

# NATIONALISM

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## Directions:

1. Read and highlight the following article.
  2. Create a definition for nationalism *in your own words*.
  3. Make a t-chart. On one side, list five positive things that could happen as a result of nationalism. On the other side, list five negative things that could happen as a result of nationalism.
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In modern history, movement in which the nation-state is regarded as paramount for the realization of social, economic, and cultural aspirations of a people. Nationalism is characterized principally by a feeling of community among a people, based on common descent, language, and religion. Before the 18th century, when nationalism emerged as a distinctive movement, states usually were based on religious or dynastic ties; citizens owed loyalty to their church or ruling family. Concerned with clan, tribe, village, or province, people rarely extended their interests nationwide.

Historically, nationalism has been fostered by various technological, cultural, political, and economic advances. Improvement in communications extended the knowledge of people beyond their village or province. Education in vernacular tongues gave lower-income groups the feeling of participation in a common cultural heritage; they learned of their common background and tradition and began to identify themselves with the historical continuity of the nation. The introduction of national constitutions and the struggle for political rights gave people the sense of helping to determine their fate as a nation and of sharing responsibility for the future well-being of that nation. At the same time the growth of trade and industry laid the basis for economic units larger than the traditional cities or provinces.

Most modern nations have developed gradually on the basis of common ties of descent, religion, and language. Several exceptions exist, however, notably Switzerland, the U.S., Israel, and India. Switzerland is a nation in which no common religion or language was ever established. The Swiss include many adherents to both the Roman Catholic and Protestant religions; they have no linguistic unity, for German, French, and Italian are spoken in distinct regions of the country. Swiss nationalism was fostered primarily by isolation in a mountain region, the determination to maintain political independence, and rivalry among imperial powers, which kept each from aggression against Switzerland.

The U.S. was formed largely by British immigrants with disparate religious ties and was developed to a great extent by other immigrants having little in common except a yearning for religious, economic, and political freedom. The U.S. is monolingual, but American nationalism was based primarily on a dedication to the British concept of individual liberty and representative government. What was considered in Great Britain the birthright of Britons became in the U.S., under the influence of the 18th-century Enlightenment, the natural right of every person. The Declaration of Independence marked the consummation of this libertarian ethos.

Israel was formed almost entirely from the immigration of diverse national groups of Jews who shared a common ideal based on religious nationalism. The traditional aspirations of Jews for a national revival in Palestine had remained unfulfilled for almost 2000 years. As a result of genocide

perpetrated by the National Socialist rulers of Germany before and during World War II, Jewish national aspirations suddenly achieved dynamic force. More than a million refugees from many different countries immigrated to Palestine. They learned Hebrew, the re-created national language, and established a new state with Judaism as the state religion. Among world Jewry, however, the Jews of Israel are a minority; most Jews continue to live as minority religious groups in their native countries.

India is a nation in which the Hindu religion served as the cohesive traditional element in uniting peoples of various races, religions, and languages. India achieved national unity through the influence of Western ideas, notably those of British origin, and in struggle against British rule.

## **The French Revolution**

The great turning point in the history of nationalism in Europe was the French Revolution. National feeling in France until then had centered in the king. As a result of the revolution, loyalty to the king was replaced by loyalty to the patrie ("fatherland"). Thus "La Marseillaise," the anthem of the French Revolution that later became the national anthem, begins with the words Allons enfants de la patrie ("March on, children of the fatherland"). When in 1789 the medieval French Estates-General, consisting of separate bodies representing the clergy, the aristocracy, and the common people, was transformed into a National Assembly, France achieved a truly representative system of government. Regional divisions, with their separate traditions and rights, were abolished, and France became a uniform and united national territory, with common laws and institutions. French armies spread the new spirit of nationalism in other lands.

The rise of nationalism coincided generally with the spread of the Industrial Revolution, which promoted national economic development, the growth of a middle class, and popular demand for representative government. National literatures arose to express common traditions and the common spirit of each people. New emphasis was given to nationalist symbols of all kinds; for example, new holidays were introduced to commemorate various events in national history.

## **Revolutions of 1848**

The Revolutions of 1848 in Central Europe marked the awakening of various peoples to national consciousness. In that year both the Germans and the Italians originated their movements for unification and for the creation of nation-states. Although the attempts at revolution failed in 1848, the movements gathered strength in subsequent years. After much political agitation and several wars, an Italian kingdom was created in 1861 and a German empire in 1871. Other Central European peoples who agitated for national independence in 1848 include the Poles, whose territory was divided among Russia, Germany, and Austria; the Czechs and the Hungarians, subjects of the Austrian monarchy; and the Christian peoples living in the Balkan Peninsula under the rule of the Turkish sultan. The events in Europe between 1878 and 1918 were shaped largely by the nationalist aspirations of these peoples and their desire to form nation-states independent of the empires of which they had been part.