The Roots of Nationalism in European History

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By

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PREFACE

The word Nationalism is a political and somewhat polemical word as it carries many shades of meaning, and of recent years the word has justifiably conveyed deeply negative overtones. There are some fifteen to twenty descriptive words which are frequently necessary to explain Nationalism (secessionist, revisionist, irredentist, isolationist, aggressive, expansionist, banal, and so forth) many of which overlap but which attempt to describe the type of nationalism under discussion. The word patriotism can often be built into some interpretation or explanations of nationalism, but in the introduction these words will be shown to be two different concepts. Generally, it could be stated that nationalism is not always negative, but as history unfolds it becomes easier to understand why the word is associated by so many as having destructive elements, and why recently Pope Francis warned about its reappearance. The Pope was self-evidently concerned about the aggressive style of nationalism, which often results in racism. As the *Time Magazine* writer Daniel Benjamin wrote "anti-Semitic incidents have increased dramatically, up to 57 percent in just one year according to the Anti-Defamation League…and hate crimes against Muslims also rose almost 20 percent in 2016 over 2015," and this is currently on the increase.[1] In the *Washington Post* James McAuley had no hesitation in claiming that "nationalism is seeing a startling resurgence…heads of states assert 'Italy First,' 'Hungary First' and 'America First'…and collective aversion to the term nationalist has begun to recede."[2] The writer undoubtedly was also reflecting on President Trump who on October 22nd 2018 publicly claimed "I'm a national. OK? I'm a nationalist." There is little doubt that despite the general antipathy to the term nationalism following the years 1914-1945, it is, in its aggressive form, once again re-emerging in Europe and globally. In March 2019 some fifty people of the Islamic faith were massacred while worshipping in their mosques. The New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern called for a global attack on resurgent Right-wings which, it is generally agreed, is resurging and utilising this aggressive and racialist form of nationalism. What makes it even more dangerous is the unifying effect that the international cyber-net has produced; fanatics in one country can in micro-seconds be in touch with their opposite numbers the other side of the world, even reaching as far as New Zealand. Killing people for their

ethnicity and religion is the most barbaric form of nationalism which has
tainted the word for a long time.

The contention by many historians is that nationalism in historical terms
is recent, many looking to the 1789 French Revolution as a starting point,
others to other dates in the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. This book
explores a completely different viewpoint. Harari wrote that "nationalism
too upholds a linear story" and he is right in so far that its feelings and roots
go deep into human history.[3] Nationalism describes an attitude or political
stance taken by people which this book contends is a propensity built into
many human beings from the earliest of times. Some Neo-Darwinists have
claimed that humans are almost pre-programmed towards this inclination;
only the strong can survive. The ingredients which make up this propensity
are few but significant and worth noting. These ingredients or determinants,
as it were, do not necessarily make the concept of nationalism an early
development, but the necessary factors or the roots of nationalism are deep
in humanity, and all too often traverse Europe's time-periods; nationalism,
this book will argue, shows signs of significant and early development.
These ingredients include territorial demands, seeking wealth power and
influence, and treating neighbouring nations as somewhat alien and
constantly under suspicion. This is a human propensity which is almost part
of the human genetic makeup, and it forms the basis of nationalism which
emerged over a long period of human history. This concept of searching for
relevant human propensities will be touched on throughout the text and
further explored in the conclusion. The book also proposes that the word
nation had an earlier identification than many historians suggest, and even
nation-states found roots in earlier times than is currently believed.

This history of Europe starts with the tribal migrations and ends in 1989,
though the last thirty years (1989-2019) are reviewed, not with the
objectivity which history demands, but with observations based on the
history of Europe. Such a history is demanding and complex and requires
volumes of work to accomplish. This book provides a brief survey and uses
as its backbone the work of Norman Davies in his study, *Europe, A History*,
along with other well-known works.[4] Although a survey of Europe's history
the fundamental reason is looking to the phenomenon of Nationalism, and
observations are constantly made during this study, but there are also
chapters devoted to this overview which, out of necessity, go back and forth
in chronological time to clarify the various thoughts and ideas.

In terms of the study of Nationalism there have been many works
devoted to this vexed subject providing a rich and mixed vocabulary. These
studies often clash in their analysis, but one of the most comprehensive is
the text book edited by Breuilly who brings together the views of many of

the outstanding scholars of today and their various insights.[5] The brief survey of history pauses from time to time to explore some of the views of nationalism across Europe expressed in Breuilly's compendium, and at other times pauses for the occasional comment which some may find provocative.

When writing on any subject in history the parameters are often dictated by dates with a starting and endpoint. A work on the Great War (1914-18) will begin with the causes, and after studying the events of 1914-18 will concentrate its focus on the consequences. A study of Nationalism cannot be so clearly defined; even its start date is questionable as mentioned above. Nationalism has never left the arena of human activity, and as already noted, is undergoing a current resurgence, and as history enters the realm of current affairs a degree of objectivity may be lost. An objectivity which is always elusive and claimed by some impossible to attain in the pursuit of history. It is not that the facts and details are wrong as far as is known, but the interpretation of the events and motivations of the past can be equally difficult to state with any certainty. In his *History of Europe* H. A. L. Fisher wrote in his preface the difficulty in finding patterns or rhythms, "I can only see one emergency following upon another…and there can be no generalisations."[6] As is often the case in history one event follows the next with no discernible pattern or guidelines, and each country and each event when it occurs is always singular and stand-alone; nevertheless, there are pointers which can be noted. Despite this warning an attempt is made to identify the ingredients of nationalism, not necessarily patterns or notable delineation of events, but the actions of people and groups which provide some of the impetus for this study.

In the final stages of this book it became essential to move away from history texts to current times in trying to understand these developments arising from history. As will be noted in the General Introduction the writing of history in an entirely objective fashion is sometimes difficult to achieve, but this becomes more of a serious problem when commenting on current developments. In order to attempt this Michael Burleigh's work, *The Best of Times, The Worst of Times* has been used as a yardstick, but with further additional material and some up-dating.[7] The nature of the populist vote and the upsurge of the Right-wing form of nationalism will be noted in the closing pages. The political, religious and social views of any writer can be easily transmitted if only by emphasis, but every effort has been made to achieve an objective viewpoint, which is sometimes more difficult than climbing Mount Everest with no equipment and wearing just a tracksuit.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Any study of nationalism and its implications can select a single country to explore or study, but it makes more sense to choose several because the nature of nationalism invariably involves more than one country. Some German historians in the 1920-30s once claimed it was only possible to study a country through international relationships and foreign policy. They had nationalistic themes at the core of their thinking in trying to revise the Treaty of Versailles, but they were possibly correct in so far that it is often the interaction of nations that creates discord or harmony, and raises many questions including nationalism. This book examines the continent of Europe since a global study would demand many volumes. This does not mean that nationalism is unique to Europe or even necessarily originated on that continent. Concentrating on Europe can create a few problems, not least because it may offer the impression that Europe is "the cradle of nationalism and leaves countries from the rest of the world outside the West in the role of mere recipients of a model from elsewhere, and thus having derivative nationalisms."[8] Europe has been selected as a conglomeration of neighbouring nations, but it must be remembered that "Europe cannot be seen as a model of future developments in the world, but rather as a historical instance of global processes that affect the entire world."[9] Europe is not the oldest of global civilisations, but it offers a variety of historical situations, because of the close proximity of so many large and small countries and regions with empire boundaries too frequently in conflict, and with many ethnic regions. It is the one continent which provides a vast variety of nations all developing in their various and distinctive ways, almost "bouncing off one another" in border, religious and political issues. At times the various European conflicts have been like a huge melting pot for the various aspirations of its inhabitants, sometimes leading to harmony but often to disaster. Similar machinations can be found elsewhere on the globe, but Europe's rich history provides a kaleidoscope of many colours for comparison and reflection in such an investigation.

Concept of Nation

First it is necessary to understand the word *nation*, which for some scholars is a new concept of the last three centuries, for others, including this study, its existence and antecedents are much older. It is frequently argued that it is impossible to have nationalism without a nation and this is often defined as the modern nation state. The two words which cause the most frustration are *nation* and *country* and not just in their precise linguistic meaning, but the way they are generally understood. According to the Oxford dictionary a *country* is "a nation with its own government,

occupying a particular territory," and quotes "Spain, Italy and other European *nations*." For *nation* it defines as "a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory." They are both defined as inhabited territories, and some regard *country* as a self-governing political entity, but a nation is more about a group of people who share a culture, language and history. Using this as a guideline *country* simply means a geographical entity with recognisable borders with its own governing body, a *nation* relates to a shared language and culture which means a nation can exist within a country, and it does not have to have a governing body or a specific territory. On the other hand, a *Nation State* is defined in the Oxford dictionary as "a sovereign state of which most of the citizens or subjects are united by factors which define a nation, such as language or common descent."

Both in historical and linguistic terms this remains a complex puzzle. When most people were asked, they simply thought the two words were inter-changeable. Nationality differs from what is meant by nation; a person may state that by nationality he or she is French, but that is different from the French Nation. Most countries and nations today are multi-cultural even if they pretend otherwise, and they were so in the past with minority ethnic groups as discussed above. America has taken in immigrants from all over the world, the native Americans are now very few, but it refers to itself as a country and a nation based on the fact it is a territory, a people, has a government and sovereignty. This complexity causes further issues with the word nationalism. Is a nationalist a person prepared to fight and die for people of the same language and culture or for the country; the answer appears to be a constant mixture.

Many millions have died on behalf of their nations, so what makes a nation so important? Humanity tends to group and divide itself into distinct and often conflicting groups which goes back to the earliest of times. Even the early intellectuals such as Plato and Aristotle divided humanity between Hellenes and Barbarians, and for the ancient Jews everyone else was a Gentile. Today Chechens and Ukrainians do not regard themselves as Russians, the Welsh people determinedly remain Welsh and not English. The question must be asked as to why people have this powerful desire to separate themselves into distinctive nations, when we are of the same biological classification, despite the puerile Nazi efforts to use science to prove otherwise.

A nation differs from the family and tribe in so far that it involves a larger area of **territory** than the family home or valley, and an individual born into that area is characterised by a bonding culture and language in the first instance. Naturally it takes time to emerge and form into a recognisable

shape and travels through a series of historical processes. This was never a simultaneous development but a patchwork over centuries. Some nations may be identified as assuming "national status" earlier than others, and new nations have appeared in the last hundred years.

A nation is always dependent upon its historical memories, many of them are often legendary and mythological and based on popular oral tradition. Much of the Old Testament, its history books, prophets, laws, and myths form the background for Jewish thinking to this day, including their perceived right of domination in their area of the Middle-East. The romantic story of good King Alfred burning cakes was undoubtedly legendary, but these and many other examples were all part of the necessary tradition for the early development of England. Some of the stories may have a factual background, other accounts less so, but this "temporal depth" assists the collective consciousness necessary for justifying the existence of a nation. The common culture and language, along with the social relationship of historical self-consciousness, creates a form of social relationship. It often epitomises itself in some constructed edifice such as the wailing wall of the old temple in Jerusalem, Stonehenge in Britain, and the Great Wall in China; all acting as a memory that common ancestors have all trod the same path in the same territory. The Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins in his verse entitled *God's Grandeur* wrote:

> *"Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;*
> *And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;*
> *And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil*
> *Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod."*

Hopkin's purpose behind these lines was portraying a deeply religious insight, but he conveys that emotional sense of the human attachment to the land and the past.

The first obvious implication is the historical claim in terms of territory based on historical rights. The sense of kinship and community is also important, and the Jewish people look back to their father Abraham, the Romanians to the Dacians, the Chinese to the Han race and the British to Boadicea whose chariot sits on Westminster Bridge. Nearly all these features have historical roots, but they are embellished by legend and oral tradition to give them significance. Being born into a territory with its historical and legendary background is so important that often, to this day, pregnant women will return to their birth-countries to ensure the nationality of their child, thereby seeking emotional reassurance. As the nation grew it nearly always included small ethnic groups under the one territorial claim,

but hopefully signifying the concept of an area free from conflict; at least that was an ideal rarely achieved by humanity's behaviour.

A nation is a territory built over time and linked together by culture, but it varies from nation to nation. When the nation becomes organised under authority the nation starts to indicate the position of what we tend to call a *State*. Many nations can exist as nations under one State as in Empires. Romania and Hungary retained their identity as nations but were under the Soviet Union during its existence, as were other countries under the Habsburgs, Ottomans and Romanovs when these empires existed. In early France and in Britain many smaller nations were brought together under the State, and to this day retain their identity in what tends to be called "regions." The Catalonians and Basques regard themselves as distinctive nations, but they are held under the State of Spain with its constitutional laws, legal codes, fiscal and military demands, and sometimes a common religious affiliation. The standardisation of money and language helped many states bind nations under the one flag. The convergence of nation and state led to the situation of Empire, and as with states and nations the vexed question of borders. The existence of an Empire has often raised the question of nationalism as individual areas have continuously sought the right of self-determination, naturally deemed as a right by virtue of their collective memory of their distinctive past.

The basis for this identity is nearly always the ***common culture*** associated with the historical and legendary past mentioned earlier. This is usually linked with a specific territory made somewhat more complex because during that historical process ethnic regions appeared, and this raised the question of the nation as a social relationship. Humans make up a nation and apart from being born in the same territory and sharing the same culture and traditions, they interacted on this basis that they are part of the same *land*. Culture and traditions can change over time when it depends on a reliance of their history to bind them. It happens that during the historical process modifications take place such as changing from a despotic monarch to a constitutional monarchy or to a democratic republic. In the process of such radical changes there is always the risk of breaking up or being at odds internally. No nation can avoid periods of change and the sense of nation is maintained through the social relationships of being passed down from one generation to the next. Some traditions are enhanced or even invented using the past in a creative way to maintain the sense of nationhood. A minor but curious "example of such an invention was the Scottish tartan kilt…invented in the 18th century" yet always regarded as an emblematic continuity of Scottish identity.[10]

Various factors have changed the perception of a nation such as the arrival of immigrants or refugees, and the emergence of significant minority groups. Definitions of citizenship have frequently changed from those born of accepted national members indicating a specific ethnicity, to those of incomers which indicated a more civic conception of the nation. Determination of national membership is open to change, but it inevitably varies from country to country. Kinship and tradition are critical yet mobile.

One of the main factors which helps bind a nation as an identifiable unit is the matter of *Law.* In medieval times written law became prolific and traditional, "the law of the land." In the early regional areas of Italy and Germany there were local codified laws, but they had no unifying centres. From the thirteenth century France had a strong monarchy with a royal court and the *Parlement of Paris* which acted as a centralising and binding influence. Nevertheless, the law was more diverse in France than in England. The English feudal system acted like a pyramid reaching up to the ultimate authority of the monarch. King Henry II (1133-1189) helped develop a legal system, with travelling judges, local courts, the start of the jury system and above all the Common Law, which meant it was to treat all people the same in all regions of the nation. The people owed their sense of safety and peace to the king, and under one law and one king a possible unified nation was more apparent. Also, under Henry II was the Assize of Arms, which demanded the rich and poor should supply a national army; this alone helped bind the classes as a single nation or country. Henry's son King John was obliged to sign the 1215 Magna Carta to appease the barons, which much later helped prompt the concept of a legislating parliament; the modern parliamentary concept was of course far from the minds of the Barons of that day and age, despite the myths attached to Magna Carta. All these medieval machinations helped with the emergence of a national community where even the king was supposedly bound by the law. There were similar developments in other countries, but it was more pronounced in England, giving the later inspired myth that England was the source of parliamentary type democracy. The major impact was on the social relations where regions which may differ somewhat in culture and dialect came under the same unifying law. The main feature was that a person had to be an English national to have the benefit of the law (not class as in some countries; in late Tsarist Russia peasants could be flogged for minor misdemeanours unlike the other social strata) and in England foreigners could not appeal to the courts, and until 1870 they could not purchase land unless they were English. At an early stage "Englishness" and nation were elevated.

A nation to be a nation needed defined territory, its people born in that area with its cultures, and a social relationship passed from generation to generation, and under a unifying structure (such as a monarch and his council) based on law and justified by its perceived history to claim the first signs of being a state. It almost amounted to a familial relationship of commonality seemingly based on the extended family. This sense of **belonging** and the growing family is contained in such words as motherland, fatherland and homeland. The word "land" making direct reference to the territory, and the words mother or father suggesting the power of generating life and sustenance, as in the old Hebrew land that their country "flows with milk and honey;" a place of nourishment and growth. In the human mind it becomes a place of projected comfort, familiarity, and memory. This writer can recall having spent seven years in New Zealand returning home and seeing London from an aeroplane at six in the morning, with all its familiar lights and frenetic traffic movement, which created a deep sense of emotional nostalgia. The word homeland is the same as mother and father as it indicates not just a house or residence but the place of the family. It is just a piece of territory where a person is born by sheer accident or fate, but for most of humanity it carries a feeling of "belonging," if only because of a sense of early familiarity.

Generally, the word territory is part of the key to the word nation, bound by its history which often recalls its "founding fathers," or moments such as victory against an oppressor which marks out its singularity. Factors such as religion, trade, and science cross national frontiers with little interest in natural or designated political borders, but the word nation carries a sense of identity and belonging to those born or raised within its confines; humans often have a deep need for the familiar. Having a home, family, education, and place of work in a specific territory offers a sense or a degree of ownership or belonging. In the family a child is an extension of that family and the familial terms of motherland, fatherland and homeland tend to underline this emotion. It is also dependent upon memories of everyday food, clothing and housing, and traditions with many other customs. It often creates a sense of security as a place of safety for most (with the possible exception of those who belonged to an ethnic minority) born in the territory leading to the old saying that "an Englishman's home is his castle."[*] The feeling of belonging can induce a sense of deep membership and even ownership found in a territory with ancestral links, and with a temporal

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[*] This expression was first defined by William Pitt in 1763 when he claimed "the poorest man may in his cottage bid defiance against the forces of the crown;" the predilection of home ownership is still a British custom compared to many European neighbours.

depth marked by its history. This sense of belonging touched all classes of
a society, as Roy Porter in his history of *England in the Eighteenth Century*
noted: "yet even the discontented and oppressed often felt passionate loyalty
to their place in the order of things…inheritance of stations in life reinforced
jealously guarded territoriality."[11]

Many historians tend to see the word nation as a modern concept dating
from the seventeenth century though there will always be notable variations,
and there are some powerful arguments to support this conclusion. It has
been claimed that it was the democratic process, which involved the
population in the national community which was the turning point for the
making of a nation, because everyone then became part of its identity and
the formation of real nationhood ensued. Although a pertinent view it tends
to favour the modern democratic system; a totalitarian nation remains a
nation even in modern eyes, although the people generally have no vote or
say in how it is governed. Even after the Parliamentary Reform Acts of 1832
Britain could hardly be described as democratic.

This also raises yet further the complexity of the definition of the word
nation. There have often been serious conflicts within the nation as to what
the nation should be, its form and conduct; this has sometimes been fought
out in civil wars such as the American, English and Spanish wars in their
respective centuries. The French and Russians may look to their
revolutionary history as the turning points as to the designation of nation.
One thing is clear, it was never a uniform process, and there was an
identifiable French nation prior to 1789 and a Russian Empire before the
Soviets.

However, the process of myth-building in early times indicates that the
pre-modern nation was very much in the mind of our ancestors. The land
flowing with milk and honey was supposedly occupied by the giant
mythological Nephilim and the Anakites, but Moses promised them that
Yahweh was making this piece of land his promise for their ownership. In
Poland the legend of Bishop Stanisław (c.11th century) grew; he was
martyred, and his body parts spread throughout Poland's territory, and this
miraculously marked Poland's resurrection in the unification where the
body parts had been buried. These and many other myths were utilised and
contributed to territorial ownership, distinguishing it from other "lands."
There was a symbolic meaning reinforced by legendary history and
seemingly justified later by actual historical events. Occasionally there are
various forms of the myth and legend and interpretation of historical events
which clash and reflect the ongoing tensions within any community. There
are often varying interpretations not just of a country's past, but to its future
as mentioned above. This does not necessarily mean that they were nations

in the modern sense, but they were part of the process of making a nation. "There is a self-understanding, a collective self-consciousness, which is spatially orientated, territorially bounded, and temporally deep, as conveyed by the very existence of the respective, written histories of each of the pre-modern societies."[12] Many scholars accept these early moves of making a nation, but understandably deny that they were nations as understood by the term today. It could be argued that the word nation is still disputed in modern times as regions such as Catalonia still seek individual nationhood, and further illustrated by the recent emergence of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and the demands for autonomy in Scotland.

The debate involving the argument that nations are a recent phenomenon often centres on the argument that in pre-modern history the illiterate masses were never conscious of such issues, and they were manipulated by the few. However, in the millennia BC there were literate societies as historians of ancient history are aware, and, as mentioned above, there are many recognisable and accredited nations where the masses play no part. The widely read Old Testament indicated a formation of their history, outlined the codification of laws, and concentrated on their given land, as well as those who contested this claim in neighbouring territories. For many it would have been oral tradition, but this carries its own deep powers of transmission. It is also clear that in these early times religion was important; all these Old Testament lands had their gods of territory, for Israel it was Yahweh and for the Moabites it was Chemosh with a myriad of other examples. It was all part of the formulation of a distinctive culture and nation.

In later times the masses, the illiterate "peasants" fought for their territory as the Poles did in their battle against the Teutonic Knights (1431) and Henry II of England called for military arms in 1181 from all citizens. There must have been amongst such soldiers a sense of the nationhood or "my country" for which they were fighting and prepared to die, even if that nationhood centred on the king and not the democratic process.

If a nation is defined by a given bounded territory with a name, a history, a singular culture and religion, legal codes, a central system of power then many of these components were evident before modern times, even if they differed vastly from area to area. The argument that citizenship was missing, and that for example, the Polish nation was a mere nobility-conflict does not always hold water. It should be recalled, as noted above, that recently in 1832 England only 3.2% of the entire population could vote. The modern concept that there must be an agreement between the governed and the ruling body, both subject to the law, is important and still evolving, but nationhood itself is still developing and changing, and has been a persistent

characteristic of human evolution. Nations are much older than many historians infer. While it is true the modern nation-state was very different from the medieval concept, and more so from earlier times, it is apparent that even in the period commonly known as "Before Christ" or the modern BCE, nations and countries were recognisable in their self-identities.

Patriotism

George Orwell was an acknowledged wordsmith who admitted that nationalism and patriotism can both be challenged in their meanings. He wrote that "by patriotism I mean devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best place in the world but has no wish to force upon other people," [whereas]… "nationalism, on the other hand is inseparable from the desire for power."[13] This is typical of Orwell's succinct fashion and is direct and straight to the point. Nationalists think only in terms of competitive prestige which Orwell tended to regard as an infection, whereas patriotism for him tended to engender a more acceptable homely feeling.

There is a frequent tendency to regard patriotism and nationalism as merging if not being synonymous. They are different words which should not be taken out of context, but even dictionaries differ in analysis. Patriotism is often used when individuals and groups look to their own territory with a sense of home, if not fondness, which unlike nationalism (yet to be examined), does not imply a suspicion of a neighbouring country. When the Roman Cato (234-149 BC) expressed a hatred of Greeks this was a form of nationalism; had he offered a view on patriotism he would have written that he loved the way the Romans lived, and simply acknowledged that the "Greeks do it their way." It could be argued that patriotism does not demand a person dies for their country, but simply means a person has a greater empathy for their homeland. Modern parlance and idiom are confusing, and recently it has been common for soldiers to be called patriots to encourage or reward them for killing the enemy.

In the popular understanding of the word nationalism has its closest association with patriotism (patriotism became more widespread linguistically during the 1790s) in which most dictionaries generally agree: it is often defined as a love or devotion to one's country coupled with vigorous support. The synonyms commonly associated with patriotism are nationalism, loyalty, partisanship, and jingoism. There has been continuous debate as to defining these two words of patriotism and nationalism, and it is a discussion which continues. It has often been said that patriotism is the love of one's country as opposed to nationalism which is *my country right or*

wrong. In other words, these two concepts of nationalism and patriotism are both reflective of a person's love for their country, but their ways of expressing this devotion differ in the methods they use to express that emotion. It could be claimed that patriotism is more emotional and passive, whereas nationalism is more pro-active. Patriotism is more easily defined than nationalism which has so many aspects and gradations of colour ensures disagreement now and for a long time to come.

A patriot believes his country is good but not necessarily the best, otherwise the word jingoism creeps in; others argue that patriotism is personal, whereas nationalism is a political device often based on patriotism, but the nationalistic aspect is the more potentially dangerous and needs exploration.

What is Nationalism?

For some people nationalism is a good thing for others it portends disaster. Nationalism can be regarded by some as reasonable if not good, it can by other people be defined as potentially evil; the attitudes behind the word have numerous definitions and nuances all subject to changing times in history. Lord Acton famously wrote that "nationalism was both a modern development and a 'retrograde step in history,' the spread of which would be marked with 'material as well as moral ruin.'"[14] Never has a word been so extensively discussed in recent years, from those who uphold its importance, to others like George Orwell, who wrote an extended essay on nationalism in which he wrote: "By nationalism I mean first of all the habit of assuming that human beings can be classified like insects, and that whole blocks of millions or tens of millions of people can be confidently labelled 'good' or 'bad.' But secondly, and this is much more important, I mean the habit of identifying oneself with a single nation or other unit, placing it beyond good and evil and recognising no other duty than that of advancing its interests."[15] For Orwell, nationalism was summarised by three characteristics: namely *obsessio*n, claiming superiority in everything, *instability,* loyalties are transferrable, and *indifference to reality,* that, for example, it implies it is necessary to defend self-determination in Europe, but not in India. It should be recalled that Orwell's essay was written in 1945 when he had experienced the Spanish Civil War and World War Two, and he had experienced nationalistic extremism.

In his *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle wrote about the doctrine of "the mean" arguing too little of a thing was never good enough, too much was damaging, and somewhere between the two is the right balance, namely "the mean." Too little food could mean death by starvation, and too much could

be death by obesity, whereas "the mean" or right amount is healthy and correct. The same could be applied to nationalism at a stretch of the imagination, but this can be a contentious thought for some.

Nationalism can be deployed as an abstract noun, an adjective, a verb and adverb. If the word nationalism is checked in the mainline dictionaries there is little disagreement on its broad definition. It is regarded as a word which is identified with a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation over another, with primary emphasis on that country's cultural interests, as opposed to other nations or supranational groups. It represents a form of identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of other nations. Interestingly it has a synonym basis which includes such words as patriotism, chauvinism, independence, xenophobia, and jingoism. This makes an interesting comparison with the synonym base for patriotism mentioned earlier, mainly because the words chauvinism and xenophobia have made an appearance.

At its best nationalism means to give more importance to unity by way of cultural background, including language and heritage, corresponding to patriotism's love of nation with its stress on values and belief. George Orwell famously once claimed nationalism is "the worst enemy of peace," whereas patriotism is merely a feeling of admiration for a way of life. Patriotism therefore was regarded as passive, whereas nationalism was aggressive. The implication is whereas Patriotism is based on affection, nationalism finds its focus in rivalry and resentment. Nationalism is militant whereas patriotism tends to be peaceful. It has been claimed that patriots work for their country as with President Kennedy's well-known speech "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country," whereas nationalists work against other nations; but such sweeping explanations are rarely watertight, and President Kennedy's speech could be interpreted from a different perspective.

Making the matter of definition even more confusing are the various changes over time based on history and culture. One form of nationalism can be the Nazi racist demand of its soldiers to attack in the name of the fatherland and destroy "sub-humans," compared to the call for defence against intruders often demanded from such nations as Finland, Israel and Switzerland at various times. Some claim the distinction between patriotism and nationalism is only a matter of degree, but it is more complex than this simplistic statement implies.

Politicians used the clarion call of nationalism to initiate the idea that their country is or should be the top leader of other nations, not just independent, but the ruling nation. This form of nationalism may encourage the belief that minorities should be persecuted or even eliminated, and that

other countries need to be invaded for the sake of unity. In this sense there is a general tendency to regard "nationalism as a kind of political disease."[16] However, it can be regarded as "a vivifying and inspiring force. It makes for national unity when it is genuine, and not merely a cloak for national ambitions."[17] In any outline history of Europe it can be eschewed that "National States are themselves 'imagined communities:' they are built on powerful myths and on the political rewriting of history;" this may hold a degree of truth but it still encourages a sense of nationalism.[18]

A reading of European history sets the words of nationalism and patriotism into a context which supports some of the above arguments but not consistently. As noted, the words Nationalism and Patriotism are not necessarily the same; it is possible to be a Swiss patriot whether the Swiss national speaks French, German or Italian. The same could be said of bi-lingual Belgium and Wales. However, Nationalism and Patriotism have different origins even though they may be described as natural and primary feelings. Generally, it could be argued that patriotism springs from a love of home, whereas nationalism can be regarded as an aversion to persons and things which are unfamiliar or strange. This can relate to cultural and religious differences, but often relates to language, and can create a "them and us" scenario. A perceived common enemy can put such differences aside for other motives as was experienced in the Crusades, when people of differing languages and cultures joined together to fight the growth of Islam, and thereby gain wealth and glory; the common denominator here was that religion appeared to bind them. As the centuries progressed from the tenth to the eighteenth there was a tendency for the feelings of patriotism and nationalism to be regarded in the same light, though the words were not in common currency.

Both words, especially nationalism remain contentious in their definitions. Nationalism can be good or bad, useful or dangerous and no singular word stands for all the possible themes contained under its wide and almost indefinable umbrella. Nationalism comes in many shapes and forms and needs continuous defining adjectives, and it cannot be tied down to a one sentence definition. The word nation is not nationalism, but is a word used to describe a set of beliefs or feelings about a nation and can be understood in many ways. Even Orwell looked at positive and negative nationalism and what he called transferred nationalism.[19] There is cultural nationalism which may include language, ethnicity, traditions and daily life. This can, to use Orwell's language be both positive and highly negative. Unifying nationalism can bring regions and principalities into an identifiable state, which can involve secessionist nationalism, when it is deemed necessary for a nation to extricate itself from a powerful empire. This is the type of

nationalism when people seek autonomy and self-determination, as when a nation wishes to rule itself and not be governed by a powerful neighbour. Once again history indicates this can have positive as well as negative results. There is also irredentist nationalism when a country or people believes, rightly or wrongly, that another nation has misappropriated their territory and demands its return or face invasion. There is an isolationist nationalism in which a nation retreats into itself and wants nothing to do with neighbours. As with President Trump's removal of American interests in many international agreements, most especially in the Paris Agreement of 2015 in which "nationalist isolationism is probably even more dangerous in the context of climate change than of nuclear war."[20] These isolationists frequently tend to be Right-wing elements who "tend to care far less about things like pollution and endangered species than Left-wing progressives."[21] There is even what has been described as banal nationalism when the people of the country are almost inculcated in its very landscape and surroundings with a sense of nationalism. Banal nationalism will be explored later in this introduction. All these aspects bring out different meanings to the word and either separately or within this survey of European history need noting and explanation.

Perhaps the only way forward for this study to make sense is to use an analogy and compare Nationalism to a colour. If the colour red is selected it is immediately apparent that it comes in various shades, cardinal, carmine, carnelian, cerise, scarlet, vermilion, Persian to name just a few of a range which for some experts can reach hundreds. Some of the reds will be dark and hardly detectable, some too light and the same problem emerges, some are beautiful to the human eye, some too stark, a sinister blood-red for others, and for some there are shades of red which act as a warning light.

Over the centuries of European history nationalism has come in varying shades, sometimes seemingly justifiable, sometimes government initiated, other times as a populist reaction. On occasions nationalism has achieved freedom from foreign domination, and at other times it has been highly aggressive and dangerous. In order to gather a glimmer of understanding about nationalism, its origins, driving forces, motivations, intentions, and consequences, it is necessary to take a survey of European history from its tribal origins through to this day. Such a task would need volumes, but this work is intended for the general historian or reader, and a survey is the only sensible way to address the task. This work will indicate the highly significant points on the journey through Europe's history as to the various shades and transformation of shades that Nationalism has developed over the centuries. It will demonstrate various peaks in the last three centuries,

but it will confirm there has always been a form nationalism before the modern period, even though the term is comparatively modern.

It has been stated that "we can succinctly define the political ideology of nationalism as one which claims that there exists a unique nation, that this nation has a special value, and therefore a right to existence and recognition that to secure this right the nation must possess autonomy."[22] This naturally is considered by many as sound sense, but it is also entirely feasible that the decisive human impulses behind nationalism go back even beyond nations. It was the appalling ramifications of the French Revolution and later the Great War which drew the sharper attention of historians to the subject of nationalism, but few have noted that this phenomenon albeit claimed as recent, has deep roots in human conduct and thinking.

It has been stated that "the emergence of the European nation state is commonly seen to depend on three connected processes of centralisation: the emergence of supralocal identities and cultures (the 'nation'); the rise of powerful and authoritative institutions within the public domain (the 'State'); and the development of particular ways of organising production and consumption (the 'economy')."[23] No one could disagree with this line of thinking, but it contains the commonly held belief that nationalism in historical terms is recent. Orwell wrote that he regarded nationalism as an infection writing "the nationalistic loves and hatreds that I have spoken of, they are part of the make-up of most of us, whether we like it or not."[24] This Orwellian insight gives pause for the consideration that the ingredients that help produce the sense of nationalism are deep rooted in human history.

When did Nationalism become an Issue?

It has been suggested that the 1789 French Revolution marked a turning point when loyalty to the figurehead, the king or emperor, changed to "the people," and some have argued that this was the point at which nationalism became evident.[25] However, some argue that the first signs of nationalism started in Austria during the time of the Habsburgs. It was a nationalism based on religious persecution, which although modified in 1705 continued until 1781. This was the time of Emperor Joseph II, who was a free-thinker, not only abolished serfdom, but reduced the number of religious establishments. He constructed schools and wider education facilities, but he tried to ensure German was the universal language within his extensive domains; it made Joseph the hero of German nationalism but caused serious widespread dissent. This exploration while not denying these view-points will argue that, as with the concept of nation, there is a temporal depth to

the impulse behind the word nationalism which has deep historical roots in human history.

Nationalism grew across Europe as it has done for centuries and continues to this day. It has been suggested patriotism would expand with demands for liberation, unification and often became aggressive, but the question must be asked whether such patriotism was simply nationalism. This happened in both Italy and Germany at about the same time. Italy had been for centuries a series of independent states, but a sense of patriotic sentiment grew to expel the Austrians and damp down other nationality influences. National unification could be seen to be fulfilled with the occupation of Rome in 1870. Somewhere along the line patriotism was exchanged for nationalism, because liberation had led to unification and this entered the third aggressive phase of expansion. The unified Italy started to look not only to those areas where there were Italian speakers as in the South Tyrol, but extended their ambitions around the Mediterranean to Tripoli, Cyrenaica, Rhodes, and smaller islands; this was an uncluttered form of expansionist and aggressive nationalism.

A similar pattern in the same century emerged in Germany. After the sense of liberation from Napoleonic oppression in 1813-1814, the first step was taken to unification with the German Federation and its Diet at Frankfurt in 1815, properly established in 1866-7, and the arrival of the German Empire in 1871. There then followed the third phase of aggression with the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein (1866) and Alsace-Lorraine (1871) both areas also containing German speakers. In Ireland the Fenian brotherhood was established in 1858 and by 1880 had adopted the term nationalists. The nature of a language people spoke remained an objective for nationalism, but "it is only when nationalism becomes aggressive that it tends to adopt policies, especially that of terrorism, which are incompatible with democracy."[26]

Features of Nationalism in a Divided Europe

In historical terms nationalism in Europe has its roots and motivations back in the earliest of times. This survey of European history will show that nations and countries have featured in human life much longer than some historians allow, but more specifically so have the ingredients of nationalism.

The very term Europe is a modern concept, but it relates to the western portion of the landmass of Euro-Asia with its borders defined by the sea, but the Euro-Asian border remains, as it long has, a question of historical, political, religious, and often emotional debate. Since the 1880s a general theme has been that it is broadly fixed between the Atlantic and the Urals;