

that the changes originated mainly in western Europe, just as the preceding sketch devoted to the definition of our terms, followed events that occurred in that part of our earth. Nationalism in its various forms penetrated into eastern Europe from the West, but in this migration it underwent important changes. We will explore the reasons and nature of these changes in the remaining pages of this chapter.

II

Professor Hans Kohn recognized the basic problem of eastern European nationalism when he stated that

so strong was the influence of ideas that, while the new nationalism in Western Europe corresponded to changing social, economic, and political realities, it spread to Central and Eastern Europe long before a corresponding social and economic transformation The new ideas encountered in the different countries a great diversity of institutional and social conditions, bequeathed by the past, and were shaped and modified by them. Their different interpretations produced different types of nationalism—one based upon liberal middle-class concepts and pointing to a consummation in a democratic world society, the other based upon irrational and pre-enlightened concepts tending towards exclusiveness⁴

Some of the implications of this analysis are clarified further by Kohn.

Nationalism in the West arose in an effort to build a nation in the political reality and struggle of the present without too much sentimental regard for the past; nationalists in Central and Eastern Europe created, often out of myths of the past and the dreams of the future, an ideal

Leonard W. Doob, *Patriotism and Nationalism: Their Psychological Foundation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964); Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communications; An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press and New York: Wiley, 1953); Hubertus C. J. Duijker and N. H. Frijda, *National Characteristics and National Stereotypes* (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Co., 1960); Leonard Krieger, "Nationalism and the Nation-State System," *Chapters in Western Civilization*, ed. Contemporary Civilization Staff of Columbia College (3rd ed.: New York: Columbia University Press, 1962); Karl W. Deutsch and William J. Foltz (eds.), *Nation Building* (New York: Atherton, 1963); Louis L. Snyder, *The Meaning of Nationalism* (New Brunswick, N.H.: Rutgers Press, 1954).

⁴ Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, p. 457.

fatherland, closely linked with the past, devoid of any immediate connection with the present, and expected to become sometime a political reality. Thus they were at liberty to adorn it with traits for the realization of which they had no immediate responsibility, but which influenced the nascent nation's wishful image of itself and its mission⁵

Western nationalism, Kohn suggests, was based on reality, eastern nationalism on myths and dreams. Nationalism makes sense, at least according to the explanation offered in the preceding pages, only in a centralized nation-state. In the nature of the state we might find the first clue why eastern and western European nationalism were so different.

In the Western world, in England and in France, in the Netherlands and in Switzerland, in the United States and the British dominions, the rise of nationalism was a predominantly political occurrence; it was preceded by the formation of the future nation state, or, as in the case of the United States, coincided with it. Outside the Western world, in Central and Eastern Europe and in Asia, nationalism arose not only later, but also generally at a more backward stage of social and political development: the frontiers of an existing state and of a rising nationality rarely coincided; nationalism there grew in protest against and in conflict with the existing state pattern—not primarily to transform it into a people's state, but to redraw the political boundaries in conformity with ethnographic demands.⁶

This difference between the situation in western and eastern Europe is not difficult to understand when one considers that

unlike western Europe, where relative national homogeneity was achieved before the nineteenth century . . . eastern and east-central Europe has nurtured differences to the present day. The reasons are manifold. Whereas migrations had ceased in the West at an early date, in the East they continued far into modern times, often in the form of deliberate colonization The borders of the eastern states, too, remained fluid . . . and each acquisition of territory . . . brought masses of people differing nationally and culturally from the dominant statebuilding group. Moreover, the influence of Rome, particularly that of the Roman Catholic Church, operated during the Middle Ages to slough off dis-

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 330.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

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similarities in the West, while in the East it only accentuated distinctive differences as it met and clashed with Byzantine culture and the Greek Church. The unifying effect of royal power was potent in the West partly because the linguistic and cultural consciousness of the masses was as yet in a rudimentary stage in early modern times. Therefore effective resistance to the process of assimilation failed to develop. In the East, on the other hand, feudal and local particularism did not yield to political and administrative centralization until the nineteenth century, when nationalism was becoming a conscious force. What had been the privileges and prerogatives of local satraps in previous centuries was presumed to be in the nineteenth the birthright of the people, sanctioned by the national ideal⁷

No wonder that eastern European nationalism did not tend towards "a consummation in a democratic world society," but was "tending towards exclusiveness," seeking to find a justification, a specific *mission* for a given group that quite often did not even include all members of the nation or nationality. When such a group, the Polish or Hungarian nobility for example, was willing to include all members of their nationality in their nationalism, eastern European nationalism became *messianic*. Messianism cannot be egalitarian; it claims rights for a chosen people, the *Volk*, not for the individual or the citizen. This *Volk* concept is practically totalitarian. It stands for a group that has its history, national characteristics, culture, rights, and mission. It has to achieve this mission because some vaguely conceived laws (God-given, historical, natural) demand it. The individual, as a member of this *Volk*-community, has no history, no characteristics, rights, or so on, on his own. He is a *Volks-genosse* ruled by the will of the *Volk*, and if he opposes it he is considered by the majority as only slightly better than a traitor.

This will, *Volkswille*, should not be confused with Rousseau's general will. Rousseau's will was the result of a social contract, a freely performed human action excluding even majority rule. A member of a *Volk* was subject to the *Volkswille* from birth. This confusion of nationality and nation, of cultural, political, and linguistic characteristics was further extended to justify the *Volk's* mission. This mission could be accomplished only if it had free play

⁷ Oscar J. Janowsky, *Nationalities and National Minorities (With Special Reference to East-Central Europe)* (New York: Macmillan, 1945), pp. 19-20.

in a *Volksstaat*, nation-state. Once again one must be careful. The nation state of western Europe developed along lines discussed in the first section of this chapter. It was simply the result of the process of democratization, the transference of sovereignty from the ruler to the subjects, now transformed into citizens, the members of the nation. The *Volksstaat* was a similar political unit, but it existed to fulfill the mission of the *Volk*, and sovereignty rested with those few who supposedly expressed the *Volkswille*, the members of the political nation. Consequently the specific groups that originally accepted nationalism from the West could broaden the basis of their operation by nominating themselves as the depositories of the *Volkswille* by using the arguments developed in the West to justify the existence of their continued hegemony in their states.

This was, roughly speaking, the *Volk* concept in eastern Europe. It differs as sharply from the humanistic-romantic concept first developed in Germany as the western nation-state differed from the eastern European *Volksstaat*. Germany was the main transmitter of most western ideas, including nationalism, to eastern Europe although direct influences were by no means negligible. Western ideas were not only modified by the German thinkers, they were often used to produce new interpretations of old beliefs. This was inevitable. Human experience is not uniform, and ideas cannot be separated from the other aspects of reality. At least since the days of Charlemagne, Germany was in close contact with the West, was part of the cultural world of western Christianity, and in the eighteenth century had numerous towns and cities, a bourgeoisie, a common literary language, and was ruled by native princes. On the other hand, Germany was not a state in the modern sense of the word, suffered from great internal tensions that became acute after the outbreak of the Austrian War of Succession that was fought when the ideas of nationalism were germinating. Germany, furthermore, was behind England, France, and the Netherlands in terms of economic development and sociopolitical progress. If shadings and degrees are left aside it might be said that Germany had as much in common with eastern as with western Europe. As westerners, Germans were fascinated by the enlightenment and were influenced by modern nationalism, but they were easterners enough, to feel a need to adjust the various new ideas to the realities of their quasi-feudal economy and political structure. The German variants of

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⁸ Bernhard Su
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basically western European ideas were more easily adaptable to eastern European needs than the originals. By the time they became operating forces east of Germany they were at least twice removed from their western models.

Liberty to the French and British meant the absence from oppressive government. The same word in Germany stood for the absence of too many oppressive governments and thus carried a connotation of the creation of a German nation and state. In eastern Europe liberty represented the absence of oppressive foreign rule, religious freedom, and the creation of states, but not yet nations because those educated enough to understand (or misunderstand) the new ideas—the Polish *szlachta*, the Romanian boyars, the Hungarian and Croatian nobility, the leading churchmen, and the bureaucrats—were unwilling, at least in the eighteenth century, to give up their privileges. Moving from west to east the same word acquired at least three meanings.

The same adaptive transformation can be observed in the concept of the *Volk*. Although he did not invent the *Volk* concept, Johann Gottfried von Herder's name is associated with it as closely as Rousseau's is with the social contract. Herder's *Volk* comes close to our definition of *nationality*. He never confused it with *nation*. When he wrote about the latter he always used the German word *Nation*. He contrasted the interests of nationality with the effects of national policy sharply in his letter No. 121 written in 1797 in which he asked: what are the rules of justice in history? He observed that

. . . cold history judges in accordance with the goals of states in conformity with a supposedly positive right, and even it [history] becomes often very hot in following this approach. The good of the fatherland, the honor of the nation becomes its [history's] battle cry and, in the case of underhanded action, the motto of the state.⁸

Herder pointed out that this approach, going back to ancient Athens, made humanity unhappy and finally culminated in the spirit of the Spanish-French state polity that "blackened the most brilliant with the shadow of vanity Humanity . . . is forgotten because

⁸ Bernhard Suphan (ed.), *Herders Sämmtliche Werke*, XXXIII (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1877-1913), XVIII, *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*, 282.

according to [this polity] it exists only for the state, namely for kings and ministers."⁹ Herder went on to point out that his contemporaries, who had rejected this approach, were pursuing a similarly dangerous "phantom of light"¹⁰ when they tried to find an ideal state structure applicable to the needs of all nationalities. Herder justified his criticism of the state and its actions by pointing out that "the happiness of one nationality cannot be forced upon, trusted upon, or loaded on another or all others. The roses in the wreath of liberty must be gathered by everybody's own hands and must spring with pleasure from one's own needs and own desire."¹¹ On the one hand we have the state and the nation, on the other nationality [*Volk*] and liberty that must correspond not to polity or an ideal state form, but to the need of each nationality.

In another letter written during the same year, (No. 123), Herder tried to explain that for each nationality liberty is essential because

we cannot be either happy, nor dignified or morally good until, for example, a single slave is unhappy because of the guilt of men The essence of human nature encloses a universe whose motto is: "Nobody for himself alone, all for one. Therefore let us all be happy and valuable for each other. An endless variety tending towards unity is in all and advances all."¹²

This is a romantic and, even more, a humanitarian concept. It condemns those who place the state, even the ideal state, ahead of people. People are, admittedly, of an endless variety; nationalities are the units in which people gather in accordance with their different desires. Each nationality must be free because, in spite of all differences, humanity tends toward unity that profits all and that can be achieved only by the cooperation of all nationalities. "By its own efforts not a single nationality of Europe was raised to the level of culture,"¹³ wrote Herder elsewhere.

Herder's nationalities had but one common mission: to add their

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

¹¹ *Ibid.*,

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.

¹³ Eugen Kühnemann (ed.), *Herders Werke*, Part IV, Section III, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, p. 677 in Joseph Kürschner (ed.), *Deutsche National-Litteratur*, LXXVII (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, n.d.).

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¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 676.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 667

bit to the total of human culture and happiness. They had to find themselves first by rediscovering their languages and history. But, warned Herder,

. . . the historian of humanity should be careful in this [the rediscovery of the past] not to make one nationality into his exclusive favorite and thus slight all others whom circumstances had deprived of happiness and fame. The German learned even from the Slav; the Kymr and the Lett might have been Greeks if their situation among people would have been different.¹⁴

We can see, without difficulty, how different Herder's concept of the *Volk* and its mission was from those of his eastern European followers. His goal was a happy humanity composed of free nationalities cooperating with each other peacefully as equals. He was a humanitarian and a champion of nationality. Those who later used his words and ideas in eastern Europe were statist and nationalists.

III

Herder was very influential in introducing nationalism into eastern Europe. We have just discussed what happened to his *Volk* concept and its mission when it migrated eastward into non-German regions. His influence on the Slav revival is an even better known and equally important subject. The Slav movement began among the Czechs and Slovaks. With the exception of Josef Dobrowský (1753-1829) all Czechs and Slovaks from Jan Kollár (1793-1852) and Pavel Josef Safarik (1795-1861) to František Palacký (1798-1876) acknowledged, to a greater or lesser degree, their and their fellow nationals' debt to Herder. Yet their reading of Herder was entirely their own and certainly not in their master's spirit. Examination of a short passage from Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* will illustrate: On only three printed pages did Herder discuss "Slavische Völker."¹⁵ Half of this short section is devoted to a description of the region inhabited by Slavs and to praising their pacific nature, their concentration on agriculture, commerce, and mining, their cultural activity and military passivity. These paragraphs end with the lines:

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 676.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 667-70.