

SOCIAL PRECONDITIONS  
OF NATIONAL REVIVAL  
IN EUROPE

*A Comparative Analysis of the  
Social Composition of Patriotic  
Groups among the Smaller  
European Nations*

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Columbia University Press  
New York

PART I

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*Introduction*

*A clarification of the basic concept:  
what is a nation?*

The discussion on the definition of the nation, which has already been conducted for a whole century by historians, political theorists and sociologists, is one of the most fascinating phenomena in modern political thinking.<sup>1</sup> Its content is so multifarious and its range so wide that a simple reproduction with commentary of the changing opinions on the question would suffice for a separate volume by itself. We shall therefore refrain from commenting on the opinions of other authors and do no more than outline their own positions. But in order to render the text of this book intelligible, we consider it necessary to put before the reader the conception of the nation which is the author's own starting-point. This conception is decisively to be differentiated from the notion that nationalism is the primary formative factor and the nation is derivative.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast with the subjectivist conception of the nation as the product of national consciousness, nationalism, the national will and spiritual forces, we posit the conception of the nation as a constituent of social reality of historical origin.

We consider the origin of the modern nation as the fundamental reality and nationalism as a phenomenon derived from the existence of that nation. However one must not determine the objective character of the nation with a fixed collection of features and attributes given once and for all, just as it is not possible to view the nation as an everlasting category, standing outside concrete social relations.

In every attempt to define the nation there lies concealed a contradiction between the demand for an exhaustive definition on the one hand, and on the other the relatively rapid development of the 'distinguishing features' and their union to form the nation. Especially where we are concerned with the study of the origin of the modern nation, the need is evident for a dialectical conception of the nation, which would take fully into consideration the dynamic of social development.

If however we proceed from the distinguishing marks and features, we emphasize by that fact precisely the immutability and as a result also the external nature of our characterization of an extraordinarily dynamic social group. But this is not the only negative feature of the definition of the nation

as a collection of distinguishing features. The definition implies namely the notion that each individual's position either is or is not determinable with the appropriate 'essential traits', and his membership of a nation would already have been decided according to this test. But we are hardly ready to say anything at all concretely about the growth, the developmental variations and the nuances of such distinguishing features and traits. Let us give an extreme example of the formal application of this kind of conception of a nation. For Wales at the end of the nineteenth century all the features of the 'classical' definition were valid in their full extent: it had a compact area of settlement, an old-established and distinctive cultural unity, a modernized literary language, its territory even formed an economic whole, comparable with a national market – and despite all this we cannot speak at that time of a fully developed Welsh nation.<sup>3</sup> At the same time it would be possible in contrast to instance a series of nations from which some of these features were absent, but which nevertheless became constituted into national units with an independent existence.<sup>4</sup>

The point of departure for a more fruitful, truly dialectical conception of the nation is the recognition that the position of the individual in society cannot be defined by any fixed characteristics but only by the apprehension of his relations to society, or, as the case may be, his location in those relations. The determination of people's objective social relations within a large social group is therefore by far the most fruitful point of departure for the investigation of the nation and its process of formation. We proceed, then, from the notion of the nation as a particular type of large social group. Sociologists customarily define a group as 'large' if its members are not in immediate personal contact with each other. For us of course this definition is inadequate. The members of a nation are not characterized by a single, fundamental, reciprocal relationship, and accordingly they do not all take up an identical place in society; we are not dealing here with an identity group, such as peasants, postmen, etc., we are not dealing with a group whose members would automatically lose their right to belong to the group with the loss (or the weakening) of that sole relationship. Relations between the members of a nation are relatively constant, they cannot usually be annulled at one stroke, and they always form a well-defined complex. Hence the growth of a more definite group sentiment, hence also the relatively more long-lasting nature of membership in the group. The surface manifestation of this permanence is provided by consciousness, but its essence derives from the stable connection of the individual with a series of objective social relations. The nation is differentiated from the class above all by the fact that membership in it is not determined by links arising from a single kind of relation, such as in the example just given the relation to the ownership of the means of production.

We therefore consider the nation to be a large social group characterized by a combination of several kinds of relation (economic, territorial, political,

religious, cultural, linguistic and so on) which arise on the one hand from the solution found to the fundamental antagonism between man and nature on a specific compact land-area, and on the other hand from the reflection of these relations in the consciousness of the people. We can also apply this conception of the nation to the process by which it came into existence. It makes it possible to study the formation of this type of large social group over a longer period of time, in the course of which there have occurred very significant social changes and changes in social structure. A conception like this further makes it possible to take into account the mutual interchangeability of the different relations: some of them might play a momentous role in one nation, in another a subsidiary role, their place being filled in contrast by the extraordinarily powerful role of other relations. These differences may be transient, and they may also be long-lasting.

In the course of the nation-forming process the economic relation gains in importance; for the more intensively associated section of the nation's members at least this relation becomes the fundamental one – whether directly or through mediations.

Marxist theoreticians agree on this point – albeit in different variations and formulations – that they consider the development of exchange relations and the national market to be the most important and decisive precondition for the formation of a modern nation. This should not of course be interpreted as suggesting that we consider this to be the sole cause. The development of commodity production and productive relations proceeds in principle without regard to the development of linguistic, cultural or political entities; inequalities in the intensity of that development, and especially in the territorial extent of exchange relations are however jointly determined by a series of further relations, such as precisely linguistic and political relations, and national conditions. This determination also works in the reverse direction: the development of language, culture and so on is determined by the development of economic relations. Sometimes people talk about the 'needs of the market', at other times about the interests of the ruling classes, the principles of state policy, etc. Economic relations could and do accelerate the merging together of dialects, just as they stimulate the process by which some dialects achieve independent status; in other cases of course a comparable role might be played by political factors in influencing the direction in which economic relations are established.

Owing to the growth of the division of labour in the period of the rise of capitalist relations, the members of the different classes are linked in economic structures. This connection is not a connection between individuals who are equal with each other; in this way the large social group called the nation obtains a hierarchical character. The most closely packed matrix is of course presented by the members of the class which took its place in the forefront of economic activity, and later on also at the head of society: the bourgeoisie.

The primary elements in the formation of the economic relations of importance for the movement towards national existence must already be sought in the period of simple commodity production, when commodity and monetary relations were strengthened by those enterprises which went beyond the confines of the feudal domain or seigneurial dependence, and promoted regular intercourse between the members of those classes and social groups which were chiefly involved in the production of commodities. This development was borne along above all by two kinds of activity: long-distance trade and the blossoming of regular exchange between the towns and their rural hinterland. It has not yet been made clear whether the road to the creation of nation-wide markets led through the formation of local markets and their association together, or through the intensification of long-distance trade. In any case it was only capitalist mass production which enforced the full transition from the local market and the expansion of regular exchanges over the whole national territory; at this time of course the modern nation was already in process of formation. Political centralization was a necessary result of this supersession of the fragmentation of the means of production and the network of markets — and indeed this supersession was in its interests. Provinces hitherto independent, frequently only joined together by treaties of alliance, with differing interests, laws, governments and aims were cemented together in a single whole with uniform legislation and a single customs boundary. However the frontiers of this new political unit were far from being decided simply by economic relations and requirements. Economic development determined rather the nature of the constituents which went to make up the emerging nation; its form was determined on the other hand by the territorial, linguistic and political relations. For it is very difficult to explain otherwise what the criterion is for a local and a national market, if this is not given by the magnitude of the territory; why for example did Bohemia not form in relation to the Habsburg Monarchy one of the constituents of the market of the whole state, as a formation analogous to that presented by the cases of Bavaria, Saxony and other German territories in relation to the whole of Germany? In the concrete case presented here, a satisfactory answer can only be given by a combination of the individual types of relation. Not only the combination and the significance of the individual types of relation but also their connection with the economic relations is subject to simultaneous variation. Thus for example under certain circumstances the natural environment can become an extraordinarily powerful economic bond, where it forces human beings into very close cooperation, or extraordinary efforts (the contest of the people of the Low Countries with the sea, an insular or a mountainous position, etc.).

It would be a mistake to make a full identification between those forces we designate as economic relations and capitalist relations in general. The nations maintained themselves as fixed configurations even when capitalism began to aim, after the formation of national markets, or rather in parallel with their

formation, at the world-wide market. Large-scale industry created everywhere roughly the same relations between the social classes, and in that way destroyed the unique character of the individual nations. The ruling class of the capitalist epoch could have just as much of an interest in establishing fixed political and customs boundaries for its own nation as in asserting itself in the broader context of the European or world market. This fact complicates every interpretation proceeding from the leading rôle of the bourgeoisie in the national movement. The economic interest of the bourgeoisie was not the only material interest making itself felt, as we shall see.

### Special features of the formation of the small nations

So far we have considered the formation of the nation as a social process which formed part of the changes during the transition from the feudal society of Estates to the capitalist society of the citizens. The formation of the modern nation thus took the following course: a new class, the 'third estate', set itself up against the old feudal ruling class and sooner or later proclaimed itself the representative of the whole nation. In fact the 'third estate' regarded itself as identical with the nation, in that it comprised all the formally equal individuals, i.e. all the citizens. In the new society of citizens, organized as the nation, national consciousness, patriotism, became an ingredient in social consciousness.

If we try to apply this model to various concrete historical situations, we find that it is only valid for some of the European nations. In others the development towards bourgeois society did not run entirely parallel with the movement towards national existence. Here the old ruling class was replaced by a bourgeoisie (or itself mutated into a bourgeoisie) not ethnically identical with the population of the relevant political unit. Hence there grew up on this territory too a national movement directed not only against the *ancien régime* and the old ruling classes but also against the new ruling class which was ethnically distinct from the members of the nationality inhabiting the region under consideration.

However, we are not concerned here with anomalies, but with the legitimate type of historical development. The origin of the modern nation took place in two basic situations: (1) Where the initial model is valid. We can briefly characterize this as the situation of the 'ruling' ('great') nation (France, England, Spain, Germany, Denmark and so on); (2) in the situation of nationalities, which at the time when they were formed into modern nations (a) did not possess 'their own' ruling class, i.e. a ruling class belonging to them ethnically, but were dominated by a ruling class of more or less alien nationality; here then the social structure of the nation was for a certain period in a state of imbalance, incomplete, since it did not embrace all the elements typical for the given social situation; (b) admittedly formed an ethnic (and sometimes even a historical) unit, but never an independent political unit; (c)

lacked a continuous tradition of cultural production in a literary language of their own, or had once possessed one, which was subsequently obliterated or underwent serious degeneration. With the rise of capitalism this group of nationalities came either completely or partially under the domination of a foreign ruling class - a bourgeoisie.

We can characterize this type of national development as the 'revival' of an oppressed, or small, nation, in which connection the term 'small' is not intended in a purely quantitative sense. There are also transitional cases between the two basic types, such as the Polish or Hungarian nations, which experienced their formative period at the dawn of capitalism as large nations, but then fell into situations characteristic of oppressed nations.

We only designate as small nations those which were in subjection to a ruling nation for such a long period that the relation of subjection took on a structural character for both parties. One can distinguish two groups among the oppressed nations from the standpoint of the continuity of political ties: (a) a group of so-called 'nations without history'; nations which had at no time in their pre-capitalist past been the repositories of an independent political formation; (b) a group of nations which did indeed constitute political entities in the Middle Ages, had their own sovereign feudal class, but lost their political independence or its essential attributes before they developed into modern nations.

In both cases the relation of the small, oppressed nation to the ruling one became structural, i.e. in these situations the ruling class held sway over two or more nationalities and belonged in its majority, or entirely, to the ruling nation alone. This circumstance suggests that the small nations were distinguished at the threshold of their independent existence by an incomplete social structure, i.e. one untypical of the given level of development. They partially or entirely lacked 'their own' ruling class, and sometimes other classes and social groups were represented atypically. This also gave rise to dissimilarities in the way the different types of relationship constituting national existence were combined.

The level of 'oppression' varied considerably in the history of the individual small nationalities; it ranged from cases at the margin of national existence (Bretons, Basques, the Sorbs of Lusatia) to the condition of political and economic dependence and cultural stagnation suffered by once independent nations (Czechs, Croats). The hegemony of an alien feudal class was in addition frequently accompanied by a considerable degree of assimilation. This was sometimes merely temporary; but in other cases it was permanent. Linguistic assimilation did not always strike a decisive blow against the further development of a nationality: one need only cite the examples of Ireland and Norway.

If we are trying to find out why modern nations could be formed, and were formed, out of oppressed nationalities, we cannot reply to the question just by enumerating the various different social ties. Nor can we merely refer to the

'general laws' covering the origin of the modern nation. It is an undoubted fact that small nations did develop in this situation; however one cannot conclude therefrom that modern nations inevitably arose out of all the 'remnants' of old ethnic units (relicts of peoples) which were on the road to assimilation. Not every falling curve of ethnic viability recorded the upturn we are familiar with from Slovak or Lithuanian history. The revival of such small nations was by no means a necessary concomitant of the development of capitalism. However, if the coming of capitalist society did not of itself automatically create the conditions for the transformation of all the feudal nationalities into modern nations, what combination of relations was needed to convert the possibility of national existence into a reality?

In investigating this question one must bear in mind that the formation of the modern nation was a process in which the establishment of objective relations between people was reflected in a growth of their awareness of national identity. In the case of the large nations this process of national self-recognition moved through broader and broader layers of the population, travelling in the same direction as the transformation of feudal into capitalist society; there was only a single national option to take up, and the whole population progressively did so. It was different for the members of an oppressed nationality. The transformation of feudal into capitalist society opened the prospect of two or more alternative routes to national consciousness. A growing number of individuals were thus drawn into a combination of relations determining the development of the two types of nation. But even if we were to assume (incorrectly) that all the ethnic units and nationalities ('peoples') of the epoch of feudalism developed under capitalism into modern nations there would still remain a difference between the conditions for the formation of a large modern nation and those for a small one.

In the ruling nations the process by which the mass of the people became aware of their national identity, their commitment to the nation, ran parallel to their struggle against the ruling class of the old society, which was composed of course of their co-nationals. It was therefore an organic part of the process of social transformation and bourgeois revolution, which does not signify that it was necessarily bound to take over any of the elements of revolutionary ideology. The small nations, on the other hand, were in a situation made much more complex by the fact that although they too had risen up against feudal ideology and the old society in their national movement, they came into conflict with the new ruling nation.

### *The subjective and objective components of national consciousness (the significance of national agitation)*

We know already that the mere combination of appropriate types of relationship cannot in itself create a modern nation, if there is no corresponding alteration in the sphere of consciousness, at least among some of the people, in the shape of a strengthening of national awareness. This point is as valid for ruling nations as it is for subject nations. How is the individual's awareness of belonging to a nation influenced by the objective relations through which he or she is linked with the environment? And further: under what conditions does the individual make the transition from a simple awareness of national identity to an active national consciousness – to a patriotism which considers membership in the nation an inherently valuable quality? This is one of the central problems, and we do not claim to have entirely elucidated it in the present work.

Not every oppressed nationality formed itself completely into a nation, 'awakened' to national life. From the subjective standpoint of the national movement this 'failure to awaken' was expressed in a failure of national consciousness to manifest itself among a sufficiently numerous group of members of the oppressed nationality. The growing fixedness of the combination of relationships regarded as decisive for the origin of the nation ought to have called forth a corresponding reaction in the consciousness of the people connected together by those relationships. This did not happen. Why not? Does the failure of this change to occur mean that among the oppressed nationalities commitment to a patriotic position was the most important and decisive force in the emergence of the nation? To say this would be to contradict the fundamental conception of a nation we have already adopted.

A modern historian can hardly accept the notion that such a powerful social process as the rise of the modern nation could have been set off simply by 'the will of a Subject', by the idea of nationality or its propagation through education. Nor did the 'spirit of the nation' travel round the country awakening people. But it is a far more laborious and complex task to interpret national consciousness by analysing the development of relationships between individuals than it is simply to point to the operations of 'nationalism' and national agitation. There are many pitfalls to avoid: for instance the connection

between objective relations and national consciousness should not be formulated too mechanically. National consciousness and objective relations between the members of a nation form an indivisible unity; they cannot be isolated from each other. There is no modern nation without national consciousness, i.e. an awareness of membership in the nation, coupled with a view that this membership is an inherently valuable quality.

When we are investigating national programmes and national consciousness as necessary relations progressively involving a greater and greater number of individuals in the modern nation's formative process, we are concerned, apart from the ideological content of national consciousness in the narrower sense, with two things. First, the course of the process whereby patriotism's social impact increased in intensity, and the nature of the material interests which conditioned that impact; second, the sources of the intellectual content of the national programme in the sphere of the individuals' material interests.

These two elements are mutually complementary; it can be assumed that national ideology is effective where it reflects (even though in a merely illusory fashion) the interests of the groups to which it makes its appeal, or contains at least in part the kind of programme which is close to their interests. It is therefore important to carry out not only an ideological but also a social analysis of the patriotic groups which gradually started to adopt the national programme.

In the case of the large nations the rise of national ideology was a constituent part of a current flowing in a single direction, and its acceptance or extension had the character of a quantitative growth in a single quality — a single consciousness of nationality — within various social layers, even though these strata attained national consciousness under the impact of diverse interests. In contrast to this the members of the oppressed nationalities were bombarded by at least two national ideologies. Some of these people were able to improve their social position or gain an education, and arrived at a point where they were compelled to decide between two different available national alternatives. They had to adopt the standpoint of one particular current of opinion; they had to take on the consciousness of one nationality or the other. The individual concerned had to undergo a differentiation of personal attitudes, whereby he identified himself either with the ruling nation or the oppressed one. The fate of the numerous ethnic groups which did not awaken to national life teaches us that the result of this differentiation was not always determined in advance. Moreover it is not even necessary to point to such an extreme case as the total submergence of an ethnic group. If we concentrate instead on the success stories, we see such striking differences in the intensity and rapidity of development in individual cases as to put us on our guard against the illusion that the extension of patriotic attitudes takes place automatically and in equal measure among all the members of small nations. At the same time this demonstrates the unacceptability of notions of the priority and the decisive

significance of patriotic enthusiasm, national idealism and similar spiritual forces.

National agitation, i.e. activities directed towards increasing national consciousness, formed part of every national movement, taking on many different forms. The analysis of these forms and their comparative effectiveness, the establishment of a typology, has not yet received sufficient attention, especially where the small nations are concerned. However, a more vital question for the origin of national movements and modern nations is this: why did one and the same form have varying degrees of success among different nations?

If we want to understand the objective prerequisites for the success of national agitation we must look for the relations through which the influence of changes in the social and economic sphere could be mediated; in particular the changes that affected the readiness of the members of the oppressed nationality to accept identification with the modern nation and its programme.

The nation is made up of individuals whose patriotism is not an unalterable datum, but undergoes a long formative period, proceeding initially from an elemental awareness of belonging to a greater whole. Sometimes they do not even have this kind of awareness of belonging to a political and national unit; in these cases national awareness has first to emerge from a nationally amorphous substratum. The individual's national consciousness, and patriotism, is determined on the one hand by general factors (objective relations) and on the other by the conditions of his own existence. To understand these determining conditions we have to study the 'patriots', the people who were most easily accessible to national consciousness and ready earlier than others to become national activists. We have to locate them within the matrix of the objective relations. We shall accordingly be looking for the position these active pioneers of the national idea took up in society at a time when the small nation they belonged to was not yet fully formed. This is the fundamental task of our present investigation.



### *The social characteristics (composition) of the bearers of national agitation*

The influence of the objective relations on the intensity of diffusion of national consciousness can only be traced by the historian where national consciousness has found expression in the conduct, the activities, of concrete personalities. Objective motivations for attitudes can of course only be traced indirectly. We are interested in finding out which kinds of social milieu within the emerging small nation afforded a relatively stronger response to patriotic agitation. Despite a flood of literature on nationalism, nationalists and national conflicts there remains a distinct lacuna in this area of investigation. Until we fill this gap we shall remain ignorant of the individuals who formed the vanguard of the national movement, and our reflections on the integrative or disintegrative factors within it, indeed on the very motive forces behind it, will remain at the level of logical construction and conjecture. The few available biographies of the most significant personalities cannot help us much here, since these are partial data, fortuitously acquired.

Whom shall we regard as a patriot, as a pioneer of the national movement, if we do not want to limit our choice to the narrow group of national 'leaders'? We shall use the word 'patriots' to denote those individuals who consciously, of their own volition, and over a long period of time, devoted their activities to the support of the national movement, endeavouring in particular to diffuse patriotic attitudes. We measure the effectiveness of this patriotic activity not just by its material results (for example an absolute increase in financial contributions) but also by the degree of subjectively intended personal sacrifice (and sometimes also political risk) which was associated with participation in the national movement. In addition to the leaders of the movement we shall therefore be interested in their assistants, agents and supporters. But we shall not include people who only appear sporadically, hovering at the margins.

To establish the social characteristics of the patriots we clearly need to obtain the greatest possible amount of information, of a sufficiently homogeneous character to permit comparison, about their original social milieu, and their eventual place in society. In view of the fact that we are endeavouring to fix the social position of a very large number of patriots, many of whom do not even have an entry in the national biographical dictionaries, we have been

obliged to limit to a minimum the amount of information required and to summarize it in the form of answers to certain elementary questions, about:

- (1) social status (occupation), and the relevant alterations in this;
- (2) social origins;
- (3) territorial distribution, and location of patriotic activities;
- (4) place or district of origin;
- (5) educational background.

We must bear in mind at the outset that we shall not be able to gather these five pieces of information for every single patriot. Moreover, the information base will be of varying solidity from one nation to the next, owing to the state of the sources and the varying degrees of sophistication attained in each nation's historiography.

Even so, we must try to establish uniform criteria for social characteristics. Here our point of departure is the complex class structure of a society in transition to capitalism. We cannot restrict our classification to a simple division of society into its basic classes: there is also the internal structure of the classes to be considered, and the existence of a series of further social groups which were richly represented in the transitional society. The ruling class itself contained two fundamentally antagonistic elements at this epoch: the old ruling nobility of the *ancien régime*, and the emergent bourgeoisie of capitalist society. The class of the oppressed also falls into two basic components: the peasantry in process of emancipation and the emerging proletariat. The peasantry were already subject to considerable internal differentiation at the time of the transition to capitalism, but we shall treat them as a single group. It is of course necessary to distinguish as an independent group the cottagers and agricultural workers. Apart from the basic classes we shall be considering two further groups, which were subsidiary classes in feudal society and underwent a transformation with the rise of the capitalist enterprise: the merchants and the handicraftsmen. These groups constituted specific components of the new society long after the liquidation of the *ancien régime*. Hence we have retained the traditional appellations: merchants and handicraftsmen. In addition we have included in this category a number of professions with relatively few members, such as innkeepers, butchers and so on. Sometimes the contemporary sources have merely preserved the description 'burgher', which signifies a possessor of urban property and is usually a synonym for trader or craftsman.

An especially complex problem is the social definition of those professions whose members had a higher education and lived by their intellectual labour, and whom we characterize in a general way with the term 'intelligentsia'. The intelligentsia only took shape as a clear-cut group with the transition to capitalism. At the same time we are well aware that this term is understood to cover differing groups of people according to divergences of linguistic usage

and ideological position. An important problem is the social characterization of the subordinate groupings within the intelligentsia. Here we shall not limit ourselves to a simple classification of the patriots according to profession, but achieve a closer definition by looking at the position they took up within society; this was determined on the one hand by the conditions under which an intellectual received the fruits of his labour, and on the other hand by the social outcome of that labour (the social class the intelligentsia 'served', in other words). From this point of view we can distinguish three strata of the intelligentsia, each occupying a different position within the class structure of the transitional society.

The first stratum comprised the élite sections of the intelligentsia, directly associated with the ruling classes. This association could consist either in the direct performance of ruling class functions, or the sale of the product of their intellectual labour to the ruling classes at such a high 'wage-price' that one cannot speak of exploitation. This top stratum also included the highest state officials and ecclesiastical dignitaries (whether they served the old régime or modern society), the managers of the big estates and the élite of the free professions (lawyers).

The second stratum comprised those professional groups which, while still outside the wage-labour relationship, did not directly share in political power or engage in economic enterprises; this includes such categories as lawyers and doctors (in so far as they were independent), artists, journalists and scientists. The Evangelical pastors also occupy a place here, albeit a peculiar one. All these groups were in the course of emancipating themselves from their previous dependence, but they did not represent capitalist enterprise. Under the old régime these people were sometimes described as the town 'notables', and they had close relations with the highest ranks of the urban population, forming, together with the latter, a component of the ruling class of the old society.

The most numerous group was the third stratum of the intelligentsia - those who stood in a relationship of wage-labour. This includes the lower and middle officials and clerics (private, state and communal) and teachers. A special place in this stratum was occupied by Catholic priests and students. Work for wages does not of course in itself provide a sufficient justification for the unconditional assignment of these strata of the intelligentsia to the status of wage-labourers. The difference in standard and style of life was still very considerable, even if the beginnings of the so-called intellectual proletariat could already be discerned in the more advanced societies, especially among the group of the unemployed or semi-employed intelligentsia.

Our research procedure will therefore be an application of the biographical method. Elementary biographical data about the maximum number of individuals will serve as our starting-point both for the definition of professional structure, and for understanding the motivation of the national movement and the integrative and disintegrative factors in it. We shall not simply pile up

biographical data about the occupation and social status of individuals, in the manner of Lewis Namier and his followers, or merely quantify a list of professional characteristics, as in Alfred Cobban's critique of the Marxist conception of the Great French Revolution.<sup>5</sup> We are aware of the fact that the accumulation of a mass of data on profession, place of birth and abode can never constitute a true determination of the social basis of the national movement. It forms rather a starting point, a set of orientational pointers towards the further analysis of the social context, and the conflicts which took place within the framework and under the influence of the latter.

We shall not disguise the fact that the generalizing procedures we use in investigating hidden class and group interests and social relations are derived from the Marxist conception of historical development. We give class character priority over the simple description of professional status, and for us the determination of class and group interests is an important guide to the motives behind the individual attitudes of people who belong to this or that class or group.

### The comparative method

In studying the social basis of the national movement we have adopted the comparative method. Its utilization has spread so far and wide in post-war history-writing that one may even speak of the danger involved in following a currently fashionable trend. However the considerable frequency with which the comparative method has been applied by no means rules out disagreements over its nature and the real weight to be attached to its results. These conflicts go so deep (and the degree of mutual intelligibility grows smaller and smaller) that one may ask whether there is anything in common between the comparative method in Theodor Schieder's conception and Stein Rokkan's,<sup>6</sup> or between J. Topolski's conception and the views advanced by a number of Soviet historians.<sup>7</sup> Although we would not regard these pages as an appropriate battleground for a polemic on the nature and meaning of the comparative method, we are obliged to acquaint the reader with our own conception of the method and with the way it has been applied here. The comparative method is one of the most complex ways of doing historical work, and its uncontrolled application has led more than once to errors and misunderstandings. In the first place it is necessary to distinguish the comparative method, as a complex of various procedures and techniques, from simple comparison, which has the character rather of a logical inference. Every application of the comparative method has a number of basic requirements:

- (a) the object to be compared must be defined as precisely as possible;
- (b) the aim of the application of the comparative method must be laid down;
- (c) the criteria of analysis for the objects of comparison should be established;
- (d) the relation of the comparative procedure to the temporal axis (i.e. to historical chronology in an absolute sense) must be clarified.

We have already dealt with the *definition* of the object of comparison. It is the process of formation of a modern nation out of a small, oppressed nationality. This definition demonstrated that we were dealing with objects which were homogeneous and therefore comparable, that they were legitimate elements of a historical process determined by social laws. Our comparative approach is made more difficult by the circumstance that we are comparing

processes, not relatively unchanging structures; this fact should be borne in mind when selecting criteria of comparison.

The comparative method can pursue several kinds of *objective*. An elementary example is the simple search for similarities and differences between a number of objects of comparison, aimed at assisting the researcher to recognize them where they occur. A more complex procedure uses the similarities and differences between the objects of comparison as the starting-point for dividing them into groups with partially concurrent characteristics – in other words it uses them as an instrument of typology. In the present work a typology of the formation of nations (see the definitions given above of the formation of ruling and oppressed nations) and of the national movement (see below) is the particular objective. But it is not the aim of our comparative method. Our own particular objective is the interpretation of the causal relations, the study of the general characteristics, and the social determinants, of the national movement considered as a process. Only here can we speak of the comparative method in the strict sense, as a complex working procedure and a route to new generalized insights.

Let us indicate for the sake of completeness that the comparative method can also adopt as its basic objective the characterization of the position a particular phenomenon (or historical process) occupies within the broad stream of historical development. In this case a large number of objects are compared in relation to a single object which we regard as central and of which we have a very detailed knowledge. At the same time we ascertain which characteristics of that object are of general application, and which ones are specific to it. This is especially important as a corrective to the study of the history of an individual nation or region; we shall give some results of this method at the end of each of the chapters devoted to specific national movements; we shall make an attempt to determine the general and the specific factors of integration and disintegration in the nation-creating process.

We understand by the *criterion of comparison* the quality with reference to which we make the comparison. That is to say, we always compare qualities applicable to each of the objects of comparison: the criterion of comparison between a carriage and a motor car can be the length of the chassis, the carrying capacity, the amount of seating room, but definitely not the power of the motor or the petrol consumption. It is however not enough to make sure that we are in a position to apply the chosen criterion to all the objects of comparison: it is also necessary that this criterion should be material to the problem to be solved and adequate to the aim in view. The more complex the problem the greater the number of criteria of comparison required. Whether we apply the individual criteria alongside each other or in succession depends on the concrete possibilities for research. The greater the number of objects of comparison, the more advantageous it is to restrict the number of criteria of comparison to a minimum. The more complex the criterion chosen, the wider

its field of heuristic fruitfulness for the historical processes undergoing comparison, and the greater the possibility of reducing the number of other criteria applied. In the present case the criterion of comparison is taken from the sphere which has central significance for our research problem, the social prerequisites for the formation of a modern nation: namely, the social composition of patriotic groups. The basic data for the comparison are derived from the information summarized under the five headings mentioned earlier: occupation, social origin, location of activities, place of birth and nature of education. Only after a comparison based on this criterion will it be possible to advance to the comparative analysis of further factors, such as the role of churches, the peasantry, industrialization, students and so on.

Here, and indeed in operating comparative procedures in general, it is of immense importance to establish a precise relationship between the separate factors and the chronological axis. In principle the comparative method can be applied both (1) *diachronically* (vertically, along the chronological axis) and (2) *synchronically* (horizontally).

(1) The comparison of events along the historical vertical axis is one of the commonest procedures of historical research: we confront prior with subsequent occurrences and we establish the similarities and differences between them.

(2a) A synchronic comparison in the narrower sense of the word involves the comparison of historical processes occurring in different countries at the same time; these processes might be mutually related and interdependent, or they might occur relatively independently; here it is important to note the asynchrony sometimes manifested by historical development.

(2b) We may make a synchronic comparison according to analogous historical situations. If we can establish that the objects of comparison passed through the same stages of development, we can compare these analogous stages, even if from the standpoint of absolute chronology they occurred at different times. We can only apply this procedure if we are certain that the societies under comparison have passed through roughly equivalent periods of historical development. The notion, typical of traditional historiography, that the historical process is a collection of unique and unrepeatable occurrences and actions is naturally incompatible with the application of the comparison of analogous historical situations along the horizontal axis. Here, then, we are comparing the process of origin of large social groups – modern nations – among small nationalities. All existing nations have been through the various stages of this process. We shall concern ourselves primarily with the stage at which patriotic activity emerged into the limelight. This stage (usually called 'the national revival') occurred at different times (but usually during the nineteenth century) and was of varying duration. Since we are undertaking an interpretative rather than a descriptive comparison, it will be useful to choose the national movements we want to compare, where possible, from

nations without any mutual relations, because in those cases the national movements can be seen to have evolved independently.

If we are to choose a comparison on the basis of analogous historical situations, and also to choose the area over which the comparison is to extend, we have to specify the characteristics of the object of comparison. Whereas we referred previously in general terms to the formative process of the modern nation without going more deeply into its internal differentiation, we must now try to specify those historical situations we shall regard as analogous and therefore comparable. The development of the national movement among the small nations was far too long-drawn-out a process for us to be able to delineate this object of comparison over its whole range. We shall therefore ask which of the key phases of this movement are actually comparable. This leads us to the question of its internal periodization.

individuals remained without any widespread social influence, and they usually did not even attempt to mount a patriotic agitation, in part because they were isolated, and in part because they did not believe it would serve any purpose. Their interest was motivated by a patriotism of the Enlightenment type, namely an active affection for the region in which they lived, associated with a thirst for knowledge of every new and insufficiently investigated phenomenon. In so far as any agitation did occur it remained at the individual level, and to all intents and purposes lacked an organizational basis. In the concluding phase of development of the national revival we meet with a situation in which national consciousness has become the concern of the broad masses (even if still by no means the whole of the nation's members) and the national movement has a firm organizational structure extending over the whole territory. By the time this stage of development was reached, the broad masses were reacting directly to patriotic impulses. The transition from one stage to the other did not of course take place at one stroke; between the manifestations of scholarly interest, on the one hand, and the mass diffusion of patriotic attitudes, on the other, there lies an epoch which was decisive for the actual formation of the small nation, an epoch characterized by active patriotic agitation: the fermentation-process of national consciousness. The success of the patriotic agitation was made possible by the establishment of objective relations of economic, political and other types; it will be necessary to investigate concrete, specific cases to establish the degree to which each of the objective relations participated in this phase as an integrating factor. The driving force in this era of national agitation was a group of patriots who were already dissatisfied with the limitation of interest to the antiquities of the land, the language and the culture, and saw their mission as the spreading of national consciousness among the people. Scholarly research also expanded in this phase, but its function was now as much national as scientific.

For greater clarity we shall designate the three above-mentioned fundamental phases of the national movement as Phase A (the period of scholarly interest), Phase B (the period of patriotic agitation) and Phase C (the rise of a mass national movement). Incidentally, Phase C started off in some national movements during – in the sense outlined above – the first stage of development of a small nation, whereas others had already been able to make the transition to the second stage. For our theme, which is the formation of small nations, the most important phase is Phase B, and we shall devote most of our attention to this when we analyse the various national movements. In the course of this phase the agitation of the patriots sooner or later influenced a growing number of members of the oppressed nationality, who began to consider their membership in the nation as more than a simple natural fact or a political consequence of subjection to a particular monarch. In other words we must bear in mind – and we shall investigate concrete examples of this – that national agitation was not bound to be successful in all cases; Phase B was not necessarily

## *The periodization of the revival of small nations*

The main problem, for purposes of periodization, is the discovery of appropriate criteria. We can apply several different criteria for periodizing the national movement, according to whether we want to evaluate the general social incidence of national agitation, to fix the role of the national movement in historical development, or to analyse its social prerequisites. In all these cases the starting-point for the criterion of periodization is the relation of the national movement to the general course of the transformation of society. Of vital importance here is the fundamental distinction between the two stages of the national movement:<sup>8</sup> (1) the period of struggle against absolutism, bourgeois national revolution and the rise of capitalism, and (2) the period after the victory of capitalism, which coincides with the rise of the working-class movement.

One might perhaps complete this with a third grand stage, namely the period of world-wide integration and the impact of the means of mass communication, dating roughly from the end of the First World War.

This fundamental criterion of periodization may with advantage be supplemented with criteria derived directly from the internal transformation which occurred during the formation of the modern nation. The nation is a large social group defined by a combination of various types of relation; it is a group, with a given historical origin, of people who only gradually attained to national consciousness under the influence of objective circumstances. Hence a further criterion for the periodization of the national movement among the small nations will be the quantitative growth of national activity, the social impact of the impulses emerging from national agitation. Clearly this criterion of the growth of national activity cannot be separated from a number of further criteria – above all the development of a national programme, the forms of national agitation, the nascent national culture, etc.

Reference to the quantitative spread of nationally conscious attitudes (i.e. the tendency to regard membership in the nation as inherently valuable) allows us perhaps to distinguish two basic stages in the development of the small nations. The beginning of every national revival is marked by a passionate concern on the part of a group of individuals, usually intellectuals, for the study of the language, the culture, the history of the oppressed nationality. These

destined to pass over into Phase C, and in a number of cases this transition did not in fact take place. The vital role of Phase B is therefore clear; in Phase B we have found a set of historical situations both analogous and mutually comparable. These will be, in the narrower sense, the object of our comparison.

## 7

*A typology of the national movement as the point  
of departure in the selection of the national movements  
to be studied*

All that remains now is to choose certain national movements suitable for comparison, in such a way that we arrive at as representative a selection as possible. It is beyond the capacity of a single individual to work through all the European national movements, providing a systematic and comprehensive comparison. This remains a task (but not an impossible one) for the future. For greater accuracy of selection, and also to allow us to locate the individual national movements within the European context, we shall try to establish a typology of European national movements, where they occurred under the conditions of oppression suffered by small nationalities. Since the starting-point of every typology is a descriptive variant of the comparative method, we must pay attention to certain of the latter's principles in this context. We must above all establish a uniform criterion of typology for every European national movement. The most useful approach to this in our view is a combination of the fundamental two-stage periodization with our division into three phases, A, B and C, from the point of view of the level of intensity of national activity.

It was certainly a question of some importance, whether the decisive period of national revival – Phase B – took place under the conditions of the first stage (during the period of the rise of capitalism), or whether the national movement reached its height only in the course of the second stage (under the conditions of stabilized capitalist 'modern' society).<sup>8</sup> It seems that for the majority of national movements Phase A coincided entirely with the first stage, hence with the period when the decisive feature of social conflict was the struggle against feudalism and absolutism. The transition to Phase C, to the mass movement, on the other hand, took place in some cases in the first, but in most cases in the second stage, when the decisive antagonism was already that between bourgeoisie and proletariat. The relation between the intensity of the national movement and its place in the development of the whole society on the way from feudalism to capitalism therefore differed from one small nation to the next. Is it possible to characterize this differentiation typologically? Let us try to summarize the situation with a table:

Type

	Stage I	Stage II
1	Phase: A → B → C	→ C
2	Phase: A → B → C	→ C
3	Phase: A → B → C	→ C → A
4	Phase: A → B → C	→ A → B

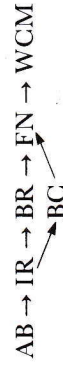
In type one Phase B runs its course entirely within the framework of the first stage; in this connection it is not important whether the transition to a mass national movement already took place before the full victory of capitalist relations or coincided with it, i.e. with the transition to the second stage. In type two, Phase B admittedly begins during the first stage, but it continues into the second. The transition to a mass national movement would in this case have had to be accomplished in conditions where the dominant antagonism was between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This circumstance not only modified the social significance and role of the national movement but also its programme. In the third type the phases move in rapid sequence from A through B to the mass movement (C) even before the transition to capitalism; the mass movement was therefore already in progress when feudal relations were still predominant. The fourth type mainly covers national movements which did not make the transition to Phase C during the second stage; here the phase of national agitation first begins in a more or less developed industrial society.

In periodizing the national movement one should not neglect the question of what I shall call the *degree of completeness* attained by the formative process of the modern nation. What is at stake here is the limit enclosing the process of national revival, the boundary marking the conclusion of the formative process (although the national movement itself continued to develop afterwards). The fundamental yardstick of the completeness of a nation's formation is the development of the class structure of the national community. Small nations were formed with an incomplete class structure. We can therefore say that small nations were fully formed when they displayed a class structure typical of capitalist society and their national movement had taken on a mass character. The achievement of political independence is not necessarily an indication that the small nation is completely formed; and conversely the struggle to achieve independence may continue even after the nation has completed its formation. The Czech, Croat and Polish national movements are cases in point. Of course it follows from the very definition of a small nation that its formative process could not be completed before the bourgeois revolution and the rise of the industrial revolution. In this connection it is useful to recall that in a number of cases an organized working-class movement emerged before the conclusion of the formative process.<sup>9</sup>

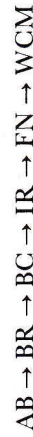
If we bear in mind all these considerations in trying to establish the chronology of the transition from stage I to stage II, we arrive at the conclusion that the typology we indicated above is only very approximate and must be given greater precision. That typology contained a distorting factor in that it fixed an over-simple dividing-line between the first and second stages. The transition from stage I to stage II cannot be located by reference to a single item; we are faced with a series of complex social interconnections and transformations, of which the three most important were the bourgeois revolution, the industrial revolution, and the coming of the organized and class-conscious working-class movement. These three changes, to which we must sometimes add agrarian reform, did not occur simultaneously either over the whole of Europe or within each particular small nation. What, then, was the precise chronological relation between the transition to Phases B and C on the one hand and the bourgeois revolution, the industrial revolution and the beginnings of the working-class movement on the other? We shall try to characterize the individual types of national movement more precisely by looking at the order of succession of the following events:

- transition from Phase A to Phase B (abbreviated to AB)
- transition from phase B to Phase C (=BC)
- completion of the formation of the modern nation (=FN)
- bourgeois revolution (=BR)
- industrial revolution in its opening phase (=IR)
- coming of the organized working-class movement (=WCM)

Type 1: The industrial revolution started before the bourgeois revolution and occurred at a time when national agitation was already taking effect. The national movement attained a mass character during or shortly after the revolution. The organized working-class movement asserted itself after the modern nation had emerged. Expressing this as a model we have:



We call this the integrated type of development. A second variant within this type is produced by the outbreak of the bourgeois revolution before the industrial revolution; Phases B and C remain in the same place. Thus:



In both variants the fight against feudalism and absolutism went back to the same epoch as the agitational endeavours of the patriots of the small nations; both movements moved in roughly the same direction. They were not antagonistic, but mutually complementary. A further feature of this type of development was that the newly formed modern nation relatively quickly gained a complete class structure, and worked out its national programme in

the course of the revolution. The programme was accordingly democratic in character.

[Type 2] National agitation emerged before the political revolution and the industrial revolution, but the transition to Phase C, the mass national movement, was delayed, so that it first took place when the class-conscious proletariat was already organized, or even after the coming of the working-class movement. The formation of the modern nation therefore took place belatedly. Expressing this as a model (the 'belated type') we have:

$$AB \rightarrow BR \rightarrow IR \rightarrow WCM \rightarrow BC \rightarrow FN$$

$$\text{or } AB \rightarrow BR \rightarrow IR \rightarrow WCM \rightarrow FN$$

$$\swarrow \quad \searrow$$

$$BC$$

Whether this phase-shift was caused by uneven economic development on the territory of the oppressed nationality (e.g. the contrast between Riga and the Latvian countryside) or by foreign oppression (e.g. Magyarization in Slovakia), patriotic agitation in these cases became intimately involved in the crystallized class contradictions of capitalist society.<sup>10</sup>

[Type 3] The national movement had already attained a mass character under the conditions of feudal society, hence before the establishment of capitalist society. The arrival of Phase C was in this case usually accompanied by an armed struggle against the ruling nation and it formed an important step in the bourgeois social transformation. Nor can specific features of an anti-feudal peasant war be ruled out, in theory. The nation was being formed before the bourgeois revolution, and this process could well be completed even before the industrial revolution. Expressing this as a model (the 'insurrectional type') we have:

$$AB \rightarrow BC \rightarrow BR \rightarrow FN \rightarrow IR \rightarrow WCM$$

$$\text{or } AB \rightarrow BC \rightarrow BR \rightarrow IR \rightarrow FN \rightarrow WCM$$

Here the grand processes of transformation in the cultural sphere (the rise of a modern literature, political ideologies, the theatre and so on), and also in the social sphere (the rise of the intelligentsia) were already under way when a mass national movement arose, and they took on an unambiguously national and patriotic significance and social function. There was a rapid development towards the national state.

[Type 4] National agitation first began under the conditions of capitalist society and a liberal constitutional system, hence after the bourgeois revolution and the coming of the industrial revolution. The known examples allow us to make the general statement that this type entered the mass phase very late or not at all. Expressing this as a model (the 'disintegrated type') we have:

$$BR \rightarrow IR \rightarrow AB \rightarrow WCM \dots [\rightarrow BC?]$$

The fact that here the national movement followed the bourgeois and industrial revolutions clearly had a disintegrating effect on it.

The course of each national movement naturally had its own peculiarities and individual features; even so one can always determine which of the four above-mentioned types of nation-forming process was the nearest approximation to it.<sup>11</sup> We can therefore regard our typology as a suitable starting-point for the selection of specific national movements as subjects of comparative analysis. We have not looked at things exclusively from the typological angle. The regional approach, for instance, was especially useful heuristically for national movements where there were no extant sources for determining the social composition of the patriotic communities in Phase B. One must also consider the framework of absolute chronology. In the period before general industrialization, and the revolution in transport and communications, the national movement in the relevant part of Europe took a different course (it was not only slower but also differently organized) from the one it took in the era of railways, rapid postal links, and the growth of school attendance. Similarly, we must distinguish the situation before and after the rise of the internationally organized working class; its presence had a profound effect on the national movement. The fact that a working-class movement was already in progress on the territory of the ruling nation inevitably influenced the character of the national movement of the oppressed nationality, even if its own industrial revolution might be delayed.

We have used all these angles of approach in selecting a number of national movements as a representative sample for comparative analysis. Three of the four basic types of formative process have been covered. The Czech national movement in Bohemia, and the Norwegian and Finnish movements, fall within the first, or 'integrated' type. In addition we have looked at the Estonian example, which lies on the boundary of type 1. The second type, which we characterize as 'belated', includes the Slovak and Lithuanian movements. Finally the 4th type, which we have called the 'disintegrated type', is represented by the Flemish national movement. We do not have enough source material, unfortunately, to study the social structure of any national movement of the 3rd type during the crucial Phase B; but we shall be able to use partial data for the Bulgarian and Macedonian national movement in the comparative section of the book, so the 3rd type will not be entirely unrepresented. We shall deal in similar fashion with partial data bearing on the Belorussian and Lettish national movements. The picture will be completed with an analysis of the social basis of a representative national minority movement: that of the Danes in Schleswig.

We shall start, therefore, by analysing seven national movements among which three of the four fundamental developmental types are represented. We shall try to locate a historical situation sufficiently common to all of them to allow comparison and analogy. In other words, this is the search for Phase B. After analysing the social composition and territorial distribution of the patriotic groups during Phase B we shall add in each case a concluding section outlining the integrating and disintegrating factors at work. This will provide



a broad outline of the fundamental features specific to each movement. For although the basic objective of our research is to identify general features and to recognize the regularities or laws of historical development, we should not be seduced by this into denying the specificity and uniqueness of a given historical development or misled into ignoring the peculiarities of the process whereby each individual nation was formed.

In the third part of the book we shall attempt to give a comparative evaluation of the results of our study of specific national movements; we shall pose the question of the role of the various classes and social groups in the national movement as well as the more general interconnections and territorial relationships (such as the contrast between town and country, or active and passive regions). In conclusion we shall try to give an account of some of the generalizations to be derived from the comparative analysis, features which will allow us to recognize the integrating and disintegrating factors in the formative process of the modern nation. The limitations of space, as well as the limited resources (and linguistic equipment) of a single researcher, prevent pressing our comparative analysis yet further, from social structures to political developments and national ideologies. We are in any case convinced that the establishment of the general social and economic conditions governing the emergence of any national movement constitutes the necessary starting-point for a fresh interpretation of its programme, its demands and its ideological superstructure.

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## PART II

### *The Social Structure of the Individual Patriotic Groups: A Nation-by-Nation Analysis*