



Dean Kostantaras

# Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848

Amsterdam  
University  
Press

A  
X  
U  
X  
P  
X

Amsterdam  
University  
Press

Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848



Amsterdam  
University  
Press

# Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848

*Dean Kostantaras*

Amsterdam University Press



Amsterdam  
University  
Press

Cover illustration: Gustaf Wappers's *Episode of the September Days 1830, on the Grand Place of Brussels*, painted in 1835. Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels.

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden

Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 94 6298 518 6

e-ISBN 978 90 4853 621 4

DOI 10.5117/9789462985186

NUR 685

© D. Kostantaras / Amsterdam University Press B.V., Amsterdam 2020

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the written permission of both the copyright owner and the author of the book.



Amsterdam  
University  
Press

To Carmen and Yianni,  
with love, on the beginning of their journeys.



Amsterdam  
University  
Press

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction	9
2. Enlightenment Era Representations of the Nation	23
3. The Enlightenment Nation as a Site of Practice	51
4. The French Revolution and Napoleonic Inheritance	79
5. The Greek Revolution of 1821	107
6. Revolutions of 1830	137
7. Revolutions of 1848	173
8. Epilogue	203
Bibliography	209
About the Author	259
Index	261



# 1. Introduction

## Abstract

The present chapter introduces readers to the major themes and lines of enquiry. Reference is also made to authors and works of both recent and earlier vintage which deal with similar questions and the manner in which their views cohere or conflict with the positions taken here.

**Keywords:** Enlightenment, historiography, composite revolution

None of the trends which the peoples of Europe are following in our day is as difficult to interpret aright as the one which manifests itself in national aspirations.<sup>1</sup>

The words above are taken from a work by the Hungarian statesman Jozsef Eötvös (1813-1871) published in the aftermath of the 1848 revolutions. Eötvös alludes to the novelty of the national ‘aspirations’ declared in the course of these and earlier upheavals, their diverse forms, and his difficulty in satisfactorily explaining the cause or causes of their relatively sudden appearance. Many of his contemporaries, including those with strong national convictions of their own, were similarly perplexed. As Adamantios Korais (1748-1833) wrote when trying to account for the rise of Greek national sentiment in his lifetime, ‘We see such a succession of cause and effect, such a concourse of varying circumstances, and yet all conspiring toward the same end, that it is quite impossible for me to assign to each its proper place in the sequence of events.’<sup>2</sup>

The difficulties of these earlier figures may provide some consolation for modern researchers when struggling themselves to reconstruct how, and again in a rather short space of time, the nation became an object of major importance in questions of collective identity and power. So

1 Eötvös, *The Dominant Ideas of the Nineteenth Century*, I, p. 109.

2 Korais, *Mémoire*, p. 15.

great in fact have been the changes rendered to the political geography of Europe in the intervening years that its modern history may simply be told, according to some, as the 'history of nationalism.'<sup>3</sup> Still, analytical problems, not unlike those articulated by the figures mentioned above, continue to resonate in contemporary debates. These same dilemmas press heavily on the present work, which represents yet another attempt to lend some coherence to the story while avoiding the teleological lapses or faulty 'methodological' dispositions cited in connection with previous efforts.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of starting points, the year 1763 is proposed as a useful place to begin. Although the selection comes with some important caveats (see below), this year, which marks the end of the Seven Years' War, is important for dating the constitutional struggle in France, into which debates concerning the condition of the nation, its constituents, and who was best positioned to lead it, were increasingly inducted. The centralizing policies instituted by Habsburg authorities in the aftermath of the same war served meanwhile to provoke controversies elsewhere in Europe where the rights of the nation, or even the right to a 'national existence,' also obtained a prominent hearing. In short, the power struggles of these years, culminating in France with the overthrow of the monarchy, afford a compelling view of how principles such as 'national sovereignty' were widely debated and put into practice.

But before entering the political sphere, the nation had, in the words of David Bell, experienced an 'efflorescence' of usage 'across a wide cultural front' and even came, by century's end, to 'possess a talismanic power.'<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the investigation of this phenomenon, critical for our understanding

3 Caplan and Feffer, *Europe's New Nationalism*, p. 3.

4 This tendency was especially pronounced in earlier nationalism studies, John Breuilly once wrote, which often portrayed the rise of such sentiment in the manner of 'some gradually unfolding development to which virtually everything is relevant.' Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, p. 443. As Roger Chartier once wrote similarly on the origins of the French Revolution: 'Under what conditions is it legitimate to set up a collection of scattered and disparate facts or ideas as "causes" or "origins" of an event?' Such a method provides a retrospective 'unity,' Chartier continued, 'to thoughts and actions supposed to be "origins" but foreign to one another, heterogeneous by their nature and discontinuous in their realization.' Chartier, *Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, p. 4. These points relate finally to the still more recent critique of what has been called 'methodological nationalism,' or a tendency on the part of scholars from a range of fields to treat the nation-state in a way that obscures all the 'doubts and uncertainties' surrounding its emergence. In the words of Chernilo, 'methodological nationalism presupposes that the nation-state is the natural and necessary form of society in modernity and that the nation-state becomes the organising principle around which the whole project of modernity cohered.' Chernilo, 'Methodological Nationalism and Its Critique,' p. 129.

5 Bell, *The Cult of the Nation*, pp. 7, 25; Bell, 'Le Caractère national,' p. 869.





of the rhetoric surrounding the upheavals of 1789, leads us farther back into the century. The results obtained from this research, which complements also the work of scholars such as Berger, Leerssen, Hirschi, and Slimani, to name a few, reveals significant weaknesses in previous accounts of both the prevalence and representation of 'the nation' in European culture in the decades preceding the French Revolution.<sup>6</sup>

Eric Hobsbawm's and Ernest Gellner's famous works are typical of these faults. Both in fact characterize Enlightenment thought on the subject as sporadic in nature with little bearing on what came later. There is, consequently, no indication of the large volume of literature, across a range of genres, engaged with questions (which became fixtures of later political debates) concerning 'the nation' and its standing as a 'moral being' with the capacity both for perfection and degeneration.<sup>7</sup> In defense of these earlier works, their attention was more heavily trained on the nineteenth century and developments such as those in the socio-economic sphere which necessitated the institutionalization of the 'high cultures' Gellner deemed essential to nation-state formation, or 'interventions' from above of an identity-shaping order intended to bolster the 'foundations' of threatened dynasties, elites, and traditional modes of rule.<sup>8</sup> These and other aspects of Hobsbawm's and Gellner's thought certainly remain relevant for our understanding of the later nationalization of European life, but provide an inadequate view of how the condition and regeneration of the nation

6 Text refers to works such as Berger, *The Past as History*; Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism*; Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe*; and Slimani, *La Modernité du concept*. As indicated in Chapter 4, Hroch, a major influence on earlier scholars such as Hobsbawm, has also reconsidered his views of late and expressed greater appreciation for the importance of developments in the cultural sphere.

7 A similar critique could be made of Elie Kedourie's influential *Nationalism*. Again, one may ask how an entity which led such a shadowy existence in pre-revolutionary culture, to judge at least from this work (which refers sporadically to the *Encyclopédie*, Montesquieu, and conventions regarding the organization of student bodies at medieval universities), could become the major concern of later actors. Kedourie, *Nationalism*, pp. 5-7. The result is a highly attenuated portrait and one which promotes conceptions of a stark 'dichotomy' (see below) between Western and Eastern European modes of development. Kedourie's remarks on the place of language in national discourse relies heavily, for example, on German sources (and mainly of later vintage). The reader thus gains little sense of how commonplace the ideas attributed to these thinkers were and especially the degree to which they were present in French and British texts. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-64.

8 Text refers to Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, and Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*. Gellner's thesis is, for example, reconsidered below in connection with the historiography of the Czech and Flemish movements (Chapters 6 and 7).

gained such high standing in pre-revolutionary era political culture.<sup>9</sup> In the case finally of Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, to cite another centerpiece of the theoretical canon, the idea of 'nationality' is posed as suddenly springing upon the scene 'towards the end of the 18th century'; a 'cultural artifact' created from a 'spontaneous distillation' of 'discrete historical forces' and concurrent advances in print capitalism.<sup>10</sup> However, Anderson rarely discusses the cultural understandings and uses of the terms in question, and thus gives little indication as to why the 'imagined linguistic community' created by such forces should be construed as a 'nation' or have 'national' significance for people at the time.<sup>11</sup> This is not intended to dismiss Anderson's claims regarding the importance of certain developments that may have abetted changes in consciousness or identity; however, the semantic conventions brought to light here, in which nation and language were closely associated, may rather be conceived as providing the missing deductive step for theories of this kind.

In supplying greater detail to the picture of Enlightenment era understandings and representations of the nation, the present work aims therefore to depict how developments in the sphere of ideas influenced the terms of political debate in France and elsewhere, as witnessed in the diverse pronouncements concerning the cause of the nation's characteristic 'lightness' and other defects impeding its quest for 'regeneration.'<sup>12</sup> This is not to suggest that ideas concerning the nation, or ideas more generally, caused the revolution; but one may at least gain from these sections an understanding of the retinue of ideas, conjectures, and claims from which contemporary actors drew when responding to the crises of their times.<sup>13</sup> It follows that the reader can expect a substantial dose of intellectual history in Chapters 2 and 3, with particular importance given to the widespread use and perceived serviceability of the 'nation' as a means to examine the causes of the manifest diversity in human manners as well as the 'rules

9 See, for example, Bell, *The Cult of the Nation*, p. 7.

10 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 4.

11 When writing similarly of the 'conceptual assumptions that make nationalism look too modern in modernist theories,' Hirschi refers to Anderson's claim that the ability to 'think the nation,' was dependent upon modern circumstances. He goes on to illuminate semantic conventions from earlier periods explicitly linking nation, language, character, and even sovereignty in ways that are customarily thought to be of much more recent vintage, and thus independent of the rise of secularization, print capitalism, or other attributes of modern times said to be crucial in this connection. Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism*, p. 30.

12 See, for example, Bell, 'The Unbearable Lightness.'

13 See, for example, Breuilly, 'Changes in the Political Uses of the Nation,' p. 93; Baker, 'Enlightenment Idioms.'



of social evolution.<sup>14</sup> As proclaimed by Voltaire in his sprawling *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations*, 'What is most interesting for us is the noticeable difference among the *espèces* of men who populate the four known parts of our world.'<sup>15</sup>

The ventures conducted in this vein included many studies directed toward questions surrounding the formation of 'national characters,' as well as numerous works of history (ranging in form from universal to philosophical) into which nations and their manners were inducted as the principal units of comparison and analysis. The lessons gained from the examination of national characters were believed to have implications also for linguistic studies, and of course theories of governance. As Rousseau observed, much knowledge was yet wanted 'on the real features which distinguish nations' if contemporary thinkers were to have a full picture of their world and the challenges of fashioning lasting political bonds.<sup>16</sup> It is important to add that Enlightenment thinkers were not in this case inventing entirely new modes of analysis or genres of enquiry, the idea of national characters having long-ago appeared on the conceptual landscape. Questions nevertheless persist over the cause of the contemporary enthusiasm for anthropological endeavors of this kind, with speculations on the role of print culture, secularization, Jansenism, and the proliferation of travel literatures continuing to provoke debate. These problems notwithstanding, the explosion of studies directed toward charting and accounting for the differences cited above raised the nation's entry in contemporary letters to a high rate of incidence.

Greater knowledge of the cultural context also helps to dispel, as Maria Todorova and other scholars observe, a still pervasive, yet false understanding of a dichotomy between an original Western-Enlightened-civic national ideal, and an Eastern-Romantic-ethno-linguistic successor.<sup>17</sup> The ensuing pages demonstrate in fact the considerable volume of literature produced in France and Britain which not only explored the interdependence between language, manners, and nation, but placed them in a state of coterminous perfectibility. As Diderot observed in his entry for '*Encyclopédie*' in the work of the same name, the educated observer may 'solely on the comparison of the vocabulary of a nation in different times [...] form an idea of its progress.'<sup>18</sup> There even appears to have been something of a linguistic arms race in

14 Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World*, pp. 38.

15 Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, I, p. 4.

16 Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, p. 159.

17 See, for example, Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, p. 331. Text refers to Todorova, 'Is There Weak Nationalism?' Additional critiques of this kind are discussed in Chapter 2.

18 *Encyclopédie* (1755), V, p. 637.



progress during the period, perhaps triggered by the publication of the French Academy's *Dictionnaire* (1694). The stakes, according at least to Samuel Johnson, were great: Should the 'academicians' succeed, he warned, in colonizing the language of arts and sciences, the English would soon find themselves (the signs were already unmistakable) 'babbling a dialect of French.'<sup>19</sup>

In addition to indicating what readers can expect to find in the volume, it may also be appropriate to note some omissions. On one hand, space limitations necessitate that many parts of Europe and the European colonial world receive, unfortunately, minimal attention. Similarly, no attempt is made to narrate in great detail the events of the era. Suffice to say, one could hardly expect to capture here the complexity of a crisis such as 1848 which touched nearly the whole of continental Europe, or do justice, for that matter, to the mass of quality scholarship, in many languages, expended upon that upheaval or those which came before. Narrative interludes are thus intended only to introduce certain historiographical problems concerning the study of European nationalism raised by the events under review. Finally, the ensuing discussion and analysis does not delve greatly into the primordial-modern debate on the supposed vintage of nations, one outcome of which has been an extended dialogue over the nature of various entities, from ancient Armenia to Second Temple Judea, deemed to give testimony (according to the definition held by one author or another) of the perennial quality of nation-formation.<sup>20</sup> Instances of collective sentiment and action that might be retrieved from the past are certainly not without interest for historians; however, the enumeration of such episodes obscures the significance of subsequent events and mentalities, and above all, the novelty of claims such as those articulated by a Slovak patriot in 1834 that 'it would be the worthiest and most appropriate if states were formed in such a way as to cover the territory of a single nation.'<sup>21</sup> In short, the problem addressed here is primarily a modern one.<sup>22</sup> Some readers may also impute a modernist or constructivist

19 Johnson, *The Works of Samuel Johnson*, II, pp. 37, 52, 64.

20 See, for example, Grosby, 'The Primordial, Kinship and Nationality', pp. 52-78.

21 Šuhajda, 'Magyarism in Hungary', p. 352.

22 This distinction was also recognized by figures, such as John Armstrong, who are commonly associated with the 'perennialist' camp. 'Like most scholars,' as Anthony Smith once wrote of the latter, 'Armstrong regards nationalism, the ideological movement, as modern,' even if 'he is a good deal less sure about nations.' Smith refers here to Armstrong's well-known *Nations before Nationalism*. Smith, 'Nations before Nationalism?', pp. 169-170. Smith's own views didn't fall far from this mark. See, for example, Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, p. 192, among many other characteristic works.



disposition to the work from the emphasis placed on the importance of elite culture in shaping the terms of popular discourse. This is not intended to diminish the importance of mass sentiment, the quantification of which remains one of the holy grails of nationalism research. Still, to whatever extent such sentiment prevailed among the people at large, the initiative for the various endeavors associated with the rise of the national idea – and on this point there is a broad consensus – does not appear to have come from below.

The aim of ‘regenerating’ the nation expressed in sources from the French Revolution was often paired with the momentous claim (also heard in preceding years) that all sovereignty resided in the nation. Chapter 4 examines the diverse ways in which such an idea was received, put into practice, and contested across the European continent over the course of the ensuing Napoleonic Wars. Here again, the reader confronts problems of meaning that surface throughout the volume, as the groups of people that might be held to comprise a nation and thus advance a claim to sovereignty was subject to interpretation, with ethnic and civic elements often mingled from one iteration or evocation of the concept to the next. Some placed still greater stress on matters of consciousness: Did, for example, a nation’s existence and thus its entitlement to sovereignty depend upon some convincing display of self-awareness? As a German writer later declared, it would indeed be inappropriate to consider ‘every group of men that has such things as descent, language, and customs’ a nation. Such a group ‘only becomes a nation when as opposed to other men they feel and recognize themselves as an entity and a self-contained totality.’<sup>23</sup> Differences in definition aside, the principles articulated in these texts continue to inform the rhetoric employed in political struggles to the present day, with demands for autonomy being frequently grounded on the assertion that the people in question constituted a nation (slumbering or not) and had on that basis a natural title to independence – a claim illustrated, to cite one notable example, in the language used by contemporary advocates of Catalan independence whose banners often simply declare ‘Catalunya es una nació’ (Catalonia is a nation) and ‘Som una nació’ (We are a nation).<sup>24</sup>

23 Cited in Vick, *Defining Germany*, p. 40; italics added.

24 The response of the Spanish state, as captured, for example, in the Christmas 2015 address of the king, offers in turn a restatement of the civic ideal. Felipe evokes here the idea of the Spanish nation as a moral community in which ‘all of the different forms of being and feeling Spanish fit.’ Political plurality and differences of vision aside, all Spaniards were bound together by a transcending sense of identity derived above all from a ‘common history.’ ‘Mensaje de Navidad del rey Felipe VI.’



In writing therefore that the modern ideology of nationalism can be 'precisely' traced to the period of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, Stuart Woolf restates a familiar and uncontroversial view of the problem.<sup>25</sup> But how much of a force was nationalism in the years immediately following these events? The second part of the book is accordingly concerned with exploring the difficulties posed to historians when attempting to assess the state of national sentiment throughout the continent and its capacity to inspire significant, extra-legal challenges to the Restoration status quo. In doing so, there is the danger, to some degree unavoidable in works of this kind, that by charting the presence or circulation of such ideas and aspirations one tends to inflate their standing or 'overdetermine' the outcome.<sup>26</sup> Historians must also contend with the problem that all of the revolutions of the era could be considered composite in nature; a factor pointed out previously in famous works by Hobsbawm, Labrousse, and other prominent scholars discussed throughout the text.<sup>27</sup> The challenge of determining or delineating the relative strength of these diverse sources of discontent – the constitutional, national, and social – is further complicated by terminological and conceptual traditions which facilitated, at least from a rhetorical standpoint, a considerable amount of overlap in the articulation of ends. Thus, internal conflicts over the distribution of power – such as those which broke out in Spain in 1820, and France in 1830 and 1848 – were commonly portrayed, drawing upon ideas and language reminiscent of earlier political discourse, as 'national' struggles.<sup>28</sup>

These problems notwithstanding, most accounts of the revolutions which occurred in parts of the Italian peninsula and German Bund during the

25 Woolf, *Nationalism in Europe*, p. 10. Indeed, for better or worse, observed Renan in a lecture from 1882, 'the principle of nationhood is ours.' Renan, 'What Is a Nation?', p. 51.

26 These hazards cogently described by Etienne Balibar in 'The Nation Form.' Similar points made also by the editors of a recent work on the question of 'nationhood from below' when writing critically of the 'linear sequential narrative present in many theoretical and monographic studies of nationalism.' The editors refer here to Hroch's famous 'ABC model' which they call, alluding to the comments of another contributor (Laurence Cole) 'an implicitly developmental process through which societies eventually nationalize.' Van Ginderachter and Beyen, *Nationhood from Below*, pp. 15-16.

27 This factor is indeed often cited as a cause of the rapid collapse of the same or their failure, most famously in the case of 1848, to achieve concrete results. Note also that 'revolutionism' was not always a gauge of national sentiment, as indicated in the discussion of the Czech case in Chapter 7.

28 The constitutional conflict was simultaneously a national one in the sense that the people (e.g., nation) was endeavoring to recover its sovereignty. See, for example, the discussion of the Spanish Revolution in Chapter 5, as well as the French Revolutions of 1830 and 1848 (Chapters 6 and 7).

1820s and 1830s lay stress on the primacy of constitutional grievances over national. The constitutional conflict was also severe in the case of Belgium, discussed at length in Chapter 6, although debate continues over questions surrounding the strength of a Belgian national identity (the present difficulties of that state aside) and its effects. When considered in tandem with the social grievances also associated with the outbreak of the crisis, the Belgian Revolution of 1830 serves indeed to display the qualities of composite revolution to an uncommon degree. The Greek and Polish Revolutions of 1821 and 1830, respectively, hold the distinction meanwhile of having been planned (this alone was rare) and set in motion by groups of conspirators with the explicit intent of launching bids for national independence.<sup>29</sup> However, here too, a closer investigation of the events in question indicates the multiplicity of actors involved, the motivations of which have been subject to diverse interpretations.

One might anticipate from the vantage point of the 1830s that new troubles lay in store for Europe in the future; but certainly, the scale of what transpired in 1848, as witnessed especially in the strength of the national demands that came to the fore in Germany and Italy, is startling. Rather than a gradual rise in the spread and assertiveness of such sentiment, historians tend therefore to present a highly punctuated picture of change, with the 1840s – and indeed the later years of that decade – often portrayed as the site of a sudden escalation in political mobilization and cross-border collaboration among oppositional movements within Habsburg Europe, the Bund, and parts of the Italian peninsula. Contemporary Italian historians speak, for example, of a ‘transformation of the social base of Italian nationalism from a minority political sect into a mass movement’ which ‘took place between 1846 and 1848.’<sup>30</sup> Here again, the apparent growth in the popularity of the national idea during these years has often been linked to a contemporaneous rise in the level, to cite James Sheehan, of ‘liberal political action’ bred in turn from the ‘growing sense’ of an impending social crisis.<sup>31</sup> The ensuing chapters explore the ideological and practical sources of this national-liberal linkage, as well as the transnational character of the phenomenon.

The historians cited above refer also to the ‘social basis’ of national movements during the period, and specifically, the problem, also addressed often below, of determining which segments of the societies in question tended

29 As indicated below, the Kraków Revolution, orchestrated by the Polish Democratic Society in February of 1846, may also be placed in this category.

30 Körner and Riall, ‘Introduction,’ p. 399.

31 Sheehan, *German Liberalism*, p. 12.





to display more interest in such causes. Thought on this subject includes of course the earlier traditions of analysis associated with the works of Kautsky, Proudhon, Marx, and Engels, with their corresponding stress on the political and material appetites of 'the modern bourgeoisie' (and the congruence of the same with a liberal-national agenda).<sup>32</sup> In a somewhat similar manner, the 'middle classes,' or more generally, 'middle strata' of local 'economic and status hierarchies,' are frequently portrayed as the leading component, where they emerged, of the movements considered here.<sup>33</sup> That said, historians such as Alberto Banti, in a well known series of interventions in the field of Risorgimento history, have suggested other sources (beyond material interests) of political mobilization.<sup>34</sup> It is also important to note,

32 The 'nationalism' of the middle classes was thus 'a false representation of the real,' which, upon closer examination could be exposed as a bourgeois quest for political power set in the popular terms of the day. See, for example, Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival*, p. 133; Thompson and Fevre, 'The National Question,' p. 302; Avineri, 'Marxism and Nationalism,' p. 640. As declared in one momentous passage of the *Manifesto*: 'The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralised the means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. [...] Independent, or but loosely connected provinces [...] became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier, and one customs-tariff.' Marx and Engels, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 339. This depiction of capitalism as simultaneously the breaker and fabricator of nations was evoked still earlier in the work of Proudhon. As Noiriel writes, 'Proudhon is undoubtedly the first author to explicitly accuse capitalism of destroying nationalities. On several occasions he refers to "nationalities sacrificed on the altar of privilege"; he denounces the "mercantile influences [which] are death to the nationalities of which they leave only the skeleton."' Noiriel, 'Socio-histoire d'un concept,' p. 13. The author refers here to Proudhon's *Système des contradictions économiques* (1846). It should nevertheless be added that not all Marxists viewed nations as largely artificial constructs or even incompatible with the eventual triumph of socialism. Some indeed, notably Otto Bauer of the Austro-Marxist school, made quite elaborate claims regarding the historicity, formation, and future relevance of nations. Any 'systematic approach to the question of the nation' must in fact begin, wrote Bauer, recalling ideas surveyed in the early chapters of this work, 'with a conception of national character.' Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, p. 20.

33 Sheehan objects for example to the use of terms 'middle class' and 'bourgeoisie' when writing of the *Vormärz*. Such terms, he argues, suggest 'a common set of economic interests arising from a similar relationship to the means of production' which simply did not exist. The 'middle ranks' of German society were occupied instead by a diverse collection of people and (mainly urban) occupations. Sheehan, *German Liberalism*, p. 24.

34 Banti places emphasis instead on the ability of national advocates to attach their ideas to 'deep images,' such as 'kinship' and 'sacrifice' that were 'located in a previous discursive continuum.' Where successful, and, as discussed in Chapter 7, Banti argues that the upheavals of 1848 give notice of this fact, nationalism derived its strength not from the manifest power of the idea itself or still less abstract principles and claims, but from achieving 'intertextual links [...] with other preexisting and traditional discursive formations.' Banti, 'Reply,' pp. 449-450. 'In



as Hobsbawm (among others) has shown, that nationalism was not the exclusive preserve of the middle classes or liberals.<sup>35</sup> To be sure, in some of the cases studied below – notably Greece, Poland, and Hungary – the role of an urban ‘middle strata’ was limited or overshadowed by other groups of elites. Although there is even some evidence in these later examples of involvement from the peasantry, most work on the subject tends to support the view that the rural populace was largely unmoved by national appeals – a problem that was indeed frankly acknowledged at times by the leaders of erstwhile national movements.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, the chapters on Restoration Europe provide readers with a view of the continuing evolution in cultural representations of the nation and the fascination with the study of national characters and histories that was so prominent feature of pre-Restoration culture. Emphasis is also placed on

the end,’ comments another, ‘such procedures made it possible to formulate a political statement which, though radically innovatory in many respects, was at the same time built up out of already highly familiar and deeply prestigious components.’ Brice, ‘Alberto M. Banti,’ p. 435. See also Körner and Riall, ‘Introduction,’ p. 399, and Isabella, ‘Rethinking Italy’s Nation-Building,’ p. 256. Text refers to works such as Banti’s *La nazione del Risorgimento. Parentela, santità e onore alle origini dell’Italia unita*.

35 ‘Identification with a “people” or “nation,” wrote Hobsbawm of the adoption of such attitudes on the part of traditional elites, ‘was a convenient and fashionable way’ of combating the legitimacy challenges of the day. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 83–85. Similar forces were at play behind the proliferation of national traditions. Hobsbawm, ‘Mass-Producing Traditions,’ p. 267. Sources from the Restoration era provide significant evidence, in sum, of the willingness of dominant classes to adapt themselves to the rhetoric of the day; much like the notables of old regime France described in Chapter 4. ‘A moment’s glance at the historical record,’ David Miller similarly attests, ‘shows that nationalist ideas have as often been associated with liberal and socialist programmes as with programmes of the right [...] the flexible content of national identity allows parties of different colours to present their programmes as the true continuation of the national tradition and the true reflection of national character.’ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, pp. 32–33. See also Breuille *Nationalism and the State*, p. 51, Mann, ‘A political theory of nationalism,’ p. 53, and Godsey, *Nobles and Nation*, p. 242.

36 See, for example, Porciani, ‘On the Uses and Abuses of Nationalism from Below,’ p. 81. In some cases too, the involvement of the masses in the national struggle was not avidly or consistently sought. Chapters 4 and 6 describe for example the conflicted attitude of some Polish gentry toward drawing ‘the people’ into their movement – a support, or so it was claimed, that could only be obtained through some form of political compensation. As Maurycy Mochnacki (1803–1834), a partisan of the ‘maximalist’ faction of Polish nationalism, bitterly wrote of his ‘minimalist’ foes: ‘Here in the centre of Europe is a great nation that collapses [...] because with us not the majority but the minority has always been the nation.’ Mochnacki, ‘To Be or Not to Be,’ p. 93. Like other Polish liberals, Mochnacki advocated a simultaneous course of social and national revolution; conservatives were more likely to place their hopes in diplomacy and the aid of friendly powers.



the impact of larger trends and fashions in contemporary thought. Indeed, for Mazzini it was only self-professed 'romantics' such as he who were able to recognize the spirit of the age and embrace the mission that history had conferred upon them: 'No one in Italy had said that romanticism stood for liberty against oppression,' he boldly declared of his movement, 'that it battled against every construct or norm that we had not chosen freely through individual inspiration or the deep, collective aspirations of the country. We were the ones who said it.'<sup>37</sup> As the century progressed, the idea that nations were necessary elements of the human habitat and that each had a right to an independent and unfettered existence became in fact the subject of ever more extravagant and grandiose theories, frequently situating the flowering of nations into a larger story of material and moral progress. Recast in the intellectual fashions of the day, and these theories borrowed heavily from the glossaries of French utopian and German idealist schools of thought, the cause of one nation or another was not simply a matter of subjective interest but part of the greater 'becoming' and glorification of creation; all were intended to give testimony, as with nature, of the infinite productive capacity of god. 'Where it is allowed to develop on its own,' wrote the very Hegelian-sounding Slovak patriot Ľudovít Štúr in 1846, 'there will always be found in a nation a flowering and unfolding spiritual life which resembles a budding and healthy tree. [...] [O]ur goal is to realize the capability hidden in its roots.'<sup>38</sup> Each nation had indeed its own part to play in the 'common work of civilization' Renan observed in a famous lecture from 1882, its 'one note' to add 'to the great concert of humanity,' discordant now and shrill for the grievances of its many discontented and dispossessed peoples.<sup>39</sup> Traumatic though they may be, the struggles of the national age were therefore the necessary prelude to a peaceful postnational one; for the people of Europe could not be dragged as captives into any future union.

The point of these later chapters and the epilogue which closes the volume is not of course to infer that the national idea had by 1848 completely won over the hearts and minds of the European body politic, masses and elites alike.<sup>40</sup> The events described here were nevertheless milestones of a kind in further validating the principle of nationality, or perhaps fostering an

37 Cited in Sarti, *Mazzini*, p. 33.

38 Štúr, 'The Slovak Dialect,' p. 152.

39 Renan, 'What Is a Nation?,' p. 59.

40 A similar point is made by Wimmer and Feinstein in another recent work. 'Our own historical institutionalist approach,' write the latter, 'assumes that nationalists create nation-states, whether or not nations have already been built.' Wimmer, and Feinstein, 'The Rise of the Nation-state across the World,' p. 767.



impression of its ubiquity and strength. As indicated in later chapters, it was, additionally, the fear of future disturbances, or in the words of Perry Anderson, 'the imaginative proximity of social revolution,' that gave further encouragement to the imposition of a program of nationalism 'from above' capable of attracting conservatives and liberals (especially those of the 'moderate' variety) alike.<sup>41</sup> Contemporary thinkers could of course be found, like Eötvös, who might reflect more philosophically on the subject. To be sure, 'the great word "nationality,"' observed the latter in the same mid-century work cited earlier, 'blares out at us from every direction, but everybody wants to understand it differently. Every nation demands its rights; not one is clear in its own mind what these are.'<sup>42</sup> Perhaps more provocative still were the thoughts again of Renan, for whom the nation was 'not something eternal,' but only the latest of many 'abstractions' to enter the annals of European history: 'They began,' he wrote, 'so they will come to an end. A European confederation will probably replace them.' Like all 'truths of this order,' the nation too would inevitably cease to inspire faith. 'Such, however,' he was quick to add, 'is not the law of the century we are living in.'<sup>43</sup>

41 Anderson, 'Modernity and Revolution,' p. 104.

42 Eötvös, *The Dominant Ideas of the Nineteenth Century*, I, p. 110.

43 Renan, 'What Is a Nation?,' p. 59.

