A few years ago, while preparing a talk on liberalism, I thought I would look back before the 1930's in order to see what leading figures in our past had taken the term to mean. To my surprise, I found that they almost never used it. I turned, for instance, to Herbert Croly, who, as author of *The Promise of American Life* and founder of *The New Republic*, could surely be regarded as one of the principal voices of liberalism in this century. Only very occasionally in that book, which was written between 1905 and 1909, did he use the term "liberal" or "liberalism." No more frequently he spoke of conservatism, and then only as one of two extremes, of which the other was radicalism.

Similarly, in political controversies before Croly's time, generic terms — such as "progressive" and "democratic" — were used in addition to party labels to designate important viewpoints. But "liberal" was not among them. Nor did contemporaries in these contests use the liberal-vs.-conservative formula to describe their confrontations. This is not to say that the terms are never found in American political discourse. Among the educated, who were in touch with politics abroad, "liberal" and "liberalism" were sometimes used. In this way one can account for occasional uses, as when Orestes Brownson for a few years called himself a liberal. This does not change the main point: that "liberal" and "liberalism" were used hardly at all in American political debate in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early
twentieth centuries. Then, suddenly, in the first years of the Presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, they were widely adopted by editorial writers, politicians and the articulate public in general to identify a major position in American politics, namely the outlook of the New Deal. In politics words are cheap and this striking innovation in political terminology could have been merely verbal. In fact, the New Deal brought into existence not only a new alignment of social forces and a new balance between the parties, but also a new outlook on public policy. Between that outlook and elements of our political past, there are, of course, many continuities, stretching back through movements of progressive and democratic reform even to Jefferson and his “cherishment of the people.” The novelty in the New Deal that needs emphasis is precisely the union of this tradition of democratic reform with what I shall call the national idea.

My central point is not merely the familiar observation that the party of Jefferson took over the old Hamiltonian advocacy of strong central government. The national idea is not only a view of American federalism, but also a principle of public policy. As a principle of public policy, it is a doctrine of what today is commonly called “nation-building.” Its imperative is to use the power of the nation as a whole not only to promote social improvement and individual excellence, but also to make the nation more solidary, more cohesive, more interdependent in its growing diversity: in short, to make the nation more of a nation. Thus, American liberalism descends from and builds upon old traditions of democratic reformism, but also joins to them a powerful thrust toward national integration.

This view of the origin and two-fold nature of American liberalism derives mainly from Croly’s interpretation of our political history in his Promise of American Life. Following his suggestive account, I should like first to review the role of the national idea in American party politics and then, in some rather more speculative pages, develop the meaning of the national idea and relate it to the new era of public policy which we have entered with the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations. Throughout I shall confine myself to attitudes toward domestic affairs in order to avoid undue complexity.

I

Croly’s Promise was written at a time when “the social problem” was making its first hard impact on our politics and in much that he said there he laid out the path that liberalism was to take a generation later. At the same time, he could look back over a field of vision that had not yet been obscured by the liberal-conservative realignment of ideas, social forces, and political parties. What he saw was an enduring tension between “the principle of nationality” and “the principle of democracy.” Originating in the clash of ideas between Hamilton and
Jefferson, this opposition, he believed, had lasted into his own day. His effort was to find a conception that reconciled the two ideas, suitably reinterpreted to fit the facts of the twentieth century.

If we look at the past from the perspective of the democratic idea (in his usage), we may indeed find confrontations similar to one important aspect of the present liberal-conservative conflict. Charles A. Beard, for instance, gave us a reading along these lines. In his view, our politics in the earliest days of the Republic revolved around the clash of economic interest groups: broadly, a coalition of owners of large property against a coalition of owners of small or no property. A rough, very rough, parallel with the liberal-conservative alignment of recent years can be granted and thus Jefferson made the ultimate author of the New Deal and Hamilton of its opposition.

But when we look at these early contests from the perspective of the national idea, the lineage is reversed. The modern liberal, as a champion of strong and active central government in the service of nation-wide purposes, becomes the heir of Hamilton, while the modern conservative, as the opponent of centralization and friend of states rights and localism, represents the Jeffersonian tradition. In short, even if we grant a certain continuity between modern liberalism and Jeffersonian democracy, the total configuration is strikingly different: the powerful strain of Hamiltonian nationalism in the liberal tendency separates it fundamentally from the Jeffersonians.

For the sake of clarity, I will state the point with some exaggeration. For the greater part of our history and well into the present century, the main division of political forces consisted of the following: 1) on the one hand, a national party, tending toward elitism, *viz.*, the Federalists, the Whigs, and then the Republicans; 2) on the other hand, an anti-national or "provincial" party* tending to be "democratic," *viz.*, the Jeffersonian Republican and then the Democratic Party. Granting the continuity between the elitist-democratic division and one aspect of our present conservative-liberal split, my object here is to emphasize that during our first century and more the issue of overwhelming importance was the national question. The conflict of classes was, and always has been, mild in comparison with such conflicts in other countries of the Western world. The national question, however, precipitated the one instance of large-scale armed subversion in our history.

**The national idea vs. states sovereignty**

As an issue of political conflict, this question had two main aspects, relating, first, to a theory of the Constitution, and, second, to

---

*I take the adjective from Albert Beveridge who, in his biography of John Marshall, described how in the 1790's the political parties arose, "one standing for the National and the other for the Provincial idea."*
a view of public policy. As a theory of the Constitution, the national idea was opposed by the compact or state sovereignty theory. According to the latter, the Union was established by agreement among the thirteen states, which had previously been independent, sovereign political entities. In the Constitution, rather as in a treaty among separate nations, they agreed to give up certain powers to the Federal government. Federal power thus was derivative from state power and one might well feel that the states were, and continued to be, the fundamental political communities. From this theory, it also was plausibly inferred that the states had the right to interpret the compact and, if necessary, to nullify an unconstitutional act, to interpose their power to prevent its execution and in the final resort to secede from the Union.

According to the national theory, on the other hand, the Union was brought into existence not by independent states, but by the people as a whole; “we, the people,” as it says in the Preamble, formed the Union. As a community of individuals, not a combination of states, we constitute the nation. From this national community the authority of the states, as of the Federal government, is derivative. Nor is it simply the state governments, but the people of any state themselves who derive their authority from the nation. This national community is our essential form of political existence and to it we owe our primary allegiance. “The Union,” said Lincoln, “and not themselves [i.e., the states] separately, produced their independence and their liberty. . . . The Union gave each of them whatever of independence or liberty it has. The Union is older than any of the States, and, in fact, it created them as States.” According to this view, of course, no state could secede or nullify or interpose, since it had been given no such authority by the nation.

On balance, the national theory is the better account of the state of mind and will of the American people at the time of the foundation of the Republic. Yet, unfortunately, the compact theory was also supported by considerable evidence, including interpretations rendered by leading men among the Fathers themselves. Nor did the words of the Constitution itself clear up the ambiguity. From the start, in other words, there existed in our conception of nationhood a deep and tragic flaw. As a result, the United States for many generations struggled with a severe problem of national identity. One can, of course, find instances when both theories of the Union were used as mere rationalizations for economic or social interest. This should not, however, obscure the real motivational force of the underlying values that were at issue. The Civil War sprang not only from a conflict of economic and social interests, but also, as Hans Kohn has said, from a conflict of American nationalism with “another nascent true nationalism.”

Given this ambiguity in American political culture, it was natural
that our early party divisions should center on the national question. The purpose of the national party was, in the first place, to defend in word and deed the national ideal of the Union. But the national party did not simply defend a view of the Constitution and American federalism. It also made the national idea into a view of public policy. This was the view not only that the American people were one nation, but also that they ought over time to become more of a nation. In its various incarnations, the national party was, to use Croly's awkward phrase, the “nationalizing” party. In Hamilton's opinion, according to Croly, the central government was to be used “not merely to maintain the Constitution, but to promote the national interest and to consolidate the national organization,” a policy which implied “an active interference with the national course of American economic and political business and its regulation and guidance in the national direction.” In spite of many setbacks and the great crisis of the 1860's, this purpose was more and more fulfilled. “The organic growth [of the United States],” said Elihu Root, in 1913, “which must ultimately determine the form of institutions, has been away from a mere union of states towards the union of individuals in the relation of national citizenship.”

In opposition to Hamiltonian nationalism and elitism, Croly set Jeffersonian democracy. In it he found not only the political doctrine of “trust the people,” but also an economic doctrine of “extreme individualism.” “The people” were the best safeguard against authoritarianism in government and at the same time entirely capable of taking care of themselves individually. These beliefs led to the Jeffersonian conclusion that “good government, particularly on the part of Federal officials, consisted, apart from routine business, in letting things alone.” This “old fatal policy of drift” meant that in our history one result of Jeffersonian democracy was to promote “a system of unrestricted individual aggrandizement and collective irresponsibility.”

From Jefferson to F.D.R.

In what way does the national-provincial distinction relate to the liberal-conservative division and the positions of the two major parties in recent decades? Clearly, in the present-day meanings of the terms, Jefferson was no more a liberal than Hamilton a conservative. This is not to say, however, that the national question became irrelevant when the rise of the “social problem” brought forward the issues that ultimately produced the New Deal. For not the least remarkable aspect of that turning point was the exchange of policies, indeed of long-held principles, on this vital question by the Democratic and Republican parties. The Democratic party — more precisely, its liberal section — became the bearer of the national idea, while the
conservative wing of the Republicans became the champions of the provincial idea.

We are now so accustomed to thinking of the Democrats as the "nationalizing" party that we may well forget how radically contrary this tendency is to what that party stood for through most of its history. Again Croly's reading in *The Promise of American Life* is instructive. Reviewing Democratic advocacy of the "old fatal policy of drift" in general, and of such heresies in particular as "nullification, squatter sovereignty, secession, free silver and occasional projects of repudiation," he found that in all our history no "measure of legislation expressive of a progressive national idea can be attributed to the Democratic party." That party, he concluded, "cannot become the party of national responsibility without being faithless to its own creed." It was, of course, to the Republicans, as restored to their "historic position and purpose" by Theodore Roosevelt, that he looked for "vigorous national action" to deal with the social problem.

This was not an idle hope. It was surely a shorter step to the New Deal from the New Nationalism than from Wilson's New Freedom — at any rate, before the New Freedom in office had absorbed the main substance of the first Roosevelt's program. Perhaps after the era of Harding and Coolidge it was too late for the Republicans again to return to their "historic position and purpose." Still, one is tempted to speculate what would have happened if Al Smith had won in 1928 and Hoover had taken office in 1932 free of the obligation to defend the policies that had led to collapse.

Perhaps it was an historical accident. In any event it fell to the second Roosevelt, no small student and admirer of his cousin, to restore the national idea. His measures had definite "class" overtones that give them a distant, but discernible affinity with the Jeffersonian "cherishment of the people." Yet we miss a major dimension of the New Deal and of the liberalism it propagated if we confine our attention to its bearing on the economic interests of various social strata.

In dealing with economic concentration and deprivation, the New Deal and its successors created a new balance of power and a new level of security. By these measures, beneficiary groups, such as industrial labor and recent immigrants, also won a degree of acceptance in the national consciousness and in every-day social and economic intercourse that they had never previously enjoyed. American liberalism acted as a "nationalizing" force not only in the sense that it centralized governmental power, using the authority of the national government to deal with problems that had previously been left to state or local government, or had not been dealt with at all. It was also "nationalizing" in the sense that it integrated into the national community groups which had previously been marginal or excluded. Through the new doctrine and force of liberalism, the national idea
worked to integrate the pluralism of the twentieth century as it had once countered the territorial sectionalism of the nineteenth.

Of this liberal achievement the Democratic Party became the principal instrument. The result was an imbalance in our party system which persists to this day. For most of our history, each of the two main parties has had a mixed character, its outlook combining a major strength, moral and electoral, with a major weakness. A national party suffering from elitism has faced a democratic party put at a disadvantage by its provincialism. Not surprisingly in this country, the democratic party has shown greater longevity, so that the political party founded by Jefferson today may claim to be the oldest in the world.

Still, an opposition has been able to survive for long periods, even when burdened with a more or less ill-disguised distrust of the people. The essential electoral condition of its survival, however, has been an adherence to the national idea. When the Federalists weakened in this faith, they lost their coherence and their following and deservedly sank into nullity. Likewise, when the Whigs, for all their talk of Union, buried the problem of slavery as a national problem, they rightly went into decline. Similarly, when in the past generation the Republicans joined to their elitism the old provincial causes of the Democrats, they too lost support and fell into the position of the minority party. More recently, in the 1964 presidential campaign, pursuing this fatal course in the name of conservatism, they reduced themselves to such a position of impotence as to raise fears for the future of our two-party system. For at the same time, the Democrats, among whom the liberals were stronger than ever, retained in modern form important elements of their Jeffersonian heritage and also continued their adherence to the national idea. Croly's hope for a party that was at once national and democratic had been fulfilled, although hardly in the way that he had expected.

II

Today the national idea is in no danger from the grosser forms of menace that threatened it a hundred years ago. Yet as a theory of American federalism which provides an approach to constitutional interpretation and, even more important, sustains a state of mind, it still needs emphasis. When Southern Senators, or Barry Goldwater, explicitly advocate the compact theory, we need not be greatly disturbed. But was it only a lapse when President Eisenhower in 1952, having declared that the "Federal Government did not create the States," went on to claim that "the States created the Federal Government?"

Today the national idea is, first of all, a perspective for viewing and judging the relations of the Federal and the state governments. People sometimes slip into the habit of speaking as if there were
something inherently preferable about state or local government in contrast with Federal. And indeed if the states were the primary political communities, that would be true. But since the nation is our essential form of political existence, such preference as flows from the structure of authority favors the activity of what Daniel Webster called the "general government" as against the provincial governments. The point is relevant to the assertion that state and local governments are "closer" to the people. If, as the national theory teaches, one means by "the people" the basic political community, the nation as a whole, then certainly the "general government" is "closer" to this community than are the lesser governments whose contacts with it are partial and separated.

Similarly, from the perspective of the national theory, one will not necessarily be alarmed if the state governments decline in power and scope of activity in relation to the general government. From the viewpoint of the national theory, it is legitimate and logical that as the process of integration of the national community goes forward, the content of the common good, with whose promotion the central government is charged, should likewise develop. This is not to say that the national theory must imply the ultimate demise of the states. On the contrary, there are excellent practical reasons why they should flourish, especially in the context of cooperative federalism and new forms of regional cooperation. The merit of the national theory is to help us see that the considerations sustaining and defining a role for the states are almost entirely practical in character, not constitutional. In essence, this was also the view of Hamilton, Marshall and the men "who put across the Constitution and who set the national government going." For in their opinion, according to E. S. Corwin, "the national government...is under no constitutional compulsion, either in the selection of means whereby to make its powers effective or in the selection of objects to be attained by their exercise, to take account of the coexistence of the states or to concern itself to preserve any particular relationship of power between itself and the states."

**Croly and the national purpose**

But the national idea is more than a theory of constitutional interpretation. It also sustains a dynamic perspective on public policy and national development. In the first place, it favors the process of governmental unification which has been a principal theme of our political history. By governmental unification I mean what is often called "centralization," "consolidation" or, in Croly's terms, the "nationalization" of governmental functions. The national idea, however, does not legitimate governmental unification simply for its own sake. There is some end or purpose to which it is instrumental and in the
light of which one may judge in what specific ways and at what pace unification should proceed. In one phase of his thought, Croly clearly drew this distinction by making democracy itself this purpose.

To Croly, as to many other political theorists, the term “democracy” is less a concept of analysis than a stimulus to speculation. One need not agree with all his uses of the word to find his speculation interesting. Certainly, he did not confine the meaning of democracy to a conception of authority, a definition of how power ought to be distributed in the polity. To him it meant not only popular sovereignty, but also the end for which power was to be exerted. Yet he was not content with the Jeffersonian ideal of “equal rights for all and special privileges for none” as a definition of this end. For in this ideal he found that “extreme individualism” which, in the course of economic development, had produced the “social problem.” Indeed, in rejecting this doctrine Croly asserts that the national government must “discriminate” constructively “among the various prevailing ways of exercising individual rights” for the sake of certain results. These results consisted in the first place in “social improvement,” meaning action to promote “a constantly higher standard of living” and, more positively, “to guarantee to every male adult a certain minimum of economic power and responsibility.” In this branch of Croly’s approach to the “social problem,” it is fair to see his anticipation of the main theme of New Deal liberalism, its use of national power for economic balance and security.

Even more interesting to us today, however, is Croly’s conception of the other element in the democratic purpose in the twentieth century. This was to use the powers of the nation to promote “the increase of American individuality.” Indeed, to this problem of raising the standards and stimulating the pursuit of “individual distinction,” Croly gives far more attention than he does to the material problems of the economy. He thunders at the American’s faith in mere good intentions and his lack of moral and intellectual discipline. “In all civilized communities,” he wrote, “the great individualizing force is the resolute, efficient, and intense pursuit of special ideals, standards, and occupations.” In this emphasis one finds vivid anticipation of that “pursuit of excellence” which, beginning with the Kennedy Administration, has increasingly formed the theme of some of the more original programs of the national government.

For Croly, then, the national purpose, as he saw it in his time, was to use “the democratic organization for the joint benefit of individual distinction and social improvement.” This dual purpose was to legitimate and guide the process of governmental unification and the exercise of power by the national government. Similarly, if we look at the development of Federal programs in very recent years, it is possible and instructive to discern in them this same twofold
purpose. Plainly enough, there is in the Kennedy-Johnson effort a massive stratum of New Deal liberalism. I am thinking not only of the development of basic statutes, such as the wage-hour and social security laws, but also new programs using familiar means, such as the Appalachia program. Contrasting with this old stratum of public policy is a new layer. Typical and most important is the series of programs involving education. Looking at the problems that confronted President Kennedy just after his inauguration, Theodore H. White put first "the unbelievable problems of education and knowledge." Going over the main Kennedy programs a while back I counted fully a third that made education in some form a central element. And, it hardly need be said, the priority given education has only increased under President Johnson, who indeed is reported to have said that "the answer for all our national problems comes down to one single word: education."

The use of labels is of no great moment. But it is worth seeing where there is continuity and discontinuity between these new departures in public policy and the pattern of New Deal liberalism. There is continuity in the vigorous use of the powers of the national government. These measures are a further step in governmental unification. In particular, the growing programs of Federal aid to education mark a large advance in the process of unification which the New Deal itself greatly forwarded. In other respects, however, there are contrasts. Above all, where New Deal liberalism sought to achieve its effects by alterations in structure, especially economic structure, the new programs operate rather through improvements in the intellectual capacities of individuals—and not only intellectual, but also moral capacities, insofar as education develops powers of discipline, self-reliance, and independent choice. This difference in the tactics of reform implies also a difference in analysis. In place of that tinge of economic determinism which colored New Deal liberalism, this new liberalism, while as strongly national as the old, puts much greater emphasis on cultural factors.

Public policy, it hardly needs to be said, cannot be neatly and exclusively sorted out into a few simple categories. The erratic pressures, ad hoc responses, bureaucratic snarls, legislative compromises, and all the vast complexity of our society and its government mean that no descriptive scheme can do more than indicate general tendencies. Granting this obvious qualification, one can still outline the broad meaning that these tendencies have, given the national idea today. This is: that the process of governmental unification goes forward guided by a national purpose that can still be accurately stated in Croly's words: "the joint benefit of individual distinction and social improvement." Yet there is, I believe, a major dimension of the national idea of which this discussion has not yet taken account.
Towards national integration

Throughout The Promise of American Life Croly presents "the principle of nationality" as on a par with "the principle of democracy." To say, however, that the national idea means merely that unification should be used to promote democratization is to make the national subordinate to the democratic idea. One cannot feel that this is fair to Croly's meaning. The "principle of nationality" clearly means more than that a strong central government is acting to promote "the joint benefit of individual distinction and social improvement." It means further that a process of national integration is being carried on in which the community is being made more of a community.

National government and national community, like the processes of unification and integration from which they emerge, are interdependent. At the moment, however, I wish to direct attention to the national community as something distinguishable from government. For this community and the process of integration by which it develops are surely much harder to observe and analyze than the national government and its growth. Yet it hardly need be said that all that furious activity and mighty agglomeration of power at the center has little point apart from the quality of life it promotes in the nation.

No national community, especially if it is a free nation, will embrace the whole of an individual's life. Outside these national bonds will remain not only the activities of many groups, but also the ultimate privacy of the individual. Yet community in the form of nationality can be a principal means of moral fulfillment.

By community I mean, to begin with, an emotional fact: a massive background feeling of "belongingness" and identification. This emotional aspect of American nationality is not usually in the front of our consciousness. But from time to time, in moments of ritual or crisis or reflection—or perhaps simply when we travel around the country or return home from abroad—it comes sharply forward, showing its power. We perceive then a force that continually, although imperceptibly, conditions our attitudes and behavior. We recognize that, apart from the private emotions which we share with family, friends and other limited groups, we are joined with a vast national community by a distinctive kind of emotional tie: by public joy, grief, pride, anger, envy, fear, hope and so on. Few Americans who watched the funeral of President Kennedy will doubt this fact. His family and personal friends had their private grief. Throughout the world people could respond to certain universal human themes, such as the tragedy of a gallant and youthful leader struck down senselessly at the height of his powers and promise. But for Americans there was a special experience: emotions of grief, anger, fear and loss that only members of this national community could feel.

People who constitute a community in some basic sense share a
common life. This common life consists, in one respect, of certain resemblances, certain conformities. In this sense, one may speak of an American consensus — a pattern of values and beliefs generally pervading the nation — or perhaps even of an American national character. These shared cultural objects, constituting resemblances among the members of the community, are a source of solidarity.

It is usually these resemblances that are analyzed by students of nations and their development. Exclusively to emphasize resemblance, however, is misleading, for there is another equally important aspect of community, viz., the fact that relations among members are complementary. Croly suggested this aspect when he spoke of the national community as "a socially constructive drama." Durkheim referred to the "division of labor" and in a memorable passage described the mutual identification that results from its complementary diversities. "The image of the one who completes us," he wrote, "becomes inseparable from ours, not only because it is frequently associated with ours, but particularly because it is the natural complement of it. It thus becomes an integral and permanent part of our conscience, to such a point that we can no longer separate ourselves from it and seek to increase its force."

Here Durkheim is speaking of face-to-face communities in which the members are directly and visibly in contact with one another. His insight, however, directs attention to similar complementary relations in a large-scale community, such as a nation, in which a widely shared image of interlocking roles or types likewise enhances solidarity. This is, I think, our commonsense perception of the matter. If we reflect on the object of our national loyalty, one aspect is no doubt certain general ideas. With its political and non-political elements, this consensus, although rough and ready and far from lucidly systematic, is vitally important to the maintenance of the governmental and social systems. Yet the object toward which our national feelings are directed obviously includes far more. It is more concrete and richly varied, more historical and less ideological. It is a common life, consisting not only of similarities, but also diversities. In other words, our attachment to the nation does not proceed simply from our resemblances — the American consensus or "way of life." The social context with which we identify as members of the nation also includes a pattern of complex, varied and highly differentiated attitudes and behavior.

Along with the more familiar factor of consensual cohesion, this functional cohesion is a major source of the stability of American institutions. Consensus is, of course, important and students of American government and society are right to be much occupied with identifying a body of values and beliefs that members of the national community generally share. Yet this consensus on generalities may
sometimes be a thin and insufficient foundation for toleration and support between persons or groups. In such situations, it is helpful to see that a further force for stability may be provided by the more particularistic bonds of functional cohesion.

National integration in this twofold meaning is a principal purpose of governmental unification. To say, however, that the thrust of the national idea is in this sense "to make the nation more of a nation" is to attribute to it no new significance. From the start this was one of its goals and effects. If, for instance, the Whig policy of internal improvements had been realized, our common life as a nation could not have failed to be enriched and strengthened. To stress this old significance here is important in order to make clear that the national idea means something more than mere centralization of power. As the principle of community, it provides, along with the democratic idea, one of the standards by which governmental unification can be justified and by which it should be controlled and guided.

The national idea and civil rights

The national idea has persisted throughout our history. It has always confronted opposition, and this tension has constituted one of the major axes of our political life. Its friends have not always cherished "the people" or professed sensitivity to the grievances of the poor. At different times they have called themselves Federalists, Whigs, and Republicans. Beginning in the 1930's, the Democrats, or more precisely the liberal Democrats, became the principal bearers of the national idea. The liberalism brought into existence by the New Deal consisted of a combination of the national idea and the democratic idea which was unique in our history, although in broad outline it had been anticipated by Herbert Croly. Looked at from the democratic perspective (in Croly's meaning), it aims at the "joint benefit" of social improvement and individual distinction. Yet these same programs also serve the national idea by providing means and enhancing capacities for extending and deepening community.

At present, the civil rights programs are without doubt the most important example of this old effort to make the nation more of a nation. According to some historic conceptions of liberalism, it is a proper and decent solution for a minority if it is given the opportunity to live unto itself in such a way that it may enjoy and develop its own way of life — a status comparable, for instance, to that of the French-speaking people of Canada. American liberalism, however, rejects such solutions along with the doctrine of "separate but equal" and, as a force influencing both Negroes and whites, compels us toward integration. This new stage in American nation-building is surely one of the most ambitious, difficult and characteristic undertakings into which the national idea has led us.