

nationalism

nationalism, ideology based on the premise that the individual's loyalty and devotion to the nation-state surpass other individual or group interests.

This article discusses the origins and history of nationalism to the 1980s. For later developments in the history of nationalism, see 20th-century international relations; European Union; and Euroskepticism.

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The modern nature of nationalism

Nationalism is a modern movement. Throughout history people have been attached to their native soil, to the traditions of their parents, and to established territorial authorities, but it was not until the end of the 18th century that nationalism began to be a generally recognized sentiment molding public and private life and one of the great, if not the greatest, single determining factors of modern history. Because of its dynamic vitality and its all-pervading character, nationalism is often thought to be very old; sometimes it is mistakenly regarded as a permanent factor in political behaviour. Actually, the American and French revolutions may be regarded as its first powerful manifestations. After penetrating the new countries of Latin America, it spread in the early 19th century to central Europe and from there, toward the middle of the century, to eastern and southeastern Europe. At the beginning of the 20th century, nationalism flowered in Asia and Africa. Thus, the 19th century has been called the age of nationalism in Europe, while the 20th century witnessed the rise and struggle of powerful national movements throughout Asia and Africa.

Identification of state and people

Nationalism, translated into world politics, implies the identification of the state or nation with the people—or at least the desirability of determining the extent of the state according to ethnographic principles. In the age of nationalism, but only in the age of nationalism, the principle was generally recognized that each nationality should form a state—its state—and that the state should include all members of that nationality. Formerly states, or territories

under one administration, were not delineated by nationality. People did not give their loyalty to the nation-state but to other, different forms of political organization: the city-state, the feudal fief and its lord, the dynastic state, the religious group, or the sect. The nation-state was nonexistent during the greater part of history, and for a very long time it was not even regarded as an ideal. In the first 15 centuries of the Common Era, the ideal was the universal world-state, not loyalty to any separate political entity. The Roman Empire had set the great example, which survived not only in the Holy Roman Empire of the Middle Ages but also in the concept of the *res publica christiana* (“Christian republic” or community) and in its later secularized form of a united world civilization.

As political allegiance, before the age of nationalism, was not determined by nationality, so civilization was not thought of as nationally determined. During the Middle Ages, civilization was looked upon as determined religiously; for all the different nationalities of Christendom as well as for those of Islam, there was but one civilization—Christian or Muslim—and but one language of culture—Latin (or Greek) or Arabic (or Persian). Later, in the periods of the Renaissance and of Classicism, it was the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations that became a universal norm, valid for all peoples and all times. Still later, French civilization was accepted throughout Europe as the valid civilization for educated people of all nationalities. It was only at the end of the 18th century that, for the first time, civilization was considered to be determined by nationality. It was then that the principle was put forward that people could be educated only in their own mother tongue, not in languages of other civilizations and other times, whether they were classical languages or the literary creations of other peoples who had reached a high degree of civilization.

Cultural nationalism

From the end of the 18th century on, the nationalization of education and public life went hand in hand with the nationalization of states and political loyalties. Poets and scholars began to emphasize cultural nationalism first. They reformed the mother tongue, elevated it to the rank of a literary language, and delved deep into the national past. Thus, they prepared the foundations for the political claims for national statehood soon to be raised by the people in whom they had kindled the spirit.

Before the 18th century there had been evidences of national feeling among certain groups at certain periods, especially in times of stress and conflict. The rise of national feeling to major political importance was encouraged by a number of complex developments: the creation of

large centralized states ruled by absolute monarchs who destroyed the old feudal allegiances; the secularization of life and of education, which fostered the vernacular languages and weakened the ties of church and sect; the growth of commerce, which demanded larger territorial units to allow scope for the dynamic spirit of the rising middle classes and their capitalistic enterprise. This large unified territorial state, with its political and economic centralization, became imbued in the 18th century with a new spirit—an emotional fervour similar to that of religious movements in earlier periods. Under the influence of the new theories of the sovereignty of the people and of individual rights, the people replaced the king as the centre of the nation. No longer was the king the nation or the state; the state had become the people's state, a national state, a fatherland, or a motherland. State became identified with nation, as civilization became identified with national civilization.

That development ran counter to the conceptions that had dominated political thought for the preceding 2,000 years. Thitherto, the general and the universal had been commonly stressed, and unity had been regarded as the desirable goal. Nationalism emphasized the particular and parochial, the differences, and the national individualities. Those tendencies became more pronounced as nationalism developed. Its less attractive characteristics were not at first apparent. In the 17th and 18th centuries the common standards of Western civilization, the regard for the universally human, the faith in reason (one and the same everywhere) as well as in common sense, the survival of Christian and Stoic traditions—all of these were still too strong to allow nationalism to develop fully and to disrupt society. Thus, nationalism in its beginning was thought to be compatible with cosmopolitan convictions and with a general love of humankind, especially in western Europe and North America.

History of nationalism to the 1980s

European nationalism

English Puritanism and nationalism

The first full manifestation of modern nationalism occurred in 17th-century England, in the Puritan revolution. England had become the leading nation in scientific spirit, in commercial enterprise, and in political thought and activity. Swelled by an immense confidence in the new age, the English people felt upon their shoulders the mission of history, a sense that they were at a great turning point from which a new true reformation and a new liberty would start. In the English revolution an optimistic humanism merged with Calvinist ethics, and the influence

of the Bible gave form to the new nationalism by identifying the English people with ancient Israel.

The new message, carried by the new people not only for England but for all humankind, was expressed in the writings of the poet John Milton (1608–74), in whose famous vision the idea of liberty was seen spreading from Britain, “celebrated for endless ages as a soil most genial to the growth of liberty,” to all the corners of the earth.

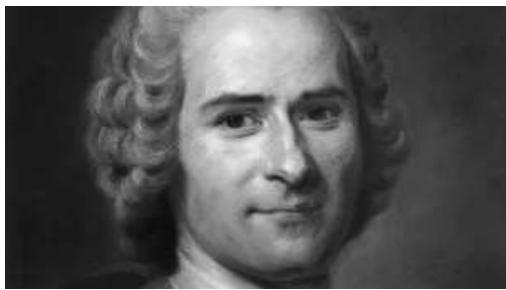
Surrounded by congregated multitudes, I now imagine that...I behold the nations of the earth recovering that liberty which they so long had lost; and that the people of this island are... disseminating the blessings of civilization and freedom among cities, kingdoms and nations.

English nationalism, then, was thus much nearer to its religious matrix than later nationalisms that rose after secularization had made greater progress. The nationalism of the 18th century shared with it, however, its enthusiasm for liberty, its humanitarian character, its emphasis upon individual rights and upon the human community as above all national divisions. The rise of English nationalism coincided with the rise of the English trading middle classes. It found its final expression in John Locke's political philosophy, and it was in that form that it influenced American and French nationalism in the following century.

American nationalism was a typical product of the 18th century. British settlers in North America were influenced partly by the traditions of the Puritan revolution and the ideas of Locke and partly by the new rational interpretation given to English liberty by contemporary French philosophers. American settlers became a nation engaged in a fight for liberty and individual rights. They based that fight on current political thought, especially as expressed by Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine. It was a liberal and humanitarian nationalism that regarded America as in the vanguard of humankind on its march to greater liberty, equality, and happiness for all. The ideas of the 18th century found their first political realization in the Declaration of Independence and in the birth of the American nation. Their deep influence was felt in the French Revolution.

French nationalism

Jean-Jacques Rousseau had prepared the soil for the growth of French nationalism by his stress on popular sovereignty and the general cooperation of all in forming the national will



Jean-Jacques Rousseau

(the “general will”), and also by his regard for the common people as the true depository of civilization.

The nationalism of the French Revolution was more than that: it was the triumphant expression of a rational faith in common humanity and liberal progress. The famous slogan “Liberty, equality, fraternity” and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen were thought valid not only for the French people but for all peoples. Individual liberty, human equality, fraternity of all peoples—these were the common cornerstones of all liberal and democratic nationalism. Under their inspiration new rituals were developed that partly took the place of the old religious feast days, rites, and ceremonies: festivals and flags, music and poetry, national holidays and patriotic sermons. In the most varied forms, nationalism permeated all manifestations of life. As in America, the rise of French nationalism produced a new phenomenon in the art of warfare: the nation in arms. In America and in France, citizen armies, untrained but filled with a new fervour, proved superior to highly trained professional armies that fought without the incentive of nationalism. The revolutionary French nationalism stressed free individual decision in the formation of nations. Nations were constituted by an act of self-determination of their members. The plebiscite became the instrument whereby the will of the nation was expressed. In America as well as in revolutionary France, nationalism meant the adherence to a universal progressive idea, looking toward a common future of freedom and equality, not toward a past characterized by authoritarianism and inequality.

Napoleon’s armies spread the spirit of nationalism throughout Europe and even into the Middle East, while at the same time, across the Atlantic, it aroused the people of Latin America. But Napoleon’s yoke of conquest turned the nationalism of the Europeans against France. In Germany the struggle was led by writers and intellectuals, who rejected all the principles upon which the American and the French revolutions had been based as well as the liberal and humanitarian aspects of nationalism.

The 1848 revolutionary wave

German nationalism began to stress instinct against reason, the power of historical tradition against rational attempts at progress and a more just order, and the historical differences between nations rather than their common aspirations. The French Revolution, liberalism, and

equality were regarded as a brief aberration against which the eternal foundations of societal order would prevail.



Giuseppe Mazzini

That German interpretation was shown to be false by the developments of the 19th century. Liberal nationalism reasserted itself and affected more and more people: the rising middle class and the new proletariat. The revolutionary wave of 1848, the year of “the spring of the peoples,” seemed to realize the hopes of nationalists such as Giuseppe Mazzini, who had devoted his life to the unification of the Italian nation by democratic means and to the fraternity of all free nations. Though his immediate hopes were disappointed, the 12 years from 1859 to 1871 brought the unification of Italy and Romania, both with the help of Napoleon III, and of Germany, and at the same time the 1860s saw great progress in liberalism, even in Russia and Spain. The victorious trend of liberal nationalism, however, was reversed in Germany by Otto von Bismarck. He unified Germany on a conservative and authoritarian basis and defeated German liberalism. The German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine against the will of the inhabitants was contrary to the idea of nationalism as based upon the free will of humanity. The people of Alsace-Lorraine were held to be German by allegedly objective factors, preeminently race, independent of their will or of their allegiance to any nationality of their choice.

In the second half of the 19th century, nationalism disintegrated the supranational states of the Habsburgs and the Ottoman sultans, both of which were based upon prenational loyalties. In Russia, the penetration of nationalism produced two opposing schools of thought. Some nationalists proposed a Westernized Russia, associated with the progressive, liberal forces of the rest of Europe. Others stressed the distinctive character of Russia and Russianism, its independent and different destiny based upon its autocratic and orthodox past. These Slavophiles, similar to and influenced by German Romantic thinkers, saw Russia as a future saviour of a West undermined by liberalism and the heritage of the American and French revolutions.

Twentieth-century developments

One of the consequences of World War I was the triumph of nationalism in central and eastern Europe. From the ruins of the Habsburg and Romanov empires emerged the new nation-states of Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Romania. Those states in turn, however, were to be strained and ravaged by their own internal nationality conflicts and by nationalistic disputes over territory with their neighbours.

Russian nationalism was in part suppressed after Vladimir Lenin's victory in 1917, when the Bolsheviks took over the old empire of the tsars. But the Bolsheviks also claimed the leadership of the world communist movement, which was to become an instrument of the national policies of the Russians. During World War II, Joseph Stalin appealed to nationalism and patriotism in rallying the Russians against foreign invaders. After the war he found nationalism one of the strongest obstacles to the expansion of Soviet power in eastern Europe. National communism, as it was called, became a divisive force in the Soviet bloc. In 1948 Josip Broz Tito, the communist leader of Yugoslavia, was denounced by Moscow as a nationalist and a renegade, nationalism was a strong factor in the rebellious movements in Poland and Hungary in the fall of 1956, and subsequently its influence was also felt in Romania and Czechoslovakia and again in Poland in 1980.



Charles de Gaulle

The spirit of nationalism appeared to wane in Europe after World War II with the establishment of international economic, military, and political organizations such as NATO, the European Coal and Steel Community (1952–2002), Euratom, and the Common Market, later known as the European Economic Community and then as the European Community. But the policies pursued by France under Pres. Charles de Gaulle and the problem posed by the division of Germany until 1990 showed that the appeal of the nation-state was still very much alive.

Asian and African nationalism

Nationalism began to appear in Asia and Africa after World War I. It produced such leaders as Kemal Atatürk in Turkey, Sa‘d Pasha Zagħūl in Egypt, Ibn Saud in the Arabian Peninsula, Mahatma Gandhi in India, and Sun Yat-sen in China. Atatürk succeeded in replacing the medieval structure of the Islamic monarchy with a revitalized and modernized secular republic in 1923. Demands for Arab unity were frustrated in Africa and Asia by British imperialism and

in Africa by French imperialism. Yet Britain may have shown a gift for accommodation with the new forces by helping to create an independent Egypt (1922; completely, 1936) and Iraq (1932) and displayed a similar spirit in India, where the Indian National Congress, founded in 1885 to promote a liberal nationalism inspired by the British model, became more radical after 1918. Japan, influenced by Germany, used modern industrial techniques in the service of a more authoritarian nationalism.

The new nations

The progress of nationalism in Asia and Africa is reflected in the histories of the League of Nations after World War I and of the United Nations after World War II. The Treaty of Versailles, which provided for the constitution of the League of Nations, also reduced the empires of the defeated Central Powers, mainly Germany and Turkey. The league distributed Germany's African colonies as mandates to Great Britain, France, Belgium, and South Africa and its Pacific possessions to Japan, Australia, and New Zealand under various classifications according to their expectations of achieving independence. Among the League's original members, there were only five Asian countries (China, India, Japan, Thailand, and Iran) and two African countries (Liberia and South Africa), and it added only three Asian countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, and Turkey) and two African countries (Egypt and Ethiopia) before it was dissolved in 1946. Of the mandated territories under the League's control, only Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria achieved independence during its lifetime.

Of the original 51 members of the United Nations in 1945, eight were Asian (China, India, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Turkey) and four were African (the same as in the League). By 1980, 35 years after its founding, the United Nations had added more than 100 member nations, most of them Asian and African. Whereas Asian and African nations had never totalled even one-third of the membership in the League, they came to represent more than one-half of the membership of the United Nations. Of these new Asian and African nations, several had been created, entirely or in part, from mandated territories.

After World War II, India, Pakistan, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Burma (Myanmar), and Malaya (Malaysia) in Asia and Ghana in Africa achieved independence peacefully from the British Empire, as did the Philippines from the United States. Other territories had to fight hard for their independence in bitter colonial wars, as in French Indochina (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia) and French North Africa (Tunisia, Algeria). Communism recruited supporters from within the

ranks of the new nationalist movements in Asia and Africa, first by helping them in their struggles against Western capitalist powers and later, after independence was achieved, by competing with Western capitalism in extending financial and technical aid. Chinese nationalism under Chiang Kai-shek during World War II was diminished with the takeover of the Chinese communists. But Chinese communism soon began to drift away from supranational communism, as the European communist countries had earlier. By the late 1960s, Russian and Chinese mutual recriminations revealed a Chinese nationalism in which Mao Zedong had risen to share the place of honour with Lenin. As Chinese communism turned further and further inward, its influence on new Asian and African nations waned.

Political and religious differences

Ambitions among new Asian and African nations clashed. The complex politics of the United Nations illustrated the problems of the new nationalism. The struggle with Dutch colonialism that brought the establishment of Indonesia continued with the UN mediation of the dispute over West Irian (Irian Jaya). In the Suez Crisis of 1956, UN forces intervened between those of Egypt and Israel. Continuing troubles in the Middle East, beginning with the fighting that accompanied the establishment of Israel and including inter-Arab state disputes brought on by the establishment of the United Arab Republic, concerned the UN. Other crises involving the UN included the India-Pakistan dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, the Korean partition and subsequent war, the four-year intervention in the Congo, the struggle of Greece and Turkey over newly independent Cyprus, and Indonesian and Philippine objection to the inclusion of Sarawak and Sabah (North Borneo) in newly formed Malaysia.

Many new nations, all sharing the same pride in independence, faced difficulties. As a result of inadequate preparation for self-rule, the first five years of independence in the Congo passed with no semblance of a stable government. The problem of widely different peoples and languages was exemplified in Nigeria, where an uncounted population included an uncounted number of tribes (at least 150, with three major divisions) that used an uncounted number of languages (more than 100 language and dialect clusters). The question of whether the predominantly Muslim state of Jammu and Kashmir should go with Muslim Pakistan or Hindu India remained unresolved long after the India Independence Act became effective in 1949. Desperate economic competition caused trouble, as in Israel where the much-needed waters of the Jordan River kept it in constant dispute with its water-hungry Arab neighbours.

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