best.

Individuals who are confident of the cohesion and independence of the state in which they live are naturally attracted to the philosophy of government. After all, if the state is assumed to be permanent, what student of politics would not want to get to work determining the kind of government it should have?

But philosophy of government can be misleading and even pernicious if not preceded by a careful study of the causes of political order. An iron law governing the operation of human reason is this: Whatever is assumed without argument comes to be regarded as self-evident, whether it is true or false. This is no less the case in the philosophy of government. Since this discipline begins by assuming the existence of a cohesive and independent state, it trains the minds of those who study it to suppose that they see cohesive and independent states all around them, not only in theory, but in reality. When they look



abroad to other regions of the world, they see cohesive and independent states where there are none, or believe that such states can easily be brought into being where no such possibility exists. And when they consider the state in which they live, they cannot recall that all states are perpetually on the verge of losing their cohesion and independence, and so they take the unity and independence of their own state entirely for granted. As a consequence, they tend to disdain the kinds of efforts that are needed to maintain the cohesion and independence of the state, happily advocating for policies that work directly to destroy its cohesion and dilute its independence, all the while believing that the state can sustain all this and yet remain sound as it was before.

Philosophy of government is useful in its proper, limited sphere. But to be competent, it must be built upon an understanding of the underlying causes of the formation, cohesion, and independence of the state, as well as of its destruction. This is the kind of political inquiry that we find in the first great works of the Western political tradition—namely, those that have been collected in the Hebrew Bible. It is here that we encounter a constant awareness of the possibility of human beings living outside the state, in an order of households and clans and tribes, and a mindfulness of the threat that is posed to such an order by the state. It is in the Bible, too, that we are exposed to the ambiguities that attend the founding of the state, and are taught to recognize the fragility of all such states, which are at every moment either rising or falling, moving toward either consolidation or dissolution. It is here that we are taught to think of how just government contributes to the consolidation of political order, whereas foolish policies lead to the dissolution of political order, paving the way to anarchy and

conquest by others. It is here that we are first exposed to the question of whether human freedom is aided or hindered by the state, and whether the extension of the imperial state does not necessarily lead to mankind's enslavement.

What follows is a study in foundational political philosophy. Rather than assuming that reasonable men will necessarily form a cohesive and independent state, I will consider the underlying causes of political order and examine the ways in which these causes shape the alternatives that are open to us. On the basis of this examination, I will suggest that the best form of political order is an order of independent national states. In particular, I will argue that such an order is superior to the other principal alternatives that are known to us: the order of tribes and clans, which preceded the state; and imperial order.

## IX: The Foundations of Political Order

SOME THINGS CAN BE attained by the individual acting alone. But most aims or ends require that we act in concert with others. However, our neighbors have aims and motives of their own, and they are often uninterested in the goal we have proposed, if not hostile to it. How, then, can we influence others so that they act to accomplish the goals that we see as necessary or desirable? This is the fundamental problem of the individual living in a community of others. The need to find answers to this question gives rise to *politics*, which is the discipline or craft of influencing others so that they act to accomplish the goals one sees as necessary or desirable.

One response to this fundamental problem is the establishment of standing bodies or collectives of individuals—the family, clan, tribe, or nation, a state or an army, a religious order or a business enterprise. These and other *institutions* are human collectives that maintain their existence through time, holding fast to certain fixed purposes and forms, such as a particular name by which they are known and accepted procedures by which they make decisions and act as a body. Each institution teaches, persuades, or coerces its members to act according to these fixed purposes and forms, abiding by accepted general rules and procedures, so that they can reliably act as a body, without each time having to be persuaded or coerced anew.

But what brings individuals, despite having their own unique aims and motives, to join together in an institution, reliably acting as a body together with its other members, in accordance with the fixed purposes and forms of the institution?

Three possibilities are well known: First, individuals will join if threatened with reprisal. Second, they will join if they are offered payment or other advantage. Finally, they will join if they see the interests and aims of the institution as their own. Of these, the second alternative produces the weakest institutions, for those who join up in some arduous struggle or effort in exchange only for a sum of money are constantly calculating whether the risks are worth the pay, and hoping that they will be able to defect to a different cause offering better pay and entailing fewer risks. Institutions are only somewhat more stable when individuals are recruited by intimidating them and their loved ones, since they cannot be relied upon once the threat is felt to recede, and are forever on the verge of mutiny so long as it does not.

For these and other reasons, strong institutions are established where the individuals involved identify the interests and the aims of the institution as their own. Think, for instance, of a soldier who takes up a rifle in the hope of establishing the independence of his people after a long history of persecution. Such individuals do not need to be coerced to fight, or to be well compensated for their services. The fact that they are fighting for the benefit of their people is enough for them to be willing to throw their lives into the balance for the sake of a collective such as a tribe or a nation, stirring up an ardor in their breasts that moves them to acts of bravery and self-sacrifice that no intimidation or promise of pay could elicit.

Many political theories assume that political events are motivated by the individual's concern for his own life and property. Yet anyone who has witnessed the behavior of individuals in wartime, or under conditions of nonviolent conflict as in an electoral campaign, understands that this assumption is wildly inaccurate. It is true that one is sometimes motivated by a concern for his own life or property. But human individuals are also capable of regarding the aims and interests of a collective or institution of which they are members as their own, and of acting upon these aims and interests even where such action will be detrimental to their lives and property. Indeed, political events are frequently determined by the actions of individuals whose motives are of just this kind.<sup>1</sup>

A political theory designed to understand human beings as they are in reality, and not to tell us stories about the adventures of some fantastic creature invented by philosophers, cannot avoid this capacity of the human individual to recognize the aims of the collective as his own. Astonishing and yet as common as the air we breathe, this ability is with us every day

and every hour. It is basic to our empirical nature, and there can be no convincing account of how strong human institutions are built unless this capacity is at its center. Let us, therefore, consider this matter more closely.

We know that the human individual is by nature fiercely concerned to ensure the integrity of his or her own self. By the *self*, I mean, in the first instance, the individual's physical body, which is protected by a reflexive urge to fight or seek immediate escape when threatened or maligned. However, this urge to ensure the integrity of the self is by no means limited to the protection of the body. The very same ferocity that the individual displays in protecting his physical body is also evident in the actions he takes to defend his reputation when accused or insulted. And it appears, as well, in the urge to protect his land or other physical possessions that he regards as his own. Indeed, the very love that he evidently feels for his wife and children, and for his parents, and for brothers and sisters, and that moves him to protect them when they are in danger, is nothing other than another name for this same urge to protect the integrity of his self—for these loved ones have been embraced, insofar as his own consciousness is concerned, within the rubric of his own self, and are experienced as if they were a part of him.

This capacity to protect and defend others as if they were a part of one's own self is not limited to kinsmen. We see this same ferocity in the urge to defend a friend or a townsman, the member of one's platoon or street gang, or, more generally, any other human being who is, for whatever reason, regarded by the individual as a part of his self. And many other examples could be mentioned. What we see across the range of human

activities and institutions, then, is that the self of the individual is by nature flexible in its extent, and is constantly being enlarged so that persons and things we might have supposed would be outside of him and alien to him are in fact regarded as if they were a part of himself.<sup>2</sup>

When an individual includes a certain other within the purview of his or her self, we call this attachment *loyalty*. When two individuals have each taken the other under the protection of their extended selves, the bond that is established is one of *mutual loyalty*, which allows these two individuals to regard themselves as a single entity. The existence of such bonds of mutual loyalty does not mean that they entirely cease to be independent persons. These bonds do not eliminate the competition, insult, jealousy, and quarrels that are always present between individuals who are loyal to one another. A husband and wife may quarrel frequently, and brothers or sisters may bicker and fight, by these means seeking to adjust the hierarchy of relations between them. While these conflicts are taking place, they are experienced as a struggle between independent persons. But as soon as either of them faces adversity, the other suffers this hardship as if it were his own. And in the face of this hardship, the disputes that had troubled them before are temporarily suspended or entirely forgotten. Moreover, once the hardship before them has been overcome, they experience a sense of relief and pleasure, of walking together in joy, each recognizing the happiness of the other as his own. These experiences, in which another individual is recognized as a part of one's self in adversity and in triumph, establish a strong distinction between an *inside* and an *outside*: an inside, comprising the two individuals, each of whom regards the

other as part of a single identity; and an outside, from which a challenge arises against them, and in the face of which they experience a joint suffering and a joint success.<sup>3</sup>

Human institutions can and often do contribute to their cohesion by providing financial compensation to their members or by coercing them. But enduring and resilient institutions are those that are constructed principally out of bonds of mutual loyalty. The *family* is the strongest and most resilient of all small institutions known to human politics, precisely due to the existence of such ties of mutual loyalty between each member of the family and all of the others. These ties are partly biological and partly adoptive. A mother forever feels that the children she has carried are a part of herself. But adoptive family relations, such as those between a husband and wife, or between either of them and their in-laws, or between parents and an adopted child, are frequently no less powerful than those between parents and the children who are born to them. Particular bonds of family loyalty can thus be either birth ties or adoptive ties, but in either case their solidity and resilience are unmatched **as a result of the daily shared experience** of relying on family members for assistance and support, which establishes family members as a part of one another's extended self.

The family is the most familiar of small institutions, but there are many others. A small-scale military unit called a *squad* (or *section*) is, for instance, the basic formation out of which all armies are constructed. Modeled after the family, it consists of roughly ten men commanded by a junior officer or a sergeant. Here, too, the capacity of the unit to function under extreme duress depends on ties of mutual loyalty—ties that become especially strong in a unit that is small enough to ensure that

each individual knows the others personally, and has extensive experience of relying on them for assistance and support during the hardships of training and combat.<sup>4</sup>

Small institutions like the family or the squad, consisting of individuals bound together by mutual loyalties developed over long years of shared hardship and triumph, are the bedrock of all political order. It is out of such small units that larger-scale political institutions of every kind are built. It is possible, for example, to bring together heads of families in an association of mutual loyalty to one another, in this way tying together the members of the various families in a *clan*. And indeed, all over the world, and in all ages, clans have been established to provide for collective defense, to establish procedures for justice between them, and to pursue common service to their gods. A child growing up in one of these families will not necessarily have a way of directly developing a bond of mutual loyalty with most other individual members of the clan, who may number in the hundreds or thousands and may be scattered over a considerable territory. But his parents, who have direct bonds of mutual loyalty to the other heads of families, experience the suffering and triumphs of the clan as if these were happening to themselves, and they give expression to these things. And so the child, who experiences the suffering and triumphs of his parents as if they were happening to him, is able to feel the suffering and the triumphs of the clan as his own as well. Thus even a very young child will feel the harm and shame when another member of his clan is harmed or shamed by members of a rival clan. In this way, the child's self is extended to embrace the entire clan and all its members, even those whom he has never met. And because of this extension, he will be willing to set aside even bitter disputes with other members of his clan

when a threat from the outside is experienced as a challenge to all.<sup>5</sup>

When we speak of the *cohesion* of human collectives, it is this that we have in mind: the bonds of mutual loyalty that hold firmly in place an alliance of many individuals, each of whom shares in the suffering and triumphs of the others, including those they have never met.<sup>6</sup>

Cohesion of this kind is not limited to the scale of family and clan. Heads of clans can unite to form a *tribe* that may have tens of thousands of members. And heads of tribes can come together to form a *nation* whose members number in the millions.<sup>7</sup> Such a process of consolidation is familiar to us, for example, from the biblical History of Israel, which emphasizes the question of whether the Israelite tribes will come together to form a unified nation. And it is familiar from the history of the English, the Dutch, the Americans, and many other nations.<sup>8</sup> Like ties of loyalty to the clan, the bond of loyalty to one's tribe or nation grows out of loyalty to one's parents: The child experiences the suffering and triumphs of his tribe or nation as his own because he experiences the suffering and triumphs of his parents as his own, and the parents feel and give expression to the suffering and triumphs of the tribe or nation as these unfold. And again, this attachment means that the individual will set aside disputes with other members of his tribe or nation, coming together with them "as one mind"<sup>9</sup> in moments of danger or when great public projects are under way.<sup>10</sup>

Are there limits to the process of consolidation, by means of which clans unite as tribes, and tribes as nations, extending the loyalties of individuals outward? We know that nations can develop attachments to other nations, and that these can, with time, resemble the attachments of tribes to one another in the

formation of the nation. There is such a thing, in other words, as a "family of nations," as the English-speaking nations often regard themselves, or as the Hindu peoples of India have at times. But what brings these families of nations together is, again, a mutual loyalty that is revived and strengthened by joint adversity in the present: The solidarity of English-speaking peoples becomes most prominent in their common struggle against the *axis of Fascist powers*, or against the Communist nations; and the mutual loyalty of the Hindus comes to the fore during their common struggle to free themselves *from English and Muslim domination*.<sup>11</sup> What we have never seen, however, is a genuine tendency toward a mutual loyalty among all human beings—which is something that could only form under conditions in which all mankind stood together before a joint adversity.<sup>12</sup>

The mutual loyalty of individuals to one another is the most powerful force operative in the political realm. Feelings of mutual loyalty pull individuals tightly together, forming them into families, clans, tribes, and nations, in much the way that the force of gravitation pulls molecules together, forming them into planets, star systems, galaxies, and systems of galaxies. Modern writers, who have been too much influenced by Darwinian science, tend to look for ways of explaining this as a process driven by biological kinship. But this has never been so. An isolated human individual, having survived a war or disease that has cut him off from his family and his clan, will invariably attach himself to a new family or a new clan, adding his *strength to theirs and receiving their protection in return*. In so doing, he establishes new bonds of mutual loyalty to replace those that had been lost, and this without any necessary tie of biological kinship. This constant regeneration of shattered bonds of mutual loyalty means that families can and do adopt

individual members that were not born among them, and that clans adopt entire families that were not born among them. In the same way, nations adopt not only foreign individuals and families, but entire tribes that were once foreigners but are not considered foreigners any longer.<sup>13</sup>

Thus while all nations use the metaphor of brotherhood to invoke a family-like relationship of mutual loyalty among their members, actual biological kinship is never more than a raw material upon which a nation is built, if it is even that.<sup>14</sup> In the end, the decisive factor is the ties of mutual loyalty that have been established among members of a nation in the face of long years of joint hardship and success.

This constant regeneration of bonds of mutual loyalty, which we find in nearly every human being, means that there can be no society whose member individuals are without loyalty to anyone other than themselves. This is true even in modern society, in which the traditional order of tribes and clans has been weakened by the national state, and liberal philosophy has taught the individual to think constantly in terms of his own life and property.<sup>15</sup> Even here, collectives built from bonds of mutual loyalty are visible everywhere, and not only within the family: Local political chapters, churches and synagogues, schools, and other community organizations are still strongly reminiscent of the old clans. On a national scale, powerful religious, ethnic, sectoral, and professional associations play a role in the life of the nation that is still very much that of the tribe with its fierce mutual loyalties, each one striving with other tribes in shifting coalitions in the effort to turn the course of the nation in their favor. These do not, to be sure, possess the strength and resilience of the clans and tribes that preceded the state. The variety of such associations permits the

individual much greater freedom in choosing or declining allegiance to them, and since they are not politically independent entities at war with one another, the mutual obligations among their members can be much less demanding. Nevertheless, their presence points to an undying tendency of individuals, even under the modern state, to ally themselves to collectives, not only at the level of the family, but also at the clan, tribal, or national level.<sup>16</sup> This is a tendency that becomes dramatically more pronounced when members of our "clan" or "tribe" are threatened, and it reasserts itself with all its old force when our tribe comes to see the national state as no longer able to protect it as before.\*

The bonds of mutual loyalty that make families, clans, tribes, and nations stable and enduring institutions also ensure that human beings constantly experience what happens to the collectives to which they are loyal as things that are happening to themselves. As a consequence, far from being motivated only to secure their own life and property, human individuals are ceaselessly concerned to advance the health and prosperity of the family, clan, tribe, or nation to which they are loyal, frequently in a manner that puts their own life and property at risk.

What do I mean by the *health and prosperity* of the family, clan, tribe, or nation? Like nearly all the terms we use to

\* Although this usage is somewhat unfamiliar with reference to society in the modern state, I will continue to use the term *clan* to refer to local institutions and organizations, and *tribe* to refer to larger-scale collectives that are strong enough to vie for national influence. I have chosen to use these terms rather than a more familiar one such as "community" because it lacks the connotation of a hierarchical ordering of collectives that is essential to empirical political theory. For the sake of simplicity, I have adopted a four-tier hierarchy: *family, clan, tribe, and nation*. But the choice of a four-tier system is somewhat arbitrary. In actual political societies, one can often find many more layers of hierarchy before reaching the top of the political structure.

describe human collectives, these are metaphors drawn from the life of the individual. Yet the characteristics of human collectives to which these terms draw our attention are no less real for being described using metaphors.

Consider first the family. The health and prosperity of the family, we can say, consists in three things: First, it requires physical and material flourishing. This means that children are born and grow strong, that the family gains in terms of the property at its disposal, and that its physical capabilities and productivity, such as the ability to produce or obtain food, advance from year to year. Second, the health of the family is recognized when it possesses a strong internal integrity—when its members are loyal to one another, celebrate one another's achievements, and defend one another in adversity, even at risk to themselves; when its members readily honor the differences in age or status among them, so that the family can take effective, unified action without coercion; and when the competition and tensions that inevitably arise among them are conducted in relative peace, so that they avoid doing long-term damage to the family as a whole. Third, the health of the family is recognized in the extent and quality of the cultural inheritance that is transmitted by the parents and grandparents to the children. This factor is often overlooked, but it is no less important to the health and prosperity of the family than either of the others. Both the physical capabilities and the internal integrity of the human family depend to a very great degree on the cultural inheritance that the older generations bequeath to the younger ones, and on the degree to which this inheritance is successfully handed down.<sup>17</sup>

These are the measures of the health and prosperity of the family, and every member of a given family has an intuitive

understanding of what these things are, whether more or less developed and refined, just as he has an intuitive understanding of what contributes to his personal life and property. Moreover, the individual at all times experiences the strengthening or weakening of his family as something that is happening to himself. And because this is the case, he is constantly moved to take action to defend and build up the family in its material prosperity, in its internal integrity, and in its capacity to transmit an appropriate cultural inheritance to the children. Indeed, it is out of such motives that parents act for many, if not most, of their waking hours: They take employment that is not to their liking so as to be able to feed their family. They humble themselves to mend relations with an unhappy husband or wife so that there will be peace in the home. They devote long hours to the tutelage of the recalcitrant young, whose ability to recognize the value of what they are taught is often quite limited. And they do so not out of an altruistic impulse to help a stranger, but because strengthening the family is experienced as strengthening themselves.

The health and prosperity of every human collective is measured in much the same way as that of the family. We can measure the health of the tribe or nation, for example, by taking stock of its material prosperity, its internal integrity, and the strength and quality of the cultural inheritance that it passes on from one generation to the next. Similarly, the individual who is loyal to his tribe or nation cannot avoid sensing that it is growing stronger or weaker, and feeling that this strengthening or weakening is something that is happening to him, just as he feels this with respect to his family. And for this reason, when the tribe or nation is felt to be weakened, we will see individuals rise up to take this matter into their own hands,

acting with all their heart and all their soul to strengthen the tribe or nation, just as they act to strengthen their family. They do so not out of altruism, but because strengthening the tribe or nation is experienced as strengthening themselves.

Human beings constantly desire and actively pursue the health and prosperity of the family, clan, tribe, or nation to which they are tied by bonds of mutual loyalty. We have an intense need to seek the material success of the collective. We work to strengthen its internal integrity by ensuring that its members are loyal to one another in adversity, honor their elders and leaders, and conduct the inevitable competitions among them peaceably. And we toil to hand down the cultural inheritance of the collective, its language and religion, its laws and traditions, its historical perspective, and the unique manner in which it understands the world, to a new generation. Remarkably, this last concern—for the transmission of the cultural inheritance of the collective to future generations—is often experienced as a need no less powerful than the desire to feed and clothe our children. Even in a family ravaged by poverty and near starvation, the efforts of the parents to transmit this inheritance to their children does not cease. One need only interfere with the language people speak, with the religion of their community, with the customary rights by which they conduct their affairs, or with the way they raise their children, to quickly inflame them and drive them to the brink of violence. Because these things impinge on the internal integrity and cultural inheritance of the family, clan, tribe, or nation, they are experienced with such bitterness, and give rise to such consuming anger.

No universal ideology—not Christianity or Islam, not liberalism or Marxism—has succeeded in eliminating this intense desire to protect and strengthen the collective, or even

in diminishing it much. Nor should we wish to see this desire eliminated or diminished, any more than we want to see the desire of the individual to defend his own life and improve his material circumstances diminished. To be sure, this fierce concern for the material prosperity, internal integrity, and cultural inheritance of the collective makes every family, clan, tribe, and nation into a kind of fortress surrounded by high, invisible walls. But these walls are a necessary condition for all human diversity, innovation, and advancement, enabling each of these little fortresses to shelter its own special inheritance, its own treasured culture, in a garden in which it can flourish unmolested. Inside, what is original and different is given a space of its own where it can be tried and tested over the course of generations. Inside, the things that are said and done only in this family, clan, or tribe, and nowhere else, are given time to grow and mature, becoming solid and strong as they strike roots in the character of the collective's various members—until they are ready to make their way outward from the family to the clan, from the clan to the tribe and the nation, and thence to all the families of the earth. Every innovation that has brought about an improvement in understanding or industry, in law or morals or piety, has been the result of a development of this kind, beginning as the independent inheritance of a small human collective and then radiating outward. At the same time, these fortress walls of tribal language and culture can be seen as preventing novelties from spreading too quickly, giving time for what is misguided and destructive to be tried and found wanting, to run its course and die out, before all humanity is overtaken.



## X: How Are States Really Born?

THERE IS A STORY that mothers tell their children about how babies are born. They tell them that when the time is right, a stork flies the newborn baby to the doorstep of its new home.

No parent believes there is any truth to this story. So why speak as if it were true? I suppose it is because the truth is, in the eyes of some parents, ugly and unpleasant. In telling their children this white lie, they hope to make the world seem more beautiful than it is, and in so doing protect their young ones from thoughts that may cause them distress and fear.

Similarly, there is a story that instructors in politics, law, and philosophy tell their students about how states are born. They tell them that while living in a state of perfect freedom and equality, each individual consents, together with countless others, to form a government and to submit to its dictates.<sup>18</sup> No university instructor or civics teacher believes this is true. So why speak as if it were?

Here, a plausible answer becomes more difficult. Like the story of the stork, it can be said that the tradition of introducing students to the theory of government by means of this fantastic story protects the minds of the students from some ugly and unpleasant truths. But there the similarity ends. For the story of the stork is only intended to keep children in their childhood innocence a little while longer, recognizing that at a certain point their parents will tell them the truth. Whereas the story of how the state is born is impressed upon young men and women time and again at every stage of their education—first in high school, then in college, and then again in law school or

graduate school. Eventually, they become legislators and jurists and scholars of renown, and yet this fairy tale clings to their thoughts about political life, taking up the space where actual competence in the subject should have been. And we see every day how much damage is done in many important endeavors, both in domestic policy and foreign affairs, because actions are pursued by statesmen who continue to rely on this myth in their decision-making on behalf of the state. This point has been made vigorously by virtually every political theorist who has attempted to approach the subject empirically, including Selden, Hume, Smith, Ferguson, Burke, and Mill.<sup>19</sup> It is impossible to think intelligently about the principles of government without first freeing oneself from the fiction that states are formed by the consent of individuals, a view that only hides from us the way in which states are born, and goes on from there to confound our understanding of how they continue to exist through time, of what holds them together, and of what destroys them.

How does the state come into being? On the basis of what has been said, we can see that there never has been a "state of nature" of the kind imagined by Hobbes or Locke, in which individuals were loyal only to themselves. As long as human beings have lived on this earth, they have been loyal to the broader family, clan, and tribe that provided for their defense, for justice among them, and for rites of thanks before the gods, each according to its own unique customs. This *order of tribes and clans* is, in fact, the original political order of mankind. How are we to think about this form of political order?

In the first place, the order of tribes and clans is not the state. It is true that the clan and the tribe are concerned with defense, justice, and religion—the same matters that are of

concern to states. But the original form of human political order is distinguished from the state in that it is, in the strict sense, *anarchical*, meaning that it functions without a permanent central government: There is no standing army or police force, no bureaucracy capable of raising taxes sufficient to maintain such a force, and therefore no one with the ability to issue decrees that can then be imposed by means of armed force. Each clan or tribe has its head or chief. But without an armed force dedicated to carrying out his will, such a clan or tribal head rarely possesses the power to coerce his fellows where they do not wish to follow him. What moves the clan or tribe to act as a unified body? First, the agreement of the clan or tribe that its leaders have decided a given matter correctly. Second, the loyalty of the clan or tribe to its leaders where such agreement is lacking. And finally, the pressure that those who agree with the decision and those who accept it out of loyalty together bring to bear on anyone who remains uncertain. Where these are insufficient, the clan or tribe does not act as a unified body.<sup>20</sup>

As is readily evident, the advantages of such an anarchical political order flow from the same source as its disadvantages. It is an order that is little concerned with taxation or with the impressment of men for large-scale construction projects or for war. This means that each family or clan possesses a freedom that is unknown after the establishment of the state, with each family, clan, and tribe participating in larger-scale collective purposes as it sees fit. On the other hand, defense is based on a fractious and irregularly trained militia, justice is attained only with great difficulty, and the customs of religion are maintained only voluntarily. When tribes and clans fall away from loyalty to

their common customs and to one another, warfare among the tribes, injustice, and defeat at the hands of foreigners inevitably follow, with no one having the ability to set matters aright.<sup>21</sup>

The state is born out of the relative weakness of the old order of tribes and clans. It is a permanent revision of the political order, which introduces a standing central government over the tribes and clans. This includes the establishment of a professional armed force that is not disbanded in peacetime; a bureaucracy capable of raising taxes sufficient to maintain such a force; and a ruler or government with the authority to issue decrees that are then imposed, where necessary, by means of armed force. Such government concentrates an unprecedented degree of power in the hands of a small number of individuals—power that can be used to defend the tribes against external enemies, for adjudicating and suppressing disputes among them, and for instituting uniform religious rites on a national scale.

But how can such a state, which necessarily deprives the clans and tribes of their freedom and imposes such heavy burdens on them, come into being? We know of two ways:

First, there exists the possibility of establishing a *free state*, which is one in which the cooperation of the ruled is given to the government voluntarily. This can happen if the heads of a coalition of tribes, recognizing a common bond among them as well as a common need, come together to establish a national standing government. In such a case the tribal chieftains themselves participate in the selection of the ruler of the nation and sit in his councils when important decisions are to be made. The loyalty of the individual is thus given to the state out of loyalty to his parents, his tribe, and his nation, and he will endure suffering and sacrifice if the government calls upon him

to do so for this reason. Moreover, this loyalty of the individual to the state may be forthcoming even if the particular persons serving in government at a given time, or the particular policies they determine to pursue, are not to his liking. His loyalty to the nation and the fierce desire to maintain its integrity moves the individual to continue to fight in the wars decided upon by the national government, and to obey its laws and to pay it taxes, all the while hoping that better leaders and policies will be forthcoming sooner or later.<sup>22</sup>

We have seen many such states established in history. The most famous case of such a unification of tribes is that of ancient Israel, which has served as the model of a national state.<sup>23</sup> The Athenian state, although it is usually referred to as a "city-state," was in fact created through the unification of a number of clans in just this way. We should therefore recognize it as a tribal state—the state of a particular Greek tribe. This is because, although Athens was cohesive enough to be ruled by a standing government, it also retained its independence from other Greek tribes, and this despite the evident existence of a broader Greek nation that remained divided into independent tribes.<sup>24</sup> Both the Israelite and the Athenian states were thus able to function on the whole as free states, their existence made possible due to the loyalty of their people to nation and tribe, respectively, which contributed the necessary cohesion to the state. And the same may be said of the founding of the kingdom of the English nation unified under Alfred, or of the coming together of the Netherlandish tribes as a national state under the Dutch Republic, or of the establishment of a unified state by the English colonies in America, the United States. All of these and other free states can be seen to have been born through the unification of

mutually hostile tribes under a single national government in accordance with the decision of the leadership of these tribes to form a free state.

Second, the state can be established and maintained as a *despotic state*. By this I mean a state whose clans or tribes have not united voluntarily to maintain their freedom, but have, on the contrary, been subjugated by a conqueror against their will. In this case, the ruler of the state is not chosen by leaders of the tribe or nation to which the individual is tied in bonds of mutual loyalty. Rather, they are foreigners or usurpers to whom the loyalty of the tribes is not given at all. And because the tribe to which the individual is loyal gives him no reason to be loyal to the state, he will not voluntarily go to war or obey the law or pay taxes to the state. In the absence of such cohesion, what is needed is a force capable of compelling the individual to act as though he is loyal when in fact he is not. And the only form of government that can impose this semblance of cohesion where a genuine cohesion does not exist is a tyranny—a state that can suppress widespread dissent by force and terror, impress large portions of the population into military service or for other public works, and extract taxes that are used to bribe compliance from those who will take such bribes.

I have described two different ways in which the state can come into being, one by means of the free establishment of a government by a coalition of clans or tribes within a given nation, and the other by means of conquest. In practice, the state is often established through a combination of these, with some tribes and clans joining together voluntarily, and others being coerced. Notice, however, how distant these accounts, as well as an account that combines them, are from the founding of the state as described in the theories of Hobbes or Locke.

These philosophers assert that the agency for establishing the state is the consent of each individual, and that the motive for this consent is a calculation that the establishment of the state will best protect his life and property. In reality, however, there is no such consent and no such calculation. In the case of conquest, the consent of the common individual is utterly irrelevant. And even when a free state is formed through the unification of a nation's tribes, this takes place because bonds of mutual loyalty have been established among the heads of these tribes with the aim of establishing peace among them and securing their joint independence and way of life in the face of foreign menace. The common individual is not asked to consent to national unification and independence, which is decided upon in counsels to which he has little access, and as a rule he will adopt a posture of loyalty to the national state out of loyalty to his tribe, even if he regards the decisions of its leaders to have been questionable. It is thus the interests and aspirations of the tribe and the nation, as these are understood by the tribal leadership, that are decisive in the birth of a free state.

### XI: Business and Family

THE ENDURING WEAKNESS OF political philosophy descended from Hobbes and Locke is due to this one great falsehood: It pretends that political life is governed largely or exclusively on the basis of the calculations of consenting individuals as to what will enhance their safety and protect and increase their property. This is another way of saying that liberal philosophy

ignores mutual loyalty as a motive, suppressing the most powerful cause operative in political affairs.

The consequences of adopting this falsehood as the foundation for political philosophy can be appreciated by comparing two small institutions: the business enterprise and the family.<sup>25</sup>

No doubt there are institutions that are governed primarily on the basis of the individual's assessments as to what will enhance his physical welfare and protect and increase his property, and by his ongoing consent to the terms of an agreement with others for the joint attainment of these purposes. A business enterprise is such an institution. When a factory, store, or investment house is established, its purpose is to provide for the life and property of the individuals who consent to participate in the business. For those who are closer to poverty, this means earning wages that will provide them with a minimum of food, shelter, and clothing. For those who are financially better off, it means accumulating property that can be used for enlarging one's business enterprises and establishing new ventures, as well as for education, luxury, and charitable works.

It is true, of course, that business enterprises can at times inspire loyalty in their employees, and that they will often seek the benefits of such loyalty by insisting on the family-like character of the business. But this does nothing to alter the fundamental character of a business as a consensual pact whose purpose is to enhance the welfare and property of those participating in it. And in general, all who participate in it do so only so long as they continue to regard the business as personally profitable in this sense. This means that the bonds that tie the participants in the business to one another are by their nature quite weak: An employee, or even a partner in the firm, may be honored as a great asset to the corporation for years, and

yet find himself removed without so much as a letter of thanks when the management of the business come to feel they might be more successful without him. In the same way, both partners and employees will frequently withdraw from a firm the moment a more lucrative opportunity presents itself.

Nor is the weakness of the bonds holding together a business expressed only in the ease with which its members withdraw or are expelled. Those who remain are affected by the changeable and temporary character of any human tie whose basis is in ongoing consent, and they limit how much of themselves they are willing to invest in the business accordingly. Thus it would be an unusual individual who would be willing to give up his life for the sake of the factory or store or investment house that employs him, and this is true of the owners of the business as well. Indeed, one would have to look hard to find a businessman, much less an employee, who would be willing even to incur persistent financial losses for the sake of a business if he calculates that he is unlikely to recoup the losses later on.

Compare this to the family. Like a business, the family is founded in an agreement—a marriage agreement—so that it, too, begins in an act of mutual consent. And like a business, the family also operates as an economic enterprise, seeking to provide for the physical welfare and property of its members. But the family is built to attain very different ends, and because of this it is able to establish bonds between human beings that are of an entirely different kind.

What are the purposes for which the family has been instituted? It may be true that married individuals enjoy better health and greater prosperity than persons remaining unmarried. But men and women do not marry, bring children into

the world, and endure the many years of hardship and sacrifice involved in remaining married and bringing their children to maturity merely because of an assessment that doing so will contribute to their personal health and prosperity. The purpose of the family is rather something else entirely: Marriage and family are instituted in order to pass on to another generation an inheritance that has been bequeathed to us by our parents and by their ancestors. This inheritance includes life itself and perhaps some property, but it also includes a way of life, a religion and a language, skills and habits, and certain ideals and ways of understanding what is to be valued that are unique to each family, and that others do not possess. A man and a woman join together to combine what each has inherited from their parents and grandparents, knitting together an inheritance for their children that combines the best of what each has received—and therefore, if possible, to improve upon it. One way to understand this effort is to say that a family is established to repay a debt to one's parents and forefathers for the inheritance that has been received from them, a debt that can only be repaid by raising up new generations that will receive it and, if possible, improve upon it in turn.

These are not aims that can be attained in a few years, or in twenty. We tend to focus on the way in which parents influence the development of their children in their earlier years, and for good reason. Less noticed is that a significant part of what parents impart to their children cannot even be understood by them until they are twenty-five or thirty-five years of age; and that once our children have children of their own, their need, and often their desire, to gain the inheritance that is available to them from their parents only grows. Nor do parents have responsibilities only to their children. When our children's

children come of age and are unable or unwilling to find what they need in the example and conversation of their parents, it frequently happens that they turn to their grandparents for answers. The truth is that the enterprise of cultivating the garden that is one's family never ceases until death or infirmity stays our hands.

Consider, now, the implications of this fact. The responsibilities undertaken in a business enterprise are, as I've said, based on ongoing consent, and can be periodically re-evaluated to determine whether the benefits gained still outweigh the costs. Every individual participating in the venture can, at any time, announce his intention to end the relationship, quickly conclude any outstanding responsibilities, and be done with the entire affair. By contrast, the responsibilities undertaken in bringing children into the world are permanent, remaining in force for the rest of our lives whether we consent to them or not. True, a husband and wife did usually agree, at one point, to bring a child into the world. But not long after this original act of consent, the difficulties involved in raising a child already bear little resemblance to anything the young lovers may have thought they were consenting to at the time. And the project of raising children only continues to throw up ever new surprises over the decades, including hardship and pain that were scarcely imagined when they first entered into it. Yet this original decision cannot be revisited, giving the parents a chance to renew their consent based on an updated assessment that weighs the benefits each child brings against the suffering endured. Just the opposite: The parents' consent or lack thereof is irrelevant to their continuing responsibilities, and it is nothing like consent that motivates them as they persist in their efforts to raise their children to health and inheritance.

What motivates them is their loyalty, which is the fact that the parents understand the child as a part of themselves—a part of themselves not only for twenty years, as certain philosophers suppose, but for the rest of their lives, forever.

Something similar can be said of the relationship between a husband and wife. It is true that they did consent to be married at a given moment. But the things they experience in their life together, including not only pleasure and joy, but also sorrow and hardship that neither ever dreamed of, are not the things that were imagined when they first wed. Nevertheless, they remain together, not because of a calculation undertaken every few months or years in which their original consent is renewed. Rather, they are sustained by mutual loyalty, which is the recognition of each that the other is a part of themselves—a part of themselves not only until their children reach adulthood, which is, after all, only the first part of the burden of a parent, but for the rest of their lives, forever.

Some will object that this distinction between a business and a family is overdrawn. There is, after all, such a thing as divorce and estrangement within the family, just as there is such a thing as loyalty to one's business partners. Such caveats are surely important when one is not speaking in theory, but considering particular conditions in which real-life human beings find themselves. That said, we cannot hope to understand the political realm if we fail to see that the business enterprise and the family are not merely very different institutions, but institutions reflecting an opposition between two ideal types: The business enterprise operates in that sphere of human life in which the individual's freedom, calculation, and consent are most beneficial. The family operates in that sphere in which loyalty, devotion, and constraint are most beneficial. Because

business enterprises are able to bestow great material benefits on those who participate in them, as well as on the broader community, we tolerate an entrepreneurial ethic in which the individual is encouraged to act as if he is free from all constraint other than that to which he has consented. But the license and promiscuity that reign in the sphere of business are worse than worthless in the relations between parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, grandparents and grandchildren. Within the domain of the family, to be reliable, to stand true in the face of adversity, to refuse the urge to start everything anew, is the main thing that is needed and the root of all other virtues. One would be a fool to conduct one's family life by the principles that benefit his business, subjecting his parents, wife, and children to periodic assessments and abandoning them when he calculates that they have ceased to profit him as much as others might. The very same attitudes and behaviors that bring the greatest prosperity in business are those that bring utter ruin to the family.

What, then, are we to say about clan, tribe, and nation? These collectives are of the same kind as the family, albeit on a greater scale—and indeed, in Hebrew, these larger collectives are referred to as “the families of the earth.”<sup>26</sup> Like the family, their purpose is to pass on to another generation an inheritance that has been bequeathed to us by our parents and by their ancestors, an inheritance that includes life itself and property, but also a way of life, a religion and a language, skills and habits, and ideals and ways of understanding that are unique, and that others do not possess. And like the family, they arise and are maintained due to the strong bonds of mutual loyalty that have been established among their members. Moreover, when a tribe or a nation is constituted as a free state,

enjoying the allegiance of the individual who willingly obeys its laws, pays its taxes, and serves in its armed forces, all this only happens thanks to the bonds of mutual loyalty that bind this individual to his family, tribe, and nation. For it is only from his family, tribe, and nation that he has inherited the custom of obeying the laws of the state, paying taxes to it, and serving in its armed forces—all of which would otherwise be alien and unthinkable to him. It is thus the strong bonds of mutual loyalty that are characteristic of the family, rather than the weak bonds of consent that are of the essence in a business enterprise, that serve as the foundation for a free state.

When a philosopher seeks to found the state on the individual's freedom, calculations of personal benefit, and consent, he asks us to see the state as a large business enterprise. He takes an ideal type that has been developed to describe behavior in the marketplace, and transfers it into the political sphere, supposing it will permit us to understand political behavior in the same way that it permitted us to understand economic behavior. But a free state is not a business enterprise. It is constituted, and continues to exist in time, not because of business-like calculations of personal benefit and ongoing consent among its members, but only due to the family-like bonds of mutual loyalty that persist among them. It is true that the financial affairs of the state are understood in terms drawn from economics, and that voluntary immigration and emigration reflect the choices of individuals as to whether to participate in the state. But these things do not make the free state into an institution akin to a business enterprise. A family, too, has financial affairs that must be understood in economic terms. A family, too, may adopt new members who were not born into it, or have members who have been estranged and no longer retain relations

with it. However, these things do not affect the basic character of the family, which is constituted, and continues to exist in time, only due to the bonds of mutual loyalty that persist among its members. The free state, which is likewise constituted and able to endure only due to the bonds of mutual loyalty among its members, is in this respect a collective of the same kind as the family, albeit on a greater scale.

## XII: Empire and Anarchy

IN MOST TIMES AND places, human beings have lived under an anarchical political order, by which is meant that they have lived in a loose hierarchy of families, clans, and tribes without a standing government or ruler. With the rise of large-scale agriculture, however, the great accumulation of wealth made it possible, for the first time, to establish a standing government capable of imposing its will by means of professional armed forces. It became possible, in other words, to replace the order of tribes and clans with a new kind of political order, that of the state. The transition was not immediate. The first states were "city-states," in which a number of clans united under a tribal government established around an urban center. In these city-states, the strength of the competing clans was still felt in all things. But once these cities had the means to support a ruler in command of a standing armed force, they quickly began to dream of strengthening themselves by annexing their neighbors. Beginning with only a few thousand professional soldiers, Sargon the Great was able, in the twenty-fourth century BCE, to conquer the city-states of Sumer and Akkad one by one until

he ruled all of Mesopotamia and could declare himself "king of the universe."<sup>27</sup> In this universal aspiration, he was followed by countless other builders of imperial states, who sought to bring peace and prosperity to the entire earth by bringing it under their unified rule.<sup>28</sup>

Should every state, then, seek to rule the universe? Or is there a reasonable boundary that can be set for the state other than that which is dictated by defeat on the battlefield in a never-ending contest among contending empires?

In answering this question, it is useful to think of the possible forms of political order as appearing along a continuum defined by the extent of the collective to which the individual is presumed to be loyal. At one extreme, we can say, is the ideal of *empire*, a state that is in principle boundless, so that the individual under such a state is expected to be loyal to a collective that may include, if not today then tomorrow, any other human being on earth. At the other extreme is *anarchy*, in which there is no centralized state and the loyalty of the individual is given to a small bounded collective—a family or clan, a village, manor, or gang—consisting of individuals who are familiar to him from personal experience.

Notice that the difference between these forms of order is not only one of scale. It is also substantive: Imperial and anarchic orders are based on a presumption of loyalty that is directed toward very different things. An anarchic or feudal order is built upon relations of mutual loyalty among familiar individuals.<sup>29</sup> The head of my clan or the lord of my manor is not an abstract entity, but an actual person to whom my allegiance is given in gratitude for personal acts of generosity or aid. I am aware of his needs, hardships, and triumphs, and can play some real part, whether small or large, in assisting him. He



is aware of my needs and hardships, and the moments in which he interferes to assist me in some matter are of great significance to me. And if the difficult day comes when the head of my clan or the lord of my manor withdraws his allegiance from his own tribal chieftain or lord, my loyalty to this individual, who has done so much for me and for the others in my community, will remain unshaken. Under empire, on the other hand, my allegiance is, above all else, to the empire itself, and to all mankind, which it is supposed to represent. The empire, too, is ruled by an individual human being—an emperor, king, or president—to whom I have sworn my allegiance. But this ruler is no familiar individual, as under anarchy. The emperor knows nothing of me as an individual, nor can I make myself known to him, or of concern to him. I do not receive personal assistance from him, nor do I assist him in his troubles in a way that can be known to him. The emperor is so remote as to be, for me, nothing more than an abstraction. Just as I am, to him, nothing more than an abstraction. And just as mankind, over which he has extended his rule, is for me only an abstraction.

In anarchy, then, my loyalty is given to an individual who is familiar to me; whereas in empire it is to a great abstraction that I owe allegiance.<sup>30</sup> It is this distinction that allows us to understand why, in an imperial order, anarchy is regarded as the greatest imaginable evil. For it is the premise of the imperial state that the great masses of humanity depend for their peace and prosperity on the universal mind of an emperor, who brings great abstractions to bear on the world, and on the universal peace and prosperity that he is able, in this way, to provide. By placing loyalty to the familiar individual who is one's chief or lord above loyalty to the empire as a whole, one in effect renounces his obligation to the universal order, and to

all the masses of unfamiliar humanity who are said to benefit from this universal order. In this way, he becomes an enemy not only of the empire, but of humanity as well. Similarly, we can see why those who are committed to an anarchic order regard the encroachment of agents of the imperial state with such horror. In demanding that allegiance to the empire be placed above loyalty to the familiar individual who has afforded them protection and cared for their needs, these agents of empire demand nothing less than the sundering and betrayal of the concrete personal attachments that have stood as the foundation of society.

From these observations we understand that empire and anarchy are not merely competing methods of ordering political power. Each is a normative ordering principle, drawing its legitimacy from the manner in which it is rooted in the moral order. This conforms with our experience as well, in which the defenders of empire and anarchy present their views not only in terms of the practical advantages that each kind of order is supposed to provide, but in terms of the moral legitimacy and sanction that should be attributed to each. We can think of these normative ordering principles in the following way:

In an anarchical order, one's loyalties and political life itself are rooted in the moral principle of gratitude to familiar individuals from whom assistance has been received. The individual lives under the protection of the family or clan—protection that includes material sustenance, recourse in cases of injustice at the hands of others, defense against outsiders, an education in the skills and traditions of one's people and rituals for appealing to the gods. Out of gratitude to, and respect for, those who have provided him with these things, the individual contributes service, as assessed by the heads of the family or clan.

In this way, the individual has everything he needs, and his obligations to those who have established him in life and provided for him are fully met.

Although the moral basis for such a politics is compelling and evident, the difficulties involved in maintaining an anarchical or feudal order are well known. In the first place, the clans and tribes living in an anarchical society are constantly on the verge of warfare between them—so that war, which we tend to imagine as taking place on the periphery of society, is brought into the very center of life for people everywhere. Similarly, while anarchical societies can and do develop elaborate traditions for settling the competing claims of individuals and collectives, such justice is often difficult to enforce without resorting to the threat of war, so that justice itself is hostage to the power relations among clans and tribes. Moreover, the role of the familiar individual in ruling the clan is not an unalloyed good: The personal nature of localized rule means that the quality of one's personal relations with a chief or lord affect every aspect of one's life. As a consequence, even the most fateful matters may be decided on the basis of prejudice, based on an old insult or some other irrelevant matter, without the possibility of an appeal. Finally, the freedom afforded to each clan and tribe in an anarchical order means that coordinated defensive action is difficult, and cannot be sustained over time in the face of the disciplined military action of an encroaching state possessing a professional armed force under a unified command.

In an imperial order, on the other hand, all political life is rooted in the moral principle of the unity of unfamiliar humanity, which is the principle that each individual has obligations to the common welfare of mankind. The conquest of the anarchical realm of clans and tribes, which the imperial state

always regards as a realm of savagery, a "realm of war," creates a realm of peace and prosperity. Through conquest of lands governed under the order of clans and tribes, the imperial state drives warfare out of these territories and exiles it to a distant border, establishing in its place a universal law that is impartial among men. And by means of this peace and this universal law, the imperial state opens up a vast sphere to agriculture, industry, and trade, bringing economic prosperity to all. It is this peace and prosperity that gives moral sanction to the laws and wars of the imperial state, which are said to benefit all mankind.<sup>31</sup>

As in an anarchical order, we find that the moral basis for the imperial state is, at least initially, compelling. Yet, here, too, there are difficulties. First among these is the fact that wherever the principle of the unity of unfamiliar humanity is imbedded in the heart of the state, it necessarily gives birth to conquest, to the subjugation of distant peoples, and to the destruction of their way of life so that the "realm of peace," as the empire understands it, can be extended. This is true even where the imperial state appears, at a given moment, to be benevolent in its relations with outsiders, because the principle of the unity of humanity does not permit any consistent comity toward outsiders. In the normal course of political affairs, every neighboring clan or tribe must sooner or later come into conflict with the empire over some bit of land, resource, or policy. But the imperial mind, which regards every resource as rightfully belonging to all mankind, and which sees the imperial state as responsible for the welfare of mankind, cannot accept any outcome to such conflicts other than the "pacification" of the dissenting clan or tribe and the annexation of the disputed land or resource. Each such conquest involves depriving another clan or tribe of its

freedom, which it tends to give up only at a horrific cost in human life. And since the empire possesses no internal principle that can prevent this monstrous habit of conquest and devastation from reasserting itself each time it is provoked, the recurrence of this pattern is limited only by the measure of force that the imperial state can bring to bear on its surroundings.

No less troubling, moreover, are the burdens imposed by the imperial state for the maintenance of its armies and fortifications, its palaces, temples, and bureaucracy. The imposition of taxation and impressment, both for public works and for military service, is a heavy load for the individual to carry, where they are not in fact a calamity. Indeed, from the perspective of tribes and clans accustomed to a life of freedom and self-determination, the entire imperial order has the character of enslavement.

In addition, the regime of peace and prosperity imposed by the empire has a very particular quality to it. The empire, which claims to give law to all mankind, necessarily concerns itself with abstract categories of human need and obligation, categories that are, in its eyes, "universal." But these categories are always detached from the circumstances and interests, traditions and aspirations of the particular clan or tribe to which they are now to be applied. This means that from the perspective of the particular clan or tribe, imperial law will often appear to be ill-conceived, unjust, and perverse. Yet the very premise of the empire, which is its concern for the needs of humanity, leaves the unique clan or tribe with no standing to protest, for its assertion of its own interests and aspirations must inevitably strike the imperial order as narrow-minded and contrary to the evident good of mankind as a whole. Thus the principle of the unity of humanity, so noble in theory, rapidly divides mankind

into two camps: those who are regarded as favoring the good of mankind, in that they adopt the empire's categories for determining what is beneficial and right; and those who are regarded as opposing the good of mankind, in that they insist on thinking in terms of the customary categories of the tribe, which the empire invariably condemns as primitive and barbaric.

This clash between imperial law and the traditions and ideals of the tribe draws our attention to what is perhaps the central dilemma facing the imperial state, which is how the aspiration to unify humanity can be reconciled with empirical human nature. Empire, as has been said, requires that the individual establish and express a loyalty to a collective that may, in principle, include every other human being on earth. But why should the individual develop bonds of mutual loyalty extending so far? We have seen that loyalty finds its most characteristic expression in the effort to defend the members of a particular collective against threats from outside: A husband and wife quarrel until they are faced with adversity, but then they rise to meet the challenge before them as a unity. In the same way, the tribes that make up a nation compete against each other until danger unites them in their common defense.<sup>32</sup> What, then, is supposed to establish the loyalty of the individual to every other human being on earth? In the absence of a common threat to provide a genuine basis for unified action, the call to unite all mankind appears worse than vacuous. It amounts to an invitation to ignore the very real dangers that a given tribe or nation may face at the hands of others in the name of a common cause that is, in its eyes, no more than a pious fiction.<sup>33</sup>

Human beings do of course engage in acts of sympathy and kindness toward strangers, without reference to nation or tribe. But these motives, much as we may approve of them, tend to be

short-lived and cannot compete with the ties of mutual loyalty that are the foundation for political order.<sup>34</sup> And the reality is that we are rarely moved to action by a bond of loyalty to all other human beings. Nevertheless, the imperial state has to be built on some bond of mutual loyalty, or its soldiers will not be willing to fight and die for it. We have seen that neither the prospect of compensation nor threats of violence, which every empire uses in one degree or another, can be relied upon to hold fast in the long term. What, then, is the bond of loyalty that holds together the empire?

The truth is that, since the dawn of recorded history, the government and armed forces of the imperial state have been built upon the ties of mutual loyalty that bind together the members of a single nation—that of the ruling nation around which the imperial state is constructed.<sup>35</sup> This was true of the Persians, Greeks, and Romans, not less than the Spanish, French, and English, each of whom established a vast empire in which a given nation ruled over many others. In each case, the ruling nation forms a tightly bound core of individuals who will defend one another at all cost against the peoples whom they have conquered, and whom they consider to pose a permanent threat.<sup>36</sup> Around this core, the empire may then add other allied nationalities—as the Persians added the Medes to their core forces, and as the English added the Scots, Irish, and Welsh—as well as smaller numbers of individuals drawn from many other nationalities. All of these are valuable in expanding the supply of trustworthy manpower, while at the same time imparting to the imperial effort an air of universality that helps bolster its claims to represent the unity of all mankind. Yet this expansion does not change the fact that the empire is ultimately held together by the mutual loyalties of members of

a ruling nation, its language and customs, and its unique way of understanding the world, which the other nations are invited or coerced into joining. Thus while empires like to identify their cause with the ultimate good of all humanity, this cause is almost always closely associated with the domination of one nation at the expense of all others.<sup>37</sup>

Anarchy and empire are each based on normative principles of immense plausibility and power: the loyalty to familiar individuals that characterizes the anarchic order; and the unity of mankind that is the aspiration of imperial order. We cannot say that either of these principles is mistaken. Each has a certain place in a balanced moral system. Nevertheless, when either one is permitted to exceed its proper place and embraced as the primary ordering principle of the political world, it quickly engenders not the freedom of peoples, but their enslavement: Just as empire tends toward the enslavement of peoples to the customs and ideals of a ruling nation, so too does anarchy tend toward their enslavement to an endless strife among local strongmen.

### XIII: National Freedom as an Ordering Principle

EMPIRE AND ANARCHY ARE the horns of a dilemma that has dogged mankind's steps since antiquity. The earliest political images of the Bible—the story of the tower of Babylon, for example, in which the leadership of that city sought to unite humanity under one language in a single community of purpose; and that of Noah's ark, a tiny, familiar community cast

out of a violent and anarchic mankind—give a sense of how deeply these two evils impressed themselves on the thought of our forefathers.<sup>38</sup> And indeed, the problem of empire and anarchy is central to the political teaching of Hebrew Scripture. What the prophets of Israel proposed in response to this dilemma was a third type of political order: the distinctive Israelite institution of the national state, which seeks to transcend the dilemma of empire and anarchy by retaining what is most vital in each, while discarding what makes each of them most dangerous.<sup>39</sup>

Let us consider this alternative political order. I have said that under empire the loyalty of the individual is supposed to be directed toward humanity as a whole; whereas in an anarchical order, it is devoted to the politically independent family or clan. Here, what is proposed is an order in which loyalty is turned toward an institution that sits precisely at the conceptual midpoint between these others: the national state.

By a *nation*, I mean a number of tribes with a shared heritage, usually including a common language or religious traditions, and a past history of joining together against common enemies—characteristics that permit tribes so united to understand themselves as a community distinct from other such communities that are their neighbors.<sup>40</sup> By a *national state*, I mean a nation whose disparate tribes have come together under a single standing government, independent of all other governments.

These definitions mean, in the first place, that a nation is a form of community, a human collective recognizing itself as distinct from other human collectives. Such a community can exist independently of the state, and does not have to include every individual living within the state.<sup>41</sup> Second, these definitions

means that the unity thus created is always a composite—because the tribes united in this way continue to exist after national independence.<sup>42</sup>

What does it mean to say that the national state sits at the conceptual midpoint between empire and anarchy? In the first place, a national state rules over many families and clans, whereas an empire rules over many nations. The national state is midway between the family or clan and the imperial state in terms of scale.

In addition, however, the national state is also qualitatively different from anarchical and imperial political order. The nation is distinguished from the family or clan in that it is not a community of individuals who are known personally to one another. No one, no matter how much he may invest in the effort, can be personally acquainted with even a small fraction of the individuals who comprise a nation. The nation, in other words, is not comprised of familiar individuals, but is an impersonal abstraction, in the same sense that humanity is an abstraction. Yet at the same time, the nation is also distinguished from all of humanity in that it possesses a quite distinctive character, having its own language, laws, and religious traditions, its own past history of failure and achievement. This means that each nation is different from all other nations, and that to the individual who is a member of a certain nation, it is known as a concrete and familiar being, much like a person, family, or clan. When the tribes of a nation unite to establish a national state, they bring to this state the familiar and distinctive character of the nation, its language, laws, and religious traditions, its past history of anguish and triumph. And the individual, who shoulders the burdens imposed by the national state, does so out of loyalty to the concrete and familiar nation of which he is a part.

In this, the national state is distinct from the imperial state, to which the individual usually has no such ties of loyalty (unless, of course, he is a member of the ruling nation, or allied to the ruling nation, that sees the empire as its own).

I would like now to consider what type of ordering principle arises once we have conceived of a political allegiance that rises above the familiar individual of the anarchic order, but stops only half as high as the celestial dome of unfamiliar humanity. Here, at the inflection point between anarchy and empire, we find a new ordering principle rooted in the moral order: the principle of *national freedom*. This principle offers a nation with the cohesiveness and strength to maintain independence and self-government, and to withstand the siren songs of empire and anarchy, an opportunity to live according to its own interests and aspirations. More generally, this principle supports the establishment of a world in which there are many such national states, each pursuing its own unique purposes and developing its own vision of human life, every one "under its own vine or its own fig tree."<sup>43</sup>

The principle of national freedom can thus be regarded as taking what is vital and constructive in each of the two principles with which it competes: From the principle of empire, it takes the idea of an allegiance that is directed toward the abstraction of the state rather than to familiar men, the practical effect of which is the creation of a large space of domestic peace; and the possibility of an impartial judicial system that is no longer tied to the politics of familiar collectives. From the principle of anarchy, it retains the ideal of a ruler devoted to the unique needs and interests, traditions and aspirations of a particular community that is different from all others. This finds expression in the aim of government over a single nation—an aim

that devalues foreign conquest, and for the first time permits a conception of the freedom of nations other than one's own as a potential good in itself.

Is it really possible to speak of the freedom of a nation? To be sure, Israel is said to have rejoiced in its escape from the bondage of Egypt at the Red Sea, and it is this kind of freedom of the nation from empire that is celebrated every year on independence days in Czechia, Greece, India, Ireland, Israel, Poland, Serbia, South Korea, Switzerland, the United States, and many other countries.<sup>44</sup> Today, however, because nearly all political thought focuses on the freedom of the individual, the very idea of national freedom has come to seem doubtful. Is not freedom something that belongs only to an individual, a human being who experiences both choice and constraint, and rejoices when he is "free to choose"?<sup>45</sup>

It is true that *freedom* describes an aspect of the actions and experience of the human individual, just as interests and aspirations, triumph and tragedy, desire, fear, and pain are features of the life and mental landscape of the individual. But these and similar terms are also used to describe human collectives. When a mother with a number of children is wounded in an accident or falls ill, for example, we say that the family is in pain. It is possible, if one insists, to imagine the mother, her husband, and each of her children as distinct individuals, each experiencing his or her own personal pain as a result of this traumatic event. But this is not what the members of a family experience in such circumstances. They are accustomed to thinking of the family as a collective, as a unity, each one regarding the other members of the family as a part of his own self. And this is the way they experience the family's pain now: Each feels the pain not only of the mother, but of the father, brothers, and sisters

as well, and each knows that the others are suffering for him in this way too. All this is experienced as a single pain, a single grief and burden. And we, their friends and neighbors, when we visit them, experience the suffering of the entire family in this way, as a single pain, a single grief and burden. A family is not, in other words, only a collection of individuals. It is also an entity possessing certain properties that belong to it as a collective, as a whole. One of these is that a family, because each of its members experiences what happens to the others as something happening to himself, can be recognized by any observer as sharing certain experiences. It is this experience of a single, shared pain that is meant when we say that the family is in pain, that the family has been convulsed, that the family has suffered a terrible blow and will need time to recover.<sup>46</sup>

Just as a family can feel pain, so too can it experience triumph and tragedy, desire and fear, interests and aspirations. A family that plows with oxen can have a shared interest in purchasing a tractor. It can share a triumph as a daughter who feared that she could not have children gives birth. It can share an aspiration to one day make the trip to the Holy Land, and can share a recognition that the time has come to undertake the journey. None of this takes anything away from the individual, who is free to resist the inclination to feel as his family does in particular instances. Indeed, a person may choose to cut himself off from his family entirely. But in times of great duress, even these exiled souls have a way of returning to their brothers, discovering that they still share feelings with them, and a wish to share actions.

All of these things can be said of larger human collectives such as the clan, the tribe, and the nation. We are familiar, for instance, with the way in which a nation can suffer pain, for we

have all experienced it. We have experienced it when a president or prime minister is assassinated, when the members of our nation are cut down in our streets or held hostage in a foreign land, or when our soldiers or policemen are defeated in battle. An individual who is bound to his nation by ties of loyalty experiences these things as if they were happening to his own self. And as in the family, it is hardly relevant to say that each of these millions of individuals experiences his own pain as an individual. On the contrary, each one experiences at once the pain of the others. A heavy sense of hurt and humiliation fills the public spaces and clings to everything taking place throughout the land, so that even very young children, who do not understand what has happened, feel pained and ashamed. It is the nation that has been harmed. It is the nation that has been shamed.<sup>47</sup>

And as a nation can be in pain, it can also suffer the experience of slavery. When a people finds that its property is confiscated and its sons and daughters forced to serve others for the sake of ends they do not desire; when they are prevented from speaking their own language, or from fulfilling their religious obligations; when their children are taken from them or forcibly deprived of instruction in the traditional manner; when they are murdered, imprisoned, and tortured for resisting—when these things happen, a nation experiences enslavement. Indeed, even if there is one who is for some reason spared the direct effects of the persecution that the nation is suffering, he too will share the feeling of enslavement, as if these things were happening to his own self.

If a nation can experience slavery, then surely it can experience freedom. The members of a nation can share an experience of being released from oppression, the joy of liberation.

And they can go on to share an experience of power, of building themselves up and determining their course according to their own aspirations, without being forced to bow to any other nation or empire. Recall that the purpose of the discipline of politics is to bring about circumstances in which the many act to accomplish goals seen as necessary or desirable. When the individual feels the collective is able to move toward the aims he sees as necessary or desirable, he feels a great liberation from constraint. He feels, in other words, the freedom of the collective: the freedom of the family, clan, tribe, or nation to which he is bound by ties of mutual loyalty.<sup>48</sup>

In taking part in the freedom of the collective, I experience something that is quite distinct from the strictly individual freedom of saying whatever I please or going wherever I want. It is tempting, for this reason, to say that individual freedom is one thing and collective freedom another, and that political freedom consists in having some of both. But the reality is not so simple. Because the individual is always bound by ties of mutual loyalty to his family, tribe, or nation, it is a mistake to suppose that he can have political freedom when the family, tribe, or nation is not free.

Consider, for example, the problem of the released slave. We tend to believe that to have the joy of release from bondage and a life of self-determination, a slave needs only to purchase his freedom from his master, or to escape in secret. However, this is not necessarily true. If one's wife and children are enslaved, then attaining one's personal freedom brings no such release. As has been said, the individual constantly seeks the health and prosperity of the collective to which he is tied by bonds of mutual loyalty. Attached to his family in this way, the

released slave continues to experience their anguish every day as something that is happening to his own self. He feels neither the joy of liberation nor the power to determine his own course according to his own will. And is it not insulting and foolish to tell such a person that he can now "determine his own course," when at every moment he remains helpless to assist his wife and children who remain enslaved? It is true that he may freely choose among the alternatives that are left to him. Yet he will recognize, as we too must recognize, that the courses of action he truly desires are unavailable to him. They have been stolen from him by the constraints imposed by others, and he will not taste freedom until his family is free as well.

The same is true of the individual who flees his country, while the tribe or nation in which he was raised continues to suffer persecution at the hands of a despotic regime. Such an individual can no more "determine his own course" under these conditions than can a man whose wife and children are being held hostage. Knowing that his people are tormented and in danger, living out his life in exile, he is like the freed slave, with all the courses of action that he might truly desire stolen from him. He looks forward to tasting real freedom only when they are freed and he can return home.

An example from the recent history of my own nation may be instructive. During the Second World War, most of the Jews in Europe were murdered by the German government and its collaborators. At the time, there were millions of Jews in America and Britain, and in British protectorates such as Palestine, where my grandparents lived. These Jews were well aware that their brothers in Europe were being massacred, and a cry arose among Jews who wished to rescue them. One of them



was my grandfather Meir, who wrote a letter to the authorities demanding to be armed and sent to Europe, and he was surely not alone. But his letter received no reply. The Americans and British were concerned with their own interests, which did not align with rescue efforts. The British worked diligently to prevent Jews from reaching safety in Palestine, intercepting refugees and deporting them to internment camps overseas. The United States, too, declined to bomb the railway tracks carrying Jews to the extermination camps. The machinery of extermination thus operated throughout the war without significant American or British resistance to it. The millions of Jews living dispersed among these great nations enjoyed generous personal freedoms, yet as their fellow Jews were slaughtered with none to save them, they understood, as we too must understand, that all the courses of action that they truly desired were in fact unavailable to them. Despite the formal individual liberties that had been granted to them, they did not have national freedom, and so they were not free. National freedom came only with the establishment of a Jewish national state in Israel, which my grandfather lived to see.

In this case, as in others, the freedom of the individual is seen to depend on the freedom of his family, clan, tribe, and nation—that is, on the freedom and self-determination of the collective to which he is loyal, and whose pain and degradation he experiences as his own. If the collective is so partitioned, persecuted, threatened, and abused that there is no hope of its attaining its aims and aspirations, then the collective is not free, and the individual is not free either.

#### XIV: The Virtues of the National State

THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF free enterprise is based on the recognition that the individual desires to improve his own life and material circumstances, and it is ordered so as to give the most beneficial and least damaging expression to this urge. It seeks, in other words, to be realistic about the true characteristics of human nature and to achieve the best that can be attained in light of these characteristics. In the same way, the political order of national states is based on the recognition that the individual constantly desires and actively pursues the health and prosperity of the family, clan, tribe, or nation to which he is tied by bonds of mutual loyalty, and it is ordered to give the most beneficial and least damaging expression to this urge.

In this chapter, I describe five ways in which the order of independent national states is recognized as being superior to the anarchic and imperial forms of political order with which it competes, once the human desire for collective freedom is taken into account and allowed to find its fullest and most salutary expression.

*1. Violence Is Banished to the Periphery.* Under an anarchical political order, the desire for collective self-determination is given expression through the independence of every clan and tribe from all others. In such circumstances, the loyalty of the individual to the clan or tribe requires that he go to war for the sake of these collectives, whether in pursuit of their interests or in order to obtain justice when nonviolent mediation has failed. Indeed, neither their interests nor justice tends to be attainable