

By a sentiment of
common mass-
consciousness or
like-mindedness.



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By ethnic unity he means a population having a common language and literature, a common tradition and history, a common custom and a common consciousness of rights and wrongs. Calvo, in his work, *International Law*, emphasises that the idea of nation is associated with origin of birth, community of race, community of language, etc. Leacock unequivocally says that the term nation, “ though often loosely used, is properly to be thought of as having a racial or ethnographical significance.” It is a body of people united by common descent and a common language. But race and nationality are two entirely distinct terms.

As said earlier, there is no pure race anywhere on earth. The myth of purity of race is nothing else but pride and prejudice of those who believe that they represent a pure and superior race. Sidgwick has correctly said that some of the leading modern nations are “ notoriously of very mixed race.” Nation, as such, has no racial significance. What makes a group of people a nation is not necessarily a community of race, language or religion, but a sentiment of common mass-consciousness or like-mindedness. It is true that language and religion are important factors in knitting the people in common bonds of affinity and togetherness, but it seems clear that the community of religion and language, and community of national sentiment are not necessarily connected.

Take the Swiss people. They do not speak a common language, nor do they profess a common religion, yet they constitute a nation and they are as patriotic and as conscious of their common membership of a nation as any other people. Both France and Spain have a Basque population, speaking a language of common origin and not spoken anywhere else in the world, but

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the Basques do not form a nation. Nor do Welsh and Breton Celts, though there is a common legendary racial and linguistic inheritance. A common religious belief has been, no doubt, a powerful nation-making force and powerful to disintegrate nations also; Pakistan and Bangladesh are two clear examples of this type. But they are two rare examples. Generally speaking, that stage in the history of civilisation seems to be nearly passed. Barker gives a more realistic definition and analysis of a nation.

A nation, he says, is a body of persons inhabiting a definite territory and thus united together by the primary fact of living together on a common land. They were drawn from a number of races and they came from different breeds. But their wanderings brought them into this territory and they settled down here because it appealed them to settle down here. While living together for a sufficiently long time, they developed two forms of mental sympathy. The first was a common “capital of thoughts and feelings acquired and transmitted in the course of a common history: a common capital, of tradition; which includes as a rule a common language, a common religion (which may, however, assume a number of different forms), and a common culture variously expressed in art and architecture, in literature, in social habits and otherwise.” The second was the common will to live together for the future freely and independently, thus, having common thoughts, feelings and aspirations and thereby exercising their right of political self-determination. When the mark of the State is stamped on the territorial nation,” as Barker calls it, it becomes a national community and the State so formed a national State. There must be a general social

cohesion which should serve as a cementing material before the seal of the State can be effectively imposed on a population.

If the seal of the State is stamped on a population which is not held together by the cementing bonds of a common tradition and sentiment, there is likely to be “cracking and splitting” as happened in Austria-Hungary and the Eastern Wing of Pakistan, now Bangladesh. It does not, however, mean that a single cohesive society is always necessary for the State. There are still a good number of heterogeneous States that exist. But a single cohesive society is the basis of a harmonious and viable State. The ties that bind the people to make them a nation are psychological and spiritual as they are in a nationality. They are common feelings of an ardent desire to live together and to serve or suffer for the cause of their Motherland or Fatherland, cemented by the memories of a common history; a memory of sufferings endured and victories won in common and the dear names of those great personalities who lifted them above and embodied unto themselves the character and ideals of the nation. These feelings make the people a community of patriotic sentiments and they transmit their common heritage to posterity to keep aglow the light and zest of patriotism in the deep recesses of their hearts so that they may ever remain dedicated custodians of the honour and integrity of the nation. A nation is, thus, the expression of the people’s consciousness of unity and once this consciousness pricks through; it makes the people a nation.

It is in the minds of the people that a nation is formed and created. A nation, according to Gamet, “is a culturally homogeneous social group which is at once conscious and tenacious of its unity of psychic life and possession.”
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Zimmern defines it as “ a body of people united by a corporate sentiment of peculiar intensity, intimacy and dignity, related to a definite home- country.” He succinctly says, “ If a people feel itself to be a nation, it is a nation.” The nation, to sum up, is a human group, inhabiting a given territory, where its members may, but not necessarily, claim one origin, a certain indefinable community of culture, traditions, memories, aspirations and interests and above all a collective will to live together and make a common and concerted *modus Vivendi* to live together forever with honour and dignity. It must also be added that the term nation now implies, for the majority of writers, a further political and legal element. This community possesses common institutions and common laws and forms an independent political entity.