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LIBERAL NATIONALISM

As we entered the final quarter of the twentieth century, there was a widespread assumption that the age of nationalism was over, that we were on the threshold of a postnational era. It is now clear that this assumption was wrong. National movements are regaining popularity, and nations that had once assimilated and "vanished" have now reappeared. Estonians, Latvians, Corsicans, and Lombards awake from the long slumber that communist regimes or Western European nation-states had forced upon them, flex their muscles, and set out to march under the banner of national independence.

Unfortunately, such attempts to turn back the historical clock are often marked by bloodshed and violation of the rights of neighboring nations. In their enthusiasm to regain their national identity and acquire recognition and self-respect, national activists often overlook the changes that have taken place in the surrounding political, economic, and strategic circumstances, and fail to realize that ethnocentric national slogans have become obsolete. The era of homogeneous and viable nation-states is over (or rather, the era of the illusion that homogeneous and viable nation-states are possible is over, since such states never existed), and the national vision must be redefined.

To make its research readily available to a broad audience, the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy publishes this quarterly newsletter. Articles are intended to advance philosophically informed debate on current policy choices; the views presented are not necessarily those of the Institute or its sponsors.

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