Nationalism in the Age of French Revolution

Edited by

OTTO DANN AND JOHN DINWIDDY

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THE HAMBLEDON PRESS
LONDON AND RONCEVERTE

Published by The Hambledon Press 1988

102 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1 8HX (U.K.)
309 Greenbrier Avenue, Ronceverte, WV 24970 (U.S.A.)

ISBN 0 907628 97 4

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Nationalism in the age of the
French Revolution.
1. Nationalism — Europe — History
2. Europe — Politics and government
— 18th century 3. Europe — Politics
and government — 1789-1900
I. Dann, Otto II. Dinwiddy, J. R.
320.5'4'094 D288

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Nationalism in the age of the French revolution.
Bibliography: p.
Includes index.
1. Nationalism — Europe — History — 18th century.
2. Nationalism — Europe — History — 19th century.
I. Dann, Otto II. Dinwiddy, J. R. (John Rowland),
1939-
D309.N38 1988 320.5'4'094 88-11283

Printed and bound by Billing and Sons Ltd., Worcester

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Preface

John Dinwiddy and Otto Dann

It has long been almost a truism of European history that the French Revolution gave a great stimulus to the growth of modern nationalism. The present volume sets out to examine in detail how far and for what reasons the era of the Revolution did see major developments in this respect in the various parts of Europe. The collection derives originally from a colloquium on 'The effects of the French Revolution on the awakening of modern nationalism in Europe', which was held at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris under the auspices of the European Science Foundation in November 1985. Scholars from Denmark, England, France, Holland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and West Germany took part. Most of them provided papers on late-eighteenth-century nationalism in their respective countries, having been asked to address themselves to a common set of questions which included the following: How far had national consciousness developed before 1789? How far and in what ways were nationalist impulses strengthened by contact with Revolutionary France? What social forces were encouraging the growth of a sense of nationhood, and through what media and organizations were nationalist concepts propagated? To what extent was the development of nationalism associated with institutional change and 'modernization'? The proceedings of the colloquium were carried on in English, French and German; but it was decided that a volume of essays should be published in English, which would make available to English-speaking readers the wide range of research and interpretation drawn upon and brought together by the various participants. The contributions were therefore revised and translated and a composite bibliography was compiled as an adjunct to the volume. The editors and contributors are deeply grateful to the European Science Foundation for sponsoring the original colloquium, and to Christoph Mühlberg and Michael Evans of the ESF secretariat for their invaluable work in helping to organize it.

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1

*Introduction**

Otto Dann

The French Revolution presented a great challenge to all European peoples, and remains fundamental to our understanding of the formation of the modern world. A major aspect of its historical importance lies in the fact that it is commonly regarded as the period when a modern form of nationalism was born, and we are reminded of this aspect every time we hear the Marseillaise. Those who are acquainted with the history of Europe in the eighteenth century know, however, that in the same epoch and even before the Revolution took place, national ideas and patriotic movements could also be observed in other countries.

Although the French Revolution may not have been the beginning of all forms of European nationalism, it certainly influenced all of them greatly. We must be careful, however, when faced with traditional, mostly nineteenth-century, evaluations of this Revolution, and with the numerous stereotyped explanations applied to it. Recent historiography has reassessed the importance of the French Revolution for developments in the various countries of Europe and for our general understanding of modern history.[1] The essays collected in this volume try to contribute to this debate by focusing on the question of the origins of modern nationalism in Europe.

The literature on the subject presents a strange picture. In general the historiography still sticks firmly to the French Revolution as the starting point of nationalism, but for more than thirty years this field has not been researched in detail.[2] The last international debate took place in 1970. A study of the proceedings of that conference leads to the conclusion that

*I am much indebted to John Dinwiddy and Christine Lattek for their help in translating and discussing this essay.

[1] See e.g. François Furet, *Penser la Révolution française* (Paris, 1978); Michel Vovelle, *Die Französische Revolution. Soziale Bewegung und Umbruch der Mentalitäten* (Munich, 1982).

[2] See e.g. C.J.H. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York, 1931); Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London, 1961); E. Lemberg, *Nationalismus*, Bd. 1 (Reinbek, 1964); Peter Alter, *Nationalismus* (Frankfurt, 1985), pp. 60 seq. The best survey of national developments before 1789 hitherto published is Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism. A Study in its Origin and Background* (New York, 1945).

our approaches today are different from the ones adopted there, with their tendency to view the Revolution from Marxist perspectives and to treat it as a heroic episode.[3]

New methodological and conceptual questions about nationalism are being posed by political science, sociology, and political philosophy. The works of Karl Deutsch and his disciples have shown the importance of analysing the process of nation-building, which underlies every form of nationalism.[4] Social scientists have discussed recent forms of nationalism in Third World countries in connection with theories of modernization; and they have thus, by way of comparison, produced new concepts for analysing and assessing the formation of nations and national states in early modern Europe.[5] From a sociological standpoint, Anthony D. Smith has recently stressed the ethnic components of nationalism, and Ernest Gellner has shown how political philosophy can pose sociological questions and apply them to intellectual and cultural developments.[6] All of these approaches have given historiography new tasks and new opportunities though so far these have rarely been followed up.[7]

The essays in this volume face particular difficulties in examining the rise of modern nationalism in eighteenth-century Europe. To begin with, there are terminological problems. In particular, which processes or stages of development should be described as 'nationalism', and which as 'patriotism'? Undoubtedly this question cannot be answered in a general and definitive way, since at the time of the French Revolution traditional and novel forms of politics went hand in hand and overlapped. It is desirable, however, to provide some conceptual orientation. At the same time, we need always to bear in mind the two dimensions of our topic: first the development of theories and concepts, as a national movement needs to express itself in a new political language, using new ideas and slogans; and secondly the field of social and political change, involving the formation of national organizations and the growth of conflict between patriots and established régimes.

[3] *Actes du colloque Patriotisme et nationalisme en Europe à l'époque de la Révolution française et de Napoléon*, XIII[e] Congrès international des Sciences historiques, Moscow 1970 (Paris, 1973).

[4] K.W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956). Cf. especially K.W. Deutsch and W.J. Foltz (eds.), *Nation-Building* (New York, 1963); S. Rokkan, K. Seelen and J. Warmbrunn, *Nation-Building* (The Hague, 1973).

[5] Cf. Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, 1976).

[6] Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1986); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (London, 1983).

[7] For a pioneering application of sociological analysis to history see Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge, 1985; originally published in German, Prague, 1969); a recent survey with a more conceptual approach is John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester, 1982).

II

Let us first turn to the development of concepts and vocabulary. It is important to observe here that the notions used in the eighteenth century differ greatly from our own political and academic terms. Today the concept 'nation' is always thought of in a political context and in connection with the state, while in the eighteenth century there were still two more or less distinct meanings attached to the term: 'nation' as a group of people of identical origin, and 'nation' as the collective holder of sovereignty. Towards the end of the century these two concepts were gradually merged, with explosive results in some countries.

Today it is common for scholars to apply the term 'nationalism' not only to chauvinistic tendencies but to any political movement by which a social group, regarding itself as a nation, aims at political sovereignty in its area of settlement and claims political participation and autonomy. On the other hand, we tend to use the term 'patriotism' to describe movements which are concerned with the welfare of their native country but do not aim at a radical reconstruction of the political system.

With this distinction in mind, let us consider what words and terms were used in the eighteenth century to describe nationalist or patriotic behaviour. The term 'nationalism' was hardly used at all. It can be found occasionally in eighteenth-century publications, for example in Herder's writings. He justifies 'nationalism' as a mode of behaviour for young peoples.[8] But generally the term was used in a pejorative sense to denote an exaggerated pride in one's own nation, an intolerant prejudice, similar to our term 'chauvinism'. In direct contrast to 'nationalism', the term 'patriotism' was used to describe all forms of national thinking in eighteenth-century societies. It was always defined as 'love for the fatherland' (*amor patriae*). Patriots were those who loved their country so much that they were always willing to value it above other countries, to work for its welfare, and to defend it in times of war. *The Patriot* was a title given to a number of periodicals. In all societies the term 'patriot' was an honorific one, used as such in many eulogies and obituaries.

Hence it is not surprising that in the second half of the century several politically active groups called themselves 'patriots'. The term became the distinguishing label of certain political parties.[9] The range of such parties shows, however, that in this epoch it was not always clear what patriotism meant. Was one's fatherland (*patria*) the territory of one's origin, the land of one's forefathers, or the country in which one felt most at home and with whose constitution one was most in sympathy? Because the term had a wide range of meanings, it was possible to have

[8] See Jacques Godechot's remarks, below pp. 13–16.

[9] See e.g. the Dutch case (H. Reitsma, below pp. 175–7) and the Swedish one (E. Lönnroth, below p. 107).

not only one but several 'fatherlands' – a vital problem for eighteenth-century Germany.[10] Furthermore there was an ambiguity about what 'love for the fatherland' really implied. Was it patriotic to want to conserve, or to want to improve and reform, the country's constitution? We shall return to this question later.

Compared to the dominant role of the terms 'patriot, patriotic, patriotism', the term 'nation' played an inferior role in eighteenth-century European societies – until the Revolution in France. Also, the adjective 'national' was very rarely used. The derivatives of the Latin term *natio* come into general use in European popular parlance relatively late and not everywhere. From the fifteenth century onwards, this term was increasingly used in political contexts and developed, as mentioned above, two different meanings.

According to one usage, dating originally from antiquity and the middle ages, 'nation' was understood in its old Latin sense as meaning a people of the same origin. Common language was the first criterion, another being common history. The latter in the form of 'national history' became a subject of academic research. Nations in this sense were the outcome of their own history and had evolved distinctive characteristics. This concept was not markedly different from the term 'people'.[11]

In his *Encyclopédie*, Diderot gave a classic definition of a different usage of the word '*nation*' as 'une quantité considérable de peuple qui habite une certaine étendue de pays, renfermée dans de certaines limites, et qui obéit au même gouvernement'.[12] Here, 'nation' is used in a political sense and describes the population of a state. Common political organizations and common laws are the main criteria. In the world of the ancien régime, where laws did not usually apply to all members of the state but only to particular social groups, the term 'nation' did not denote the whole population but only those with political rights. In feudal societies this was, above all, the aristocracy, and in republics the active citizens.

This political conception of the 'nation' embraced all those who belonged to the *societas civilis*, i.e. only those who had a right to participate in politics and to share in the exercise of sovereignty. The 'nation', therefore, was often envisaged as facing the king. The king and the nation made up the *societas civilis* and together constituted the state. The 'nation' in this sense was in many countries differentiated from what

[10] Cf. e.g. the situation in the city of Mainz (F. Dumont, below, p. 160–1); and on the individual case of Herder's allegiances, see Hans Kohn, p. 341, and Otto Dann, 'Herder und die Deutsche Bewegung', in Gerhard Sauder (ed.), *Johann Gottfried Herder 1744–1803* (Hamburg, 1987), pp. 318 seq.

[11] Cf. the essays of Benedykt Zientara and Frantisek Graus in Otto Dann (ed.), *Nationalismus in vorindustrieller Zeit* (Munich, 1986), pp. 12 seq. and 36 seq.

[12] *Encyclopédie* (17 vols., Paris, 1751–65), xi. 36.

was called the 'people', the latter term being used to describe those classes of a population which did not have political rights and consequently did not belong to the nation.

The perimeters of the political concept of the 'nation' indicate that it involved considerable problems. How were political rights to be distributed between king and nation? Who was to be sovereign? Could the 'people' be permanently excluded from the 'nation'? The problems and conflicts inherent in such questions dominated the history of many European societies during the eighteenth century. They can only be understood if we consider the political and social processes which formed the background to the national question.

III

What forces had shaped embryonic nationalism in European societies prior to the eighteenth century? And what social and political tendencies were associated with the development of nations in the century of the Enlightenment?

First of all we must consider the process of nation-building, the basis of all national developments. From the time of the decline of the Carolingian Empire, nations began to emerge as a new force in the process of state-building in Europe.[13] The leading social groups which shared a common language and other characteristics intensified their mutual links in order to pursue their common interests. A new sense of identity, national consciousness, came into being and formed the basis of a common state. The founders of the new nations were at first only two classes of the population: the nobility, electing or recognizing a national king, and the clergy, the intelligentsia, articulating the concepts of the new national consciousness. From the middle ages onwards, educated laymen and in due course other social groups followed suit. But we must bear in mind that the 'nation' in these periods never included – nor did it ever claim to include – the whole population, but only those classes which had developed a sense of national identity and begun to act upon it.

In close conjunction with the process of nation-building, more developed national ideologies emerged. From the later middle ages onwards, documents can be found referring to specific peoples as the subjects of history, thereby giving a new meaning to the term 'nation'.

[13] See Helmut Beumann, 'Zur Nationenbildung im Mittelalter', in Otto Dann (ed.), *Nationalismus in vorindustrieller Zeit*, pp. 21–33; F. Graus, *Die Nationsbildung der Westslaven im Mittelalter* (Sigmaringen, 1980); H. Beumann and W. Schroeder (eds.), *Aspekte der Nationenbildung im Mittelalter* (Sigmaringen, 1978); J.R. Strayer, 'The historical experience of nation-building in Europe', in Deutsch and Foltz (eds.), *Nation-Building* (New York, 1963), pp. 23–49.

These 'nations' were also acquiring their own national historiographies. Individuals of special importance became national symbols: here were the beginnings of a national ideology in which stereotypes and prejudices played significant roles.[14] These national historiographies often emerged and developed at the same time as early national movements, such as Hussitism in fifteenth-century Bohemia, and there are consequently grounds for locating the origins of nationalism at the times when such movements occurred.

In connection with nation-building and the development of national ideologies, the process of modern 'state-building' is of particular importance. In order to integrate the population into a common citizenship, the administrative system had to be comprehensive and a new legitimation was required for government. Thus national ideas became important as a means of developing a common political identity for all subjects. The social groups leading the state-building process increasingly had recourse to national arguments in order to explain and justify their political actions. In this way the territorial state could evolve into a nation-state. This evolution did not mean an immediate change in the political system or in the distribution of power, but only an alteration in modes of political legitimation and self-definition. The government could invoke the nation in its political argument and propaganda, and the promotion of a sense of national identity became a major concern of the state.[15]

We must not overlook, however, the fact that the process of modern state-building did not everywhere lead to the foundation of a national state. In some areas another type of modern state was coming into being: the dynastic state in which a sovereign, with the help of the privileged classes, ruled several peoples or only a part of an old people. There were great obstacles to such a state becoming a nation-state, and in the world of the eighteenth century it was not always regarded as necessary that it should do so.

The process of modern state-building was usually led by the king, while other elements in society – nobles and citizens – played subordinate parts. Inevitably these groups began to pose their own demands. Struggles for participation in the state and its reform broke out and to a large extent conditioned the history of many European states from the seventeenth century onwards. From the start, these disputes were

[14] For a recent survey see F. Graus, 'Nationale Deutungsmuster der Vergangenheit in spätmittelalterlichen Chroniken', in Otto Dann (ed.), *Nationalismus in vorindustrieller Zeit*, pp. 35–53; also C.L. Tipton, *Nationalism in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1972); E.D. Marcu, *Sixteenth-Century Nationalism* (New York, 1976); K.F. Werner, 'Les nations et le sentiment national dans l'Europe médiévale', *Revue historique*, ccxliv (1970), 285–304.

[15] See Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. There does not yet exist any general comparative analysis of the building of nation-states in Europe in the early modern period, but see the remarks of Breuilly, pp. 50 seq. and 353 seq.

characterized by the emergence of patriotic movements, and their nationalist character became increasingly predominant in the course of the eighteenth century.

At first such struggles tended to be confrontations between the king and the privileged classes, which were often organized in a parliament. Vis à vis the king, they called themselves 'the nation' – in the political sense of the word – or representatives and champions of the nation. Thus particular classes could declare their rights to be 'national liberties', and fought to obtain the king's recognition for these so-called 'national rights'.[16] If the sovereign came from a different nation, such a conflict gained an extra dimension: the struggle for privileged liberties acquired the characteristics of a movement for national liberation from foreign oppression.[17]

'Patriotism' played an important role in this type of conflict: it became the chief source of legitimation and motivation for all those who fought for 'national liberties'. So far as the privileged classes were concerned, this usually meant fighting for the preservation of the old institutions of the community. 'National constitutionalism', as J. H. Elliott has called it, thus had the purpose of conserving the native constitution.[18]

During the eighteenth century patriotism changed its appearance in many European countries. A new concept of patriotism was formulated, outside the old circles of privilege, by the educated middle classes.[19] Influenced by the natural-law theories of the Enlightenment, they formulated a new social model ensuring the inclusion of the non-privileged classes in the nation. In their eyes, this new form of patriotism was a well-founded ethical position, allowing only a secondary role for class-interests, and concerned for the welfare for all citizens. This was no longer a conservative concept of patriotism: patriotic activity now meant trying to alter and modernize the constitution of the fatherland;

[16] On the French case see R. Bickart, *Les Parlements et la notion de souveraineté national* (Paris, 1932); and for the experience of Sweden in the eighteenth century see Lönnroth, below p. 103. For the position of the English parliament in the Tudor period see G.R. Elton, 'English national self-consciousness and the Parliament in the sixteenth century', in Otto Dann (ed.), *Nationalismus in vorindustrieller Zeit*, pp. 73–82. Cf. also Breuilly, pp. 53 seq.

[17] For the example of the Netherlands during the war against Habsburg Spain see Johan Huizinga, 'How Holland became a nation', in his *Verzamelde Werken* (9 vols., Haarlem, 1948–53), ii. 266–83; and for the Hungarian diet faced with the Habsburg government see K. Benda, below pp. 131–2.

[18] J.H. Elliott, 'Revolution and continuity in Early Modern Europe', *Past and Present*, xlii (1969), 47 seq.

[19] On the Swiss case see Ulrich Im Hof, below p. 183, and his *magnum opus* on the 'Helvetic Society', *Die Entstehung einer politischen Öffentlichkeit in der Schweiz. Struktur and Tätigkeit der Helvetischen Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart, 1983); on German patriotism see H. Segeberg, below p. 142, and C. Prignitz, *Vaterlandsliebe und Freiheit. Deutscher Patriotismus von 1750–1850* (Wiesbaden, 1981); and for developments in Denmark see O. Feldbaek, below pp. 89–96.

enlightened reformers called themselves 'patriots'. If the sovereign himself was a reformer, he could be considered the First Patriot of his country; if he was not, the reformers formed a patriotic opposition against him. Their aim was a reformed fatherland, a new society based on an enlarged concept of the nation. But they respected the basic framework of the existing constitution; they were not revolutionaries.

IV

In eighteenth-century Europe some societies and social classes went a step further in their struggle for participation. They demanded not only participation for the patriots but posed the question of sovereignty. They desired full political sovereignty and autonomy for the whole nation. The concept of patriotism had thus developed into nationalism, which in the prevailing circumstances was a revolutionary programme.

Such a development presupposed a consensus that envisaged the society as a democratic nation. This process had begun in France in the mid-eighteenth century with a revolutionary new interpretation of theories of natural rights. Rousseau was the first to formulate the concept of a society in which a nation of citizens with equal rights would govern itself democratically, and in which all aspects of social life would be regulated on the basis of popular agreement. This nation would include all inhabitants, nobody being excluded; 'people' and 'nation' would become one.[20]

The term 'nation' was thus defined in a new and radical way. The model of a democratic nation was based on two main principles that are still valued in democratic societies today: the principle of the sovereignty of the people, and the idea that every individual has inalienable human rights. The new concept of the 'nation' expressed the identity and self-image of the modern political society in a general sense; its functions included political legitimation, social integration, the cultivation of loyalty, and the mobilization of the citizens.[21]

The new concept of the 'nation' tended to be not only anti-monarchical, but also anti-aristocratic, and it consequently involved breaking with the world of the ancien régime. The modern nation could not become a political reality in feudal societies, for its emergence

[20] See A.M. Cohler, *Rousseau and Nationalism* (New York, 1970); Iring Fetscher, *Rousseaus politische Philosophie* (Neuwied, 1960); Otto Vossler, *Der Nationalgedanke von Rousseau bis Ranke* (Berlin, 1937).

[21] For the development of the concept of modern nationalism see especially Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*; Hans Kohn, *The Age of Nationalism*. For the wider historical context see E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution* (New York, 1962); R.R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution* (2 vols., Princeton, 1959–64); Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship* (2nd edn., Berkeley, 1977).

required the propelling force of a wider political movement of modern nationalism. This points to the second condition for the realization of the modern nation. The intelligentsia which had developed the new concept of a democractic nation was unable to mobilize within its own milieu the social forces necessary to overwhelm the entrenched position of the privileged. It needed allies who were interested on their own account in altering current political conditions. Such allies could occasionally be found among the impoverished aristocracy, but they were mainly to be found among the middle classes and within the working population.

The creation of a new democratic nation is an act that each society can only achieve by and for itself. In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, two pioneering societies, the United States and France, were leading the way in this respect, and their experience and example provided important impulses for national movements elsewhere.[22] The American Revolution provided the first model of a new nation, but the circumstances in which it came into existence were somewhat remote from those of Europe. For the emergence of nationalism within the European world the French Revolution was more influential. In considering the effects of that Revolution, one needs to distinguish between those national movements which received a positive stimulus from the French example, and those which arose in opposition to French power and expansionism.

Of course, since circumstances and influences varied, there were many different ways in which modern nations were formed. But if one takes a broad view of European countries and their different modes of development, two general tendencies can be discerned. If a nation-state had already been in existence during the period of the ancien régime, the crucial point was the problem of sovereignty. The new nation only had to conquer the existing state. In this situation the national movement was identical with the struggle for democratic reforms and institutions. France provides the classic example: here the term 'nation' developed in the second half of the century from one that implied antagonism towards absolute monarchy to one that implied hostility towards the aristocracy and feudalism; and during the Great Revolution it became the dominant

[22] For the national character of the American Revolution and its impact on 'patriots' in Europe see Hans Kohn, *American Nationalism* (New York, 1957); Michael Kammen, *A Season of Youth. The American Revolution and the Historical Imagination* (New York, 1978); *The Impact of the American Revolution Abroad* (Washington, 1976); Horst Dippel, 'Die Wirkung der amerikanischen Revolution auf Deutschland und Frankreich', in Hans Ulrich Wehler (ed.), *200 Jahre Amerikanische Revolution und moderne Revolutionsforschung* (Göttingen, 1976), pp. 101–21. For the impact of the French Revolution on national developments in Europe see the *magnum opus* of Jacques Godechot, *La Grande Nation* (2 vols., Paris, 1956).

and integrating leitmotif.[23] But there were other countries in which a different route was followed, one involving gradual evolutionary change of the nation-state and its constitution. It should be noted that this was the route most favoured by Enlightenment opinion in Europe.[24]

If, however, the basis of a nation-state did not exist, the conditions for the realization of a modern nation were completely different. For all peoples in this situation – and they formed the majority in Europe – the building of a modern nation and the achievement of its autonomy were considerably more difficult and lengthy processes. As a first step, an ethnic community living under foreign rule had to develop into a self-confident nation.[25] This process of nation-building was especially difficult in those territories where several ethnic groups lived together, and it could lead to alternative and competing conceptions of the nation.[26] In any case new methods of nationwide communication and organization had to be found, often in the face of laws and regulations intended to inhibit such developments. Thereafter in some cases a final step still remained to be taken: the conversion of aspirations for national autonomy into the reality of a nation-state. Sometimes this was only possible through a national war of liberation. In many European countries in the second half of the eighteenth century, the pioneers of national movements were undertaking the various tasks that were necessary in the protracted process of building new autonomous nations.[27]

V

It will be apparent from the essays printed in this volume that in regard to national tendencies in eighteenth-century European societies, a great variety of concepts and developments are observable. This introduction, however, has attempted to present a broad perspective and has emphasized three general aspects. The first is the efforts of modernizing

[23] Cf. E. Fehrenbach, 'Nation', in R. Reichardt and E. Schmitt (eds.), *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich 1680–1820*, Heft 7 (Munich, 1986), pp. 75–107; B.F. Hyslop, *French Nationalism in 1789, according to the General Cahiers* (New York, 1934).

[24] Cf. the developments in the Netherlands (Reitsma, below pp. 171–82), in the last period of the Polish state (M. Müller, below pp. 113–28), and in England (J. Dinwiddy, below pp. 53–70).

[25] Cf. the conditions in Italy (M. Meriggi, below pp. 199–212) and the general explanations of A.D. Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, pp. 153 seq.

[26] See the complicated situation in Hungary: Benda, below pp. 129–35, and M. Csáky, *Von der Aufklärung zum Liberalismus* (Vienna, 1981), pp. 156 seq.

[27] Cf. especially the East-European scene: M. Hroch, *Social Preconditions*; P.F. Sugar and I.J. Ledere (eds.), *Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (London, 1969); E. Niederhauser, *The Rise of Nationality in Eastern Europe* (Budapest, 1981); Breuilly, chaps. 2 and 3.

governments to give their states a national character, and to integrate their subjects by encouraging the process of nation-building and especially the rise of a national culture. The second is 'patriotism' as the most important form in which national attitudes found their expression in the eighteenth century. While at first it strove to preserve the traditional constitution, it shifted its emphasis in the second half of the century to demands for the reform and modernization of the state and society. The third is the rise of a new model of the democratic nation which included the recognition of human rights and political participation for all citizens. This conception was characteristic of the 'age of the democratic revolution', which became an age of nationalism; and the conception was realized in two different ways, through democratic change in already existing states, and through national movements striving for liberation and national autonomy.

The history of patriotic movements in European countries during the eighteenth century may seem bewildering, since old forms existed alongside new ones in the societies that were undergoing the process of transition from feudal to democratic constitutions. In the French Revolution the modern concept of a democratic nation proved its enormous power of social mobilization and political legitimation for the first time. The French path towards the creation of a modern nation may have been only one among many, but the practice of arguing in national terms has not since disappeared from political debate and the concept of a democratic nation still forms a basic part of our political understanding today.

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2

The New Concept of the Nation and its Diffusion in Europe

Jacques Godechot

Some Remarks on Terminology

Nation, nationalisme, nationalités. Of these three words, only the first existed in the French language in 1789, though it was used with a meaning rather different from that which it has today. It is true that Furetière, in his *Dictionnaire* published in 1690, wrote: '*Nation* signifies a great people inhabiting a single area of territory defined by certain boundaries, or even under a certain dominion.' The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, in its editions of 1694, 1740 and 1762, gave a similar definition. 'A *Nation*', it said, 'is constituted by all the inhabitants of a single State, of a single country, who live under the same laws and employ the same language.' Montesquieu[1] and Voltaire[2] also used the word *nation* in this sense. But in *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*, and also in the *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des Nations*, Voltaire used the word *nation* in two different senses. The first was that of Furetière and of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie*: 'England, this witty and bold nation';[3] 'the nations of northern Europe, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Russia';[4] 'the French nation'.[5] The second did not correspond to the definitions which we have cited. For example, Voltaire used the terms '*nation allemande*' and '*nation germanique*',[6] although one could not say that at that period the Germans lived 'under a certain dominion' or 'under the same laws'. The definition of Furetière and of the Academy applied even less to the expression '*la nation juive*', which was often used in the *Essai*.[7] The Jews, in the eighteenth century, did not inhabit 'a single area of territory defined by certain boundaries'. Furthermore, the word *nation* was used in France in

[1] Montesquieu, *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence* (Paris, 1734), iii. 80.

[2] Voltaire, *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations*, ed. René Pomeau (2 vols., Paris, 1963), i. 136.

[3] Voltaire, *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*, ed. René Pomeau (Paris, 1957), p. 617.

[4] Ibid., p. 621.

[5] Ibid., pp. 619, 633, 642, 648, 680, etc.

[6] Voltaire, *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*, pp. 621, 622.

[7] Voltaire, *Essai sur le moeurs*, i. 115, 122, 136.