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Nations Without States, States Without Nations

1790–1848

If reason and revolution are concepts frequently used to characterize those eighteenth-century trends that culminated in the French Revolution, then Romanticism and reaction are concepts regularly employed to describe the early-nineteenth-century responses to the Enlightenment and the upheavals that shook France and then the rest of Europe after 1789. The French Revolution abruptly ended royal and imperial experimentation with enlightened reform in Central and Eastern Europe. Systematic searches for revolutionary sympathizers or radical conspirators in Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburg produced negligible results, and as the French Revolution began to devour its own children, enthusiasm for it evaporated among those enlightened reformers who initially sympathized with its objectives. The execution in 1793 of the French king, Louis XVI, and his wife, Marie Antoinette—a daughter of Maria Theresia and the sister of the Habsburg emperors Joseph and Leopold as well as a personal friend of Russia's Catherine the Great—and Robespierre's Reign of Terror during 1793/1794 shocked the ruling elites of Europe. It was not because regicide or the bloodletting that accompanied revolts was so foreign to them, but because they represented a political program based on systematically destroying the old order.

The dynamics of the French Revolution and its relationship to the rise and demise of the Napoleonic empire are complicated. Generalizations about the period between the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 and its diplomatic denouement in 1814/1815 at the Congress of Vienna, which established a new Continental balance of power based on old anti-revolutionary precepts, tend to oversimplify the conflicts of this era along the lines of France and the principles of the Revolution versus everybody else—

the Continental powers plus Britain—and tyranny. Instead of describing the military campaigns or the complicated diplomatic carousels of conflict and collaboration during this period, we shall examine a few of the enduring consequences of the revolutionary era for Central Europe.

From 1792 until 1815 Europe was constantly in a state of war, in which the antagonists of France's revolution and Napoleon's subsequent empire alternated between anti-French coalitions and pro-French alliances. The various principalities of Germany, Prussia, and Russia fluctuated between military adversity and diplomatic advantage by fighting against France, with France, or remaining neutral. Austria, the only power to participate in all four anti-French coalitions, and Britain were France's most consistent enemies.

One important and lasting Napoleonic contribution to revising the map of Europe was a "rationalization" of the political order in Germany, which was still, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a multifarious feudal patchwork of kingdoms, principalities of various sizes, and independent city-states. Napoleonic reforms reduced to forty the 200 states that had been the constituent members of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. At the peak of its power in 1810, France directly governed the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg; all of Germany west of the "natural border" of the Rhine; northern Germany eastward to Lübeck (roughly the German–Danish border); and it established a client association of German states, the Confederation of the Rhine, which reached from the Alps to the Baltic Sea but excluded Prussia and Austria. Although French imperial occupation and intervention in Germany activated nascent German nationalism (and Francophobia became one of the constituent attributes of German nationalism in the nineteenth century), many of the smaller German states found cooperation with France to be a convenient means of pursuing their traditional interests, like weakening the power of the Habsburg-Austrian Holy Roman Emperor of the German Nation. It also gave them a vehicle for gaining territory and offset the interests of larger rivals like Prussia. Napoleon played rather well the old French imperial role of *protector Germaniae.*

Although the Confederation of the Rhine was a short lived, Napoleonic imperial construction, its establishment in 1806 marked the end of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, on the one hand, and the beginning of Germany as a "de-imperialized" confederation of states, on the other.[1] At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Europe's diplomats and peacemakers reformulated the idea of a confederative Germany, which included Prussia and Austria as well as the German principalities that had been temporarily annexed by imperial France. The main international function of the German Confederation, a loose association of forty German principalities under the seniority of Austria, was not to replace the old German empire but to provide a forum for maintaining the new status quo of fewer but nevertheless disunited German states, and it did so well for the next five decades. However, the two largest members of the German Confederation, Austria and Prussia, had conflicting interests. Austria wanted to maintain the status quo which, in turn, placed severe restrictions on Prussia's ambitions. The long-term Prussian strategy for establishing its own empire involved forcing Habsburg Austria out of its venerable position of factual and titular predominance in the sphere of German politics.

At the Congress of Vienna, the diplomats of the victorious powers—England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia—treated France reasonably and divided the spoils of victory fairly. They established a European balance of five powers that proved to be enduring. Although it would be an exaggeration to call the nineteenth century a period of general peace, there was no general European war between the Congress of Vienna and World War I. With the sole exception of the Crimean War of 1854–1856, which was geographically peripheral, none of the thirteen European wars between 1815 and 1914 involved more than two of the five major powers or seriously jeopardized the traditional balance of power. However, the rise of Prussia and the unification of Germany at the respective costs of Austria and France redistributed how European power was balanced. In Central Europe, the antirevolutionary sentiment and absolutism cemented the cooperation of the Prussian, Austrian, and Russian empires for the greater part of the nineteenth century. Their rear-guard actions against liberalism and the nationalism of their indigenous minorities lasted until the end of World War I.

The Partitions of Poland, 1772–1795

Given the central position of the French Revolution in world history, it is difficult to believe that the partitions of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century impressed Europeans just as much as the upheavals did that began in France in 1789. Most contemporaries, however, showed an insufficient appreciation for what was transpiring in France. The immediacy of events always makes it difficult for witnesses to anticipate how important they are or how they will be evaluated in the future by a retrospective discipline like history. In any event, our understanding of the French Revolution today did not fit into the political and historical categories of the late eighteenth century. Traditional concepts like sedition and revolt or regicide and war were at first sufficient for interpreting what was happening in France. The relationship between the Enlightenment as a *révolution d'esprit* and the transformation of France as a *révolution politique* eventually became clear, but this causal nexus was not evident to contemporary observers, many of whom viewed the revolution as a historical aberration instead of the historical necessity it became.

A traditional approach to European history, which could be called "Western Eurocentric," reduces the study of European history to the investigation of the allegedly most advanced representatives of the West: England and France. A "major powers" interpretation of European history may be a bit more sophisticated because it includes Germany, Russia, and, to a certain extent, the Habsburg Empire. From the Western Eurocentric perspective, the partitions of Poland appear to be of peripheral importance, especially in comparison with the magnitude of the French Revolution. From the major powers perspective, the partitions of Poland are a relatively small subchapter in the imperial histories of Russia, Prussia, and Austria.

It would be a mistake, however, to underestimate the great impression that the partitions of Poland made on contemporaries throughout Europe and the permanent impression they made on Poles. An 800-year-old kingdom was not merely territorially truncated or temporarily occupied by its more powerful enemies and neighbors; it virtually ceased to exist. "For the first time in modern history," British historian Lord Acton stated in 1862,

> a great State was suppressed, and a whole nation divided among its enemies. . . . Thenceforward there was a nation demanding to be united in a State,—a soul, as it were, wandering in search of a body in which to begin life over again; and, for the first time, a cry was heard that the arrangement of States was unjust—that their limits were unnatural.[2]

Despite the affinities among the Polish, Czech, and Hungarian national experiences as parts of foreign empires, the Polish case is exceptional in many respects. After 1526, the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary continued to exist as "occupied" territorial and political entities, and they gave their inhabitants a certain amount of regional autonomy or sense of historical continuity, even though the kings of Bohemia and Hungary were Habsburgs.

During the nineteenth century, the Hungarians, for example, were eventually able to reassert their "historical rights." In 1867 a political compromise between the Habsburgs and the Hungarian nation led to the creation of the Dual Monarchy of Austro-Hungary, and the Kingdom of Hungary regained a considerable amount of autonomy. From the Czech perspective as well, the Kingdom of Bohemia may have been occupied and subjected, but it did not cease to exist. After World War I, the Czechs used the centuries-old historical and territorial continuity of the kingdom of Bohemia as one argument for successfully negotiating part of the borders of the Czechoslovak Republic. Poland was not occupied or incorporated into one dynastic state but partitioned by three. Therefore, Poles could not look back on the continuous existence of a Polish state. Their only real point of orientation was a historically extinct precedent that became more and more remote with each passing year: the Polish–Lithuanian Republic of 1772.[3]

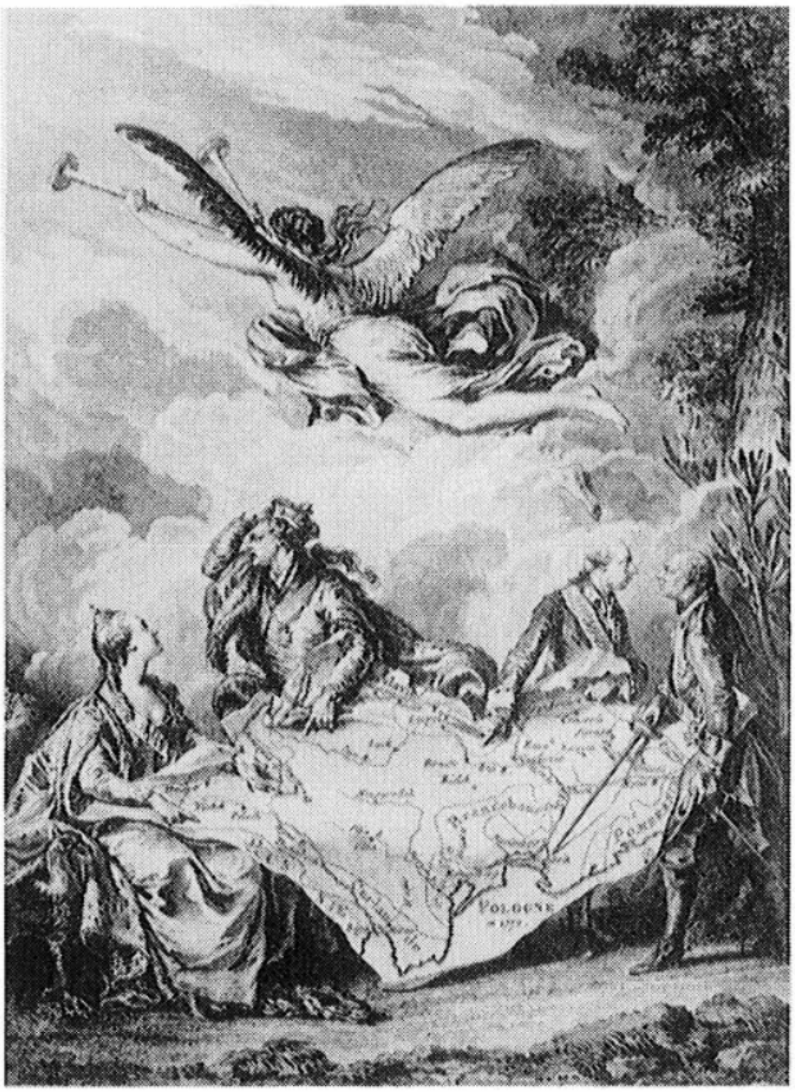
It irks Poles that Voltaire, a consummate representative of the Enlightenment, made frequent and almost uniformly hostile remarks about Poland, which he considered to be backward and anarchistic. (Rousseau, another luminary of the Enlightenment and the father of Romanticism, was one of the few contemporaries who commented favorably on Poland's traditions of freedom.) From the perspective of the various apologists for enlightened absolutism, the partitions of the Polish–Lithuanian Republic were a sign of progress: the imposition of rationality and order on chaos. The Polish nobility's maintenance of their "golden freedoms" had created a "republic of anarchy" that had no chance to defend itself. It lacked the modern, centralized institutions of authority, finance, administration, or defense that would have been necessary to do so.

The background of each of the partitions of Poland is complicated, but the overall results can be summarized. Prussia's Frederick the Great masterminded the first partition in 1772, and Russia's Catherine the Great initiated the second and third ones in 1793 and 1795. Historically, the Habsburg Empire had no real designs on Poland, but it did gain territory through the partitions.

Before the first partition, the Polish–Lithuanian Republic was a kingdom of formidable size: more than 286,000 square miles, larger than contemporary France. The first partition of 1772 reduced the republic's territory by roughly 30 percent; the second partition two decades later lopped off another 40 percent; and the remaining 30 percent was divided up in 1795. When it all was over and done with, Prussia and Austria each had incorporated a bit less than one-fifth of the territorial booty into their domains, and Russia absorbed the remaining lion's share of three-fifths. Although Napoleon reestablished a short-lived Polish client state—the Grand Duchy of Warsaw from 1807 until 1815—Poland effectively ceased to exist as a political entity. The partitioning powers found fine names for the pieces of the Polish–Lithuanian Republic they incorporated into their empires. Prussia created the Grand Duchy of Posen, and Austria created the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria. Two Polish client states—Austria's Republic of Kraków and Russia's Congress Kingdom of Poland, named after the Vienna Congress that created it in 1815—initially enjoyed some autonomy, but they were abolished by their respective imperial keepers in 1846 and 1864.

The fact that Maria Theresia had severe reservations about participating in the first partition of 1772 and that the Austrian empire's subsequent imperial administration in Poland was never as effective or as ruthless as its Prussian or Russian counterparts helped make Austria and the Habsburgs the most benign of the three culprits in the Polish historical memory. The liberality of the Austrian imperial administration toward the end of the nineteenth century eventually made the Habsburgs a symbol of political and religious tolerance which, given the hardships of foreign occupations by the Germans and the Soviets in the twentieth century, also became a source of nostalgia for the good old days in southern Poland. Some inhabitants of the part of contemporary southern Poland that belonged the Austrian imperial province of Galicia, especially the residents of Kraków, maintain that the prolonged Austrian presence influenced the southern Polish mentality. For example, confrontations between opposition movements and Communist authorities in the 1970s and 1980s never seemed to be as bloody or violent in Kraków as they were in Warsaw (in the former Russian partition) or Gdańsk (in the former German partition). Some people attributed this fact to the Austrian penchant for avoiding confrontation or bending the rules: a certain residual *Gemütlichkeit* from the good old days.

The temporal coincidence of the second and third partitions of the Polish–Lithuanian Republic in 1793 and 1795 with the pre-Napoleonic or republican phase of the French Revolution also helped give Poland a prominent position in that realm of political imagination called "the struggle for freedom." The partitions of Poland represented a victory of the old order of dynastic imperialism in Central Europe at a time when the democratic



Between 1772 and 1795, Russia, Prussia, and Austria divided the entire territory of Poland among themselves in three partitions. In an engraving portraying the First Partition of Poland in 1772, situated (from left to right) around a map of Poland, are Catherine the Great of Russia; Stanislaw August Poniatowski, king of Poland, attempting to hold on to his crown; Emperor Joseph II of Austria (coregent with Maria Theresia at the time); and Frederick the Great, king of Prussia. (Austrian National Library, Picture Archive)

principles of the French Revolution—liberty, equality, and fraternity—began to emerge in the West: "Poland was partitioned on the eve of the birth of Nationalism and Liberalism and thus became a symbol of all those people for whom self-determination and the consent of the governed provide the guiding principles of political life."[4] Subsequently there was a tendency among Poles to interpret the Polish national cause as a universally valid symbol for the struggle of oppressed peoples for freedom.

The term "freedom" lends itself to equivocal use. After the partitions, some Poles wished to regain the "golden freedoms" of the past and were not necessarily interested in the liberal democratic values propagated by the French Revolution. Nevertheless, Polish Romanticism managed to obscure the difference between these two different kinds of freedom during the nineteenth century, and it turned the Polish–Lithuanian Republic into a greater democracy than it ever had been.

Polish Romantics also compared the fate of Poland to the Passion of Christ: A chosen nation, Poland was scourged, crucified, and buried, but it would rise in glory from the dead. The political ideals of the French Revolution and the messianic vision of the Resurrection became the leitmotifs of Poland's national struggle. For example, after an uprising in the Russian partition of Poland in 1863, which was brutally squelched, the Polish eagle mounted on a black cross—Poland crucified—became a national symbol that women wore as jewelry on chains around their necks, and after the proclamation of martial law by the Jaruzelski regime ended the initial phase of the Solidarity movement in December 1981, women started wearing this Polish cross again.

Poles flocked into the Napoleonic armies because they identified their national cause with the French revolutionary principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Nonetheless, the Poles did not fare any better under the auspices of the Napoleonic empire than they did under the Prussian, Russian, or Austrian ones. Poland was merely a pawn that Napoleon ruthlessly exploited in his imperial strategy, and he had no reservations about abusing the Poles' freedom-loving potential. In 1801, for example, Napoleon sent a legion of Polish volunteers to Haiti in the Caribbean to put down a rebellion of black slaves. Ironically, the Poles contributed to Haiti's independence by contracting swamp fever and dying nearly to the last man.

Central European Soul: Volksgeist

If one had to identify a thinker responsible for giving Central European nationalism its peculiar twist, it would be Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), an innovative philosopher who exerted tremendous influence on the development of German Romanticism. Although Herder had several predecessors, he was responsible for popularizing the idea of the *Volksseele*, or *Volksgeist*, the "soul" or "spirit" unique to each people.[5] His observations and generalizations about collective attributes of the various peoples of Europe, as well as his prescriptions for discovering and preserving their respective "national souls," made a profound impression on his contemporaries.

As a proto-Romantic, Herder rejected many of the fundamental principles of the rationalistic version of the Enlightenment and also the Francophile and cosmopolitan form of civilization it propagated. He had great reservations about the mechanical and linear idea of progress because he saw it as a destructive agent that was leveling the differences between peoples, each of which had its own authentic nature or soul. Enlightened absolutism showed how homogeneous and restrictive new forms of rationality could be, and the modern centralized state was robbing people of their natural freedoms. Manifestations of unadulterated human nature and "soul"—like the emotive spontaneity of empathy or the creativity of the artist—were the supreme expressions of humanity for Herder, not enlightened reason, science, or technology. Herder came to view civilization and culture as concepts almost antithetical in this context, and the most genuine manifestations of a culture were to be found in its least "civilized" representatives: common men and women living traditional ways of life.

Each people had a unique collective soul, a *Volksgeist*, which was manifested in their collective voice: not merely in a common language, but also in the poems, stories, songs, and melodies of the common folk. Herder emphasized the role of language and tradition in the formation of collective or "national" souls, and he popularized the idea of different "linguistic and cultural nations" without propagating the creation of nation-states. The modern state was a perfect example of a rational—and hence "artificial"—form of organization for Herder, who entertained arcadian ideas about life in organic, smaller communities. Herder also helped popularize the assumption that the common folk who lived traditional ways of life were the most pristine carriers and the most important curators of national culture.

Herder's fascination with language as a nation's creative medium and collective voice, as well as his conviction that the most authentic manifestations of a people are to be sought in those traditions that had distanced themselves least from the original nature or historical heritage of a people, made a deep impression on his Central European contemporaries. Herder's aesthetics of populism and romanticism added a strong retrospective and introspective dimension to the idea of belonging to a particular nation. He inspired work in the fields of historical philology, the history of national literatures, medieval history, comparative ethnology, and an unprecedented interest in folk music and lore throughout Central Europe: all those things of which national traditions are made.

It would be difficult to underestimate the breadth and the depth of Herder's impact. Sir Isaiah Berlin, the famous British historian of ideas, maintained that "all regionalists, all defenders of the local against the universal, all champions of deeply rooted forms of life, both reactionary and progressive, both genuine humanists and obscurantist opponents of scientific progress, owe something, whether they know it or not, to the doctrines which Herder . . . introduced into European thought."[6]

It is important to distinguish here between Herder's intentions and the consequences of his work, because he was the sort of genius whose insights could easily be misinterpreted. Herder, a Protestant minister, Christian humanist, and pacifist, thought that a natural harmony among all peoples and cultures based on empathy and understanding was possible. He was one of the first modern champions of cultural pluralism, or "diversity," and a forerunner of the contemporary multiculturalism. The critique of the white European and Eurocentric version of *civilization* by contemporary multiculturalists is based to a considerable extent on the early-nineteenth-century, German Romantic concept of *culture*, or "roots." Around 1800 Herder designed the methodological tools used for the discovery or rediscovery of ethnic identities in the second half of the twentieth century. In this respect, he was, for example, one of the intellectual fathers of the African American rediscovery of "Mother Africa."

Herder was convinced that no one culture could be measured or judged by the standards of another and that to "brag of one's country is the stupidest form of boastfulness."[7] But Herder's terminology and his observations about the various peoples of Europe often were abused. In this respect, he helped create national stereotypes and those national feelings that, once hurt, were to provide a breeding ground for conflict in the future.

For example, Herder recognized that the Germans had played an ambiguous role in European history, or, as he formulated it, "more than all others have contributed to the weal and woe of this continent."[8] Some of the attributes that led to German success, often at the expense of their neighbors, were "their tallness and bodily strength, their bold, enterprising hardiness and valor, their heroic sense of duty that moved them to march after their chiefs wherever they might lead and to divide countries as spoils of war." (This passage merely shows how easy it was for the Nazis to draw up a national genealogy "from Herder to Hitler.")

Although he disapproved of war, Herder described the "warlike constitution" of the Germans in terms of their national character. Germans had been conditioned by a host of geographical and political circumstances initially related to the Romans' inability to subjugate Germany and subsequently by Germany's glorious role as "a living wall against which the mad fury of Huns, Hungarians, Mongols, and Turks dashed itself to pieces." He also recognized that the Germans' eastern neighbors, "the poor Slavs," frequently were on the cutting edge of the Germans' warlike disposition, and he showed a great deal of compassion for them.

Herder admired the ancient Slavs as "charitable, almost extravagantly hospitable, devoted to their rustic independence, yet loyal and law-abiding and contemptuous of pillaging and looting." However, given the unfortunate position of the Slavs between the Germans and the various threats from the east, Herder observed: "All of this was no use to them against oppression, it conduced it." It is one of those quirks of history that a German was one of the most influential figures in the development of Slavic historiography. Herder popularized the idea of peace-loving and protodemocratic Slavs as the victims of the aggressive, warlike, and autocratic Germans. Consequently, he played an essential role in the way the Slavs came to view their own history, as a national struggle against German aggression that culminated in the loss of ancient Slavic freedoms, and he envisioned a day when these "submerged peoples that were once happy and industrious" would rise from their "long, languid slumber" and be "delivered from their chains of bondage."

Herder also exerted great influence on Hungarian historiography. He felt that smaller peoples such as the Magyars were endangered by the threat of extinction via assimilation, a conjecture and insult that stimulated Hungarian nationalism. The Hungarians also used Herder's precepts to interpret their "conquest" of the Danube Basin at the end of the tenth century as a world historical event. The Magyars' interpretation of their *Drang nach Westen* had certain affinities to the Germans' rendition of their *Drang nach*

Osten, and Hungarians found all sorts of similarities between their own noble traditions and martial virtues as warriors and victors and the German ones. The glorification of national achievements and a sense of cultural superiority became primary characteristics of Central European nationalism, and in this respect the Magyars were like the Germans, just smaller.

Romanticism was politically ambivalent. Generally speaking, the progressive and revolutionary aspects of Romanticism were and remained particularly strong in France. After the French Revolution and the Napoleonic occupations of Germany, however, the precepts of Romanticism evolved into a set of a conservative, anti-Enlightenment, and antirevolutionary attitudes in the German-speaking world. Historians "discovered" the virtues of the political and social order of the Middle Ages, and antimodernism became a fashionable attitude that helped justify reactionary political measures. Czech political romanticism had more affinities to the French version, whereas both strains existed in the Polish and Hungarian traditions: a conservative one for the aristocrats and magnates who glorified the freedoms lost and wanted to restore the old order and a progressive or liberal one that aimed at the creation of democratic national states.

The coalescence of romantic nationalism with the precepts of nineteenth-century liberalism allowed the "historical nations" of Central Europe—Czech, Polish, and Hungarian—to interpret their histories as a continuous struggle for freedom and against foreign, and in particular German, hegemony. Historical references to the Middle Ages and the ancient freedoms that had been lost had the important function of equivocally legitimizing the national struggles for modern freedoms that were substantially different, but freedom nonetheless. Herder's assumption that the Slavs lost their "ancient freedoms" because their peace-loving dispositions made them unable to contend with German aggression transformed those feelings of national or cultural inferiority engendered by the history of German predominance—and the Habsburgs were just as German as the Prussians from this perspective—into sentiments of moral superiority that helped define national identities in the future.[9]

Herder's observations could be ambiguous. Taken out of context, a statement like "The Slavic peoples occupy a larger space on earth than they do in history" is full of devastating potential. Furthermore, although Herder's conception of *Volk* was not biological or racial—the introduction of racial categories for nations was one of the dubious achievements of the late nineteenth century—Herder interwove the concepts of nation, *Volk*, and *Kultur* in a manner that later lent itself to a racial interpretation. In one respect, it contributed to the rise of modern anti-Semitism. Jews could not fulfill the linguistic, cultural, or genealogical criteria for belonging to a nation, because they spoke Yiddish or worshiped in Hebrew; possessed cultural and religious traditions that were foreign to the larger national communities in which they lived; and had their roots, however remote, in the eastern Mediterranean world. Bastardizations of Herder's historical observations about relationships between "dominating Germans" and "submissive Slavs" also led to the development of the concepts of "superior" and "inferior" peoples which culminated in the Nazi terminology of a *Herrenvolk* and *Sklavenvölker*: a German "master race" and the Slavic "slave races."

Despite Herder's positive intentions, the Herderian model had disastrous consequences in the long run. Each people in Central Europe assumed that it had the task of discovering or recovering its own soul, and since Herder and his German Romantic contemporaries were among the first to do so, they established a paradigm that other Central European nations imitated. In this respect, the various national manifestations of the Slavic or Hungarian soul were ethnic imitations of the German *Volksgeist*, or to put it simply, some of the subsequent theoreticians of Slavic and Hungarian nationalism used a German paradigm in an attempt to out-German the Germans by making their national traditions at least as glorious and chauvinistic as the those of the Germans. Very few people exercised the type of compassionate tolerance or empathy Herder had envisioned; no one was interested having a national past that did not surpass others in greatness; and Central Europeans have rarely demonstrated an ability to view themselves as equals.

From Nations to Nationalisms

Inhabitants of the United Kingdom or the United States of America rarely refer to their sense of allegiance to the political institutions of their countries or the sentiments that go along with them as nationalism. British subjects and citizens of the United States may consider themselves patriotic—"God Save the Queen" and "God Bless America"—but not nationalistic. Nationalism is foreign to the Anglo-American understanding of democracy, and in English, the concept is imbued with negative connotations. Nationalism is a "Continental" phenomenon.

Part of the problem here is terminological. In English (as well as in French), the concept of nation is intimately associated and, in some cases synonymous, with the term "state." Nationality refers to state citizenship and the sense of allegiance to national institutions that goes along with it. Virtually anyone can become a U.S. citizen, as the history of emigration to the United States has amply demonstrated. The institutions of Great Britain unite the English, Welsh, and Scottish subjects of His or Her Majesty, despite their differences, and in France the idea of the republic has gone hand in hand with the concept of the French nation.

The genealogy of modern nationalism is a complex topic,[10] so it will have to suffice here to observe that the liberal democratic Anglo-American and French revolutionary republican traditions identified the people's allegiance to the institutions of the (democratic) state and the (democratic) political principles on which they were based as the primary criteria for being a member of the nation, whereas the Central and Eastern European ones did not. In other words, the Western European equations of state equals nation equals people (the presence of political institutions interested in promoting that mode of national identification from the top down) and people equals nation equals state (the development of democratic traditions promoting a participatory mode of national identification from the bottom up) did not apply to the Central European experience. In Central Europe, nations either were divided among various states or had been incorporated into multinational empires. Therefore, they developed divergent perspectives on nations and nationalism. A few Central European examples of the problematic relationship between nations and states will illustrate these points.

If one is prepared to accept a fundamentally *political* definition of nationalism as "primarily a principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent,"[11] Central Europe's two problems were that there were either too many states or too few, on the one hand, and that the patterns of conquest, settlement, and migration from the Middle Ages until the eighteenth century had made multinational the formerly independent feudal "nations," like the kingdoms of Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland-Lithuania, as well as the empires that swallowed them.

Germany and Poland were nations divided among states, although under different circumstances. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the German nation was divided among forty different sovereign states. All these states, despite their regional traditions, were equally German because the old feudal idea of the "German nation" came to be understood as a "linguistic and cultural nation"—a *Sprach- und Kulturnation*—that historically had many parts—the constituent members of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation—but transcended their numerous political borders. Poland was divided among three foreign empires between 1772 and 1795, and Poles became citizens of three imperial states: Prussian Poles, Austrian Poles, and Russian Poles. But the extinction of a Polish state did not destroy the Polish nation; on the contrary, the experience of the partitions contributed to its modern development.

The Habsburg, Ottoman, and Russian empires were dynastic states made up of different nations. The Austrian emperors, Ottoman sultans, and Russian czars each had incorporated a multifarious congregation of larger and smaller peoples into their multinational empires, and some of these peoples, to use the Austrian empire as an example, had their own venerable traditions as nations. The medieval idea of the political nation provided historical and terminological precedents for the development of modern forms of nationalism for Czechs, Hungarians, Poles, and Croats,[12] whereas other "unhistorical nations"—such as the Slovaks, Ukrainians, Romanians, and Slovenes—were in the process of articulating some kind of national awareness or autonomous cultural identity. Consequently, the nineteenth century was one of national quests and questions: the "German Question" and the creation of a second German Reich, the "Polish Question," the "Nationalities Question" (*Nationalitätenfrage*)[13] within the Habsburg Empire, the "Jewish Question," and the "Balkan Question" caused by the deterioration of the Ottoman Empire.

Given the complexity of the relationships between nations and states in Central Europe, generalizations about how nationalism evolved are difficult. However, one standard approach to the development of nationalism is to distinguish among three qualitatively different phases or periods. The first Romantic or protonationalistic phase at the beginning of the nineteenth century was mainly cultural, literary, and folkloristic, and it had no particular or immediate political implications. This phase is a period generally referred to as "national awakening," and it involved the *creation* of national traditions. But it also provided the basis for a second phase, which roughly corresponded to the middle of the nineteenth century, characterized by the preparedness of certain national elites to agitate politically for the "national idea." This second phase culminated in national uprisings or revolutions in 1848: the so-called Springtime of Nations. The third phase of mass nationalism, when national movements began to enjoy the collective popular support that nationalists always maintained they had, came in the last third of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.[14]

In this context, it is important to keep a few not so apparent facts in mind. First, "nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way around."[15] National languages, heritages, and identities did not exist, even remotely, to the same extent *before* nationalism as they did *after* nationalism. Second, nations are, according to Benedict Anderson's formulation, "imagined communities."[16] National traditions had to be created and projected into the past. Then they appeared to have always been there. Therefore, nineteenth-century nationalism was able to invent age-old national identities and conflicts where none had previously existed.

Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between what happened in Western Europe, where states provided the institutional framework for the articulation of nationalism and the process of nation building,[17] and the situation in Central Europe, where nationalism inspired nations in the short or the long run to create (or re-create) their own states. A third and equally important perspective is, as Ernest Renan, a French theoretician of nationalism, stated in 1882: "Historical error is an essential factor in the formation of a nation." Commenting on this observation, the British anthropologist Ernest Gellner pointed out that "a shared amnesia, a collective forgetfulness is at least as essential for the emergence of what we now consider to be a nation."[18] In other words, getting its history wrong, including forgetting what came before nationalism, frequently plays a greater role for a nation in forming its identity than getting its history right.

The Politics of Language

The political importance of the modern standardization of languages can hardly be underestimated because the standardization of the spoken and written word—the linguistic vehicles for the creation of national literary and historical traditions—and public education in the broadest sense of the term were two important preconditions for the propagation of nationalism. During the nineteenth century every incremental increase in literacy, education, and communication contributed to the potential of nationalism. A fictitious but symptomatic example can be used to demonstrate this point.

At the end of the eighteenth century, an illiterate peasant-serf and speaker of an incomprehensible dialect, who worked the same plot of ground that his ancestors had and who lived on a relatively unsophisticated barter or semicash economy, probably never had been farther than a few days' walk from his birthplace, regardless of where he lived. He definitely did not have the vaguest idea what it meant to be a member of something as large and grand as a nation, nor was he willing to kill or be killed for it. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, the great-grandson of this peasant-serf was a small landowner who had a primary education and was literate enough to read a newspaper occasionally. His livelihood depended on the vicissitudes of the European grain market, and he might have had three or four years of compulsory military service. He most likely had ridden on a train, had been to a big city, or had relatives who had emigrated there to join the industrial workforce. This kind of person knew to which nation he belonged as well as who his nation's historical and current enemies were.

There are a number of complicated methodological issues related to how nations are defined and differing opinions as to whether one criterion, like language or ethnicity, or a combination of many, such as language, cohesive territory, a shared history, or common cultural traditions, should be used to define nationhood. Furthermore, although an increase in the feeling of nationalism undoubtedly was one of the characteristics of the nineteenth century, it is difficult to judge how many people from different social groups subjectively identified themselves with the precepts of nationalism at a given time. Here we shall use a few orthodox examples of how Central European nations were made while simultaneously taking into account some of the political peculiarities of the Central European situation.

Two traditional criteria important to classifying a people as a nation are a "historic association with a current state or one with a fairly lengthy and recent past," and "the existence of a long-established cultural elite, possessing a written national literary and administrative vernacular."[19] In Central Europe there were only four historical nations, and none of them was an independent state at the beginning of the nineteenth century: the German nation of the defunct Holy Roman Empire, which included the German-speaking Austrians; the Polish nation, which had been divided among three empires; and the Bohemian nation[20] and the Hungarian nation, both of which had been incorporated into the Habsburg Empire. From the perspective of these "historical nations," the various other nations or peoples of Central Europe were "unhistoric." They could not look back on histories as rulers but merely on the past as subjects.

For all four of Central Europe's historical nations, the literary and administrative vernacular of public life—politics, government, and education—was Latin until the eighteenth century and, in some cases, the nineteenth century. Therefore, the language used for public purposes like politics or administration and the vernacular languages used for private affairs outside the public sphere traditionally were different. For example, when Polish or Hungarian nobles dealt with one another or with affairs of state, they frequently spoke Latin, but when they attended to affairs on their estates they spoke, depending on the location, some regional dialect of Polish, Lithuanian, or Ukrainian with their subordinates and serfs in the first case, or Magyar, Slovak, Romanian, Serbian, Croatian, or even German in the second. In the Habsburg Empire the foreign literate vernacular of the upper, educated, and ruling classes (Latin and German) often was incomprehensible to people who spoke national vernaculars. The common folk were not only illiterate; their vernacular generally consisted of either a variety of dialects or an archaic semiliterate language whose development had been stunted by the traditional use of Latin or the introduction of German.

It is important to distinguish here between what linguists call literary languages and nonliterate vernaculars, or spoken but not written languages. National languages are almost always semiartificial constructs. (The standardization of English spelling and grammar, for example, is relatively recent. The first English-language dictionary was published in 1755; the Oxford English Dictionary did not appear until 1888. One of the characteristics of the intervening period was the development of prescriptive grammar, rules governing how things ought to be said.) Individual Central European languages crossed the threshold from non- or semiliterate vernaculars to literary media at different times and developed at different speeds. Philologists were among the first and most important "national awakeners." They had the task of turning the nonliterate vernacular, the spoken word, or archaic semiliterate traditions into a literate vernacular, a modern written language. In developing languages and literary traditions, they helped create the kinds of national "souls" about which Herder had written.

This project included expanding vocabularies and standardizing spelling, grammar, and, above all, pronunciation. A diversity of dialects had to be replaced by a uniformly written and spoken national language. Furthermore, a standardized national language was the prerequisite for the creation and transmission of national traditions such as the recording of folktales and folk songs or the writing of national literatures or histories, a fact demonstrating the relationship of literacy, education, and nationalism.

When people became members of a larger literate and linguistic community, they crossed the threshold from regionalism to nationalism. Only after the various languages of Central Europe were established as legitimate and functional literary and cultural media could their public use for administrative, educational, and political purposes become an issue, and given the hegemony of German, the use of national languages became a political problem of increasing magnitude in the nineteenth century, especially in the Habsburg Empire.

The non-German nations of Central Europe crossed the linguistic threshold from non- or semiliterate to literary languages at different times and under different circumstances. To begin with an exception: the Poles possessed a relatively highly developed literary language before the partitions. The partitioning powers then pursued assimilatory policies of Germanization and Russification with more or less equal rigor during the first half of the nineteenth century. Although Austrian censors prohibited Polish words like "freedom" (*wolnosc*) and "fatherland" (*ojczyna*) from appearing in print, the rigor of the Austrian imperial administration slackened in the second half of the century to such an extent that the Austrian portion of partitioned Poland became a center of Polish culture.

During the same time span German and Russian were introduced as the official languages in the public offices and schools of the Prussian and Russian partitions. The policies of the partitioning powers contributed to the creation of a mode of national identification with the Polish language that had not existed beforehand and that was reinforced by the great works of Polish Romantic poets, like Adam Mickiewicz, who wrote in exile.

As part of his reform and modernization strategy, the Habsburg emperor (and king of Hungary) Joseph II issued an imperial decree in 1788 that replaced Latin with German as the language of state administration and higher education in the kingdom of Hungary. The enlightened rational behind this was to replace an antiquated language, Latin, with a modern one, German, used elsewhere in the empire for administrative purposes.[21] But the Hungarian nobility, as representatives of the old *natio Hungarica,* saw this as a violation of their "historical rights," and they successfully insisted on the restoration of Latin. Some five decades later, Magyar successfully displaced Latin as the language of public life. (Meetings of the Hungarian Diet, the kingdom's parliament of nobles, and lectures at the University of Budapest were held in Latin until 1840 and 1844, respectively.)

The transition from Latin to Magyar—and the demands that modern education and administration placed on Magyar as a basically archaic vernacular—induced a linguistic reform and renewal in Hungary that included the invention of literally thousands of new words,[22] and this process of linguistic renewal fueled the "awakening" of the modern Hungarian nation. The same cultural milestones can be used in Central Europe to document the rise of national awareness: the first collection of folk songs, the first dictionary or grammar book, the first national newspaper, the first national theater, the first national opera, and so forth. However, given the multinational composition of the populace of Hungary—Hungarians, Germans, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Romanians, Serbs, and Croats—and the fact that over half of the population was not Hungarian, the rise of Magyar to the status of a public language, along with the aspiration of some Hungarian nationalists to make it the only public language for administration and education—to Magyarize the minorities, who were the majority—reproduced the old problem of a dominant language under new circumstances.[23]

The development of Hungarian nationalism in the nineteenth century is a good example of how the old political idea of a feudal nation, the *natio Hungarica,* was used to legitimize the new idea of a linguistic nation as the basis of a state (that is, people living in Hungary should speak Magyar) as well as to justify policies of assimilation from above that were less ruthless in execution but similar in spirit to the autocratic ones the Prussians and Russians had introduced in Poland. In other words, after the Habsburgs abandoned the idea of linguistically "Germanizing" Hungary, the Hungarians pursued the idea of Magyarizing it. A certain affinity between Hungarian nationalism and German nationalism cannot be overlooked here. As a "historical," linguistic, and cultural nation, many Hungarians considered themselves to be superior to the various national minorities living in the kingdom of Hungary, just as many Germans considered their language and culture to be superior to non-Germanic ones.

The creation of Serbo-Croatian is a superb example of how modern, artificial languages were constructed out of regional dialects. The Catholic Croats used the Latin alphabet and spoke three major dialects, two of which had developed literary versions and one of which was easily comprehensible to Serbs. Orthodox Serbs also had a number of regional dialects and used the Cyrillic alphabet. However, Serbs and Croats managed to make a bilateral linguistic compromise.

Vuk Karadžić (1789–1864), a Serbian writer, philologist, author of a grammar and a dictionary, and collector of folk songs and poems, exercised the greatest influence on the development of literary Serbian. He chose *sto*, the most widespread Serbian dialect, which was closely related to one of the Croat dialects, as the basis of his standardization of Serbian. Ljudevit Gaj, a Croat who propagated the idea of the cultural unity of southern Slav nations, spoke and wrote in one of the Croatian dialects more remotely related to Serbian. But then he began writing in the Croat dialect closest to *sto*, the one Karadžić had chosen as the basis for literary Serbian. As a result, Serbo-Croatian developed as one literary language after the middle of the nineteenth century, although it was written in Latin characters by the Roman Catholic Croats and Cyrillic ones by the Orthodox Serbs. (We will not address the status of Slovene as a "Yugoslav" language here. But in brief, Slovenes can passively understand Serbo-Croatian, whereas Serbs and Croats cannot read or understand Slovene without special training.)

The selection of these dialects and their standardization was to have enormous political implications in the future. In one respect, it represented an attempt to construct a common southern Slav cultural heritage capable of offsetting German and Hungarian influences, and it often was combined with the vague Romantic conception of an ancient southern Slav kingdom stretching from the Alps and the Adriatic to the Black Sea. (In Serbian and Croatian, *jug* means "south"; hence the term "Yugoslav.") Because language was viewed as the essential criterion for nationhood, the standardization of Serbo-Croatian inevitably promoted the idea that "all South Slavs were basically one people and that, by implication, they should form a political unit."[24] Furthermore, it deprived Croat nationalism of a linguistic justification and provided Serbs with a convenient excuse for expansion in the future, insofar as some Serbian nationalists regarded all people who could comprehend the *sto* dialect, which Karadžić had chosen as the basis for the standardization of Serbian, as members of an ancient Serbian nation. In this respect, the idea of the cultural unity of "southern Slav" nations could be used as a vehicle for the realization of Greater Serbian aspirations.[25] (After the establishment of a Yugoslav state in 1918, many Croats felt that Serbo-Croatian was hegemonic, insofar as Serbs had the political control over standardization. Since the deterioration of the former Yugoslavia in

1991, both Croats and Serbs feel constrained to emphasize how different their languages are.)

The development of literary Czech and literary Slovak provides one last example of how linguistic issues became cultural and political ones in the nineteenth century and remain so in the twentieth. The fact that one of the many fathers of the creation of modern literary Czech, Josef Dobrovský (1753–1829), wrote his works on Czech philology and the history of Czech literature in Latin and German is merely one indicator for the then current inadequacies of the Czech vernacular or the position of cultural hegemony that German had attained in Bohemia.

The publication of Josef Jungmann's Czech–German dictionary (1835–1839) marks another milestone in the development of the language. František Palacký, the first great modern Czech historian, initially published in German his monumental, five-volume *History of Bohemia* (1836–1857), which was based on the Herderian premise that the history of Bohemia was "a ceaseless battle between the German and the Slav elements."[26] (It appeared later in Czech.) Each incremental step in the development of literary Czech and the national awareness (produced by literary and historical works written in that idiom) increased the tension in Bohemia between Czechs and the Habsburg-German ruling class. During the nineteenth century the public use of Czech for administration and education became a volatile political issue.

The standardization of Slovak initially was frustrated by denominational differences. Anton Bernolák, a Slovak Catholic priest, made the first attempt to introduce standardized Slovak at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by raising a west Slovak dialect, which had the greatest similarity to Czech, to the status of a literary vernacular, but Protestant Slovaks rejected this initiative because their literary tradition was based on the first, fifteenth-century Czech translation of the Bible. Slovak Protestants rejected a contemporary Catholic proposal because it did not correspond to the language of their devotional tradition, a form of medieval Czech substantially different from vernacular Slovak. Later, in the 1840s, a Slovak philologist, Lúdovit Stúr, made a second and successful attempt to standardize Slovak. He adopted a Middle Slovak dialect as the basis for modern literary Slovak and relied on literary Czech as a model for standardization.

Whether Czech and Slovak are dialects of one language or two separate languages has been a hotly debated issue. Linguists find enough essential similarities in vocabulary, syntax, and word formation to justify classifying both of them in the Czechoslovak subgroup of the Western Slavic languages. But the phonetic differences between Czech and Slovak are so great that Czechs and Slovaks can immediately identify each other after a few words have been spoken. Common structural roots and mutual comprehensibility appear to justify the concept of two modern dialects of one historical language, whereas their historical development and vernacular differences support the idea of two languages, a point that is essential if language is the criterion for nationhood. Whether there is one Czecho-Slovak language or two, Czech and Slovak, is an issue of enormous consequence. In this context, Slovak linguists always have been theoreticians of Slovak nationalism. If Slovaks do not have their own language, they cannot be representatives of an independent culture or nation.

The application of other criteria, like historical association and religion, to nationhood seems to support the idea of separate Czech and Slovak nations. It is important to recall here that after the demise of a "Greater Moravian" kingdom in the tenth century, Czechs and Slovaks never lived together in the same state. Instead, Czechs inhabited the kingdom of Bohemia and Moravia, and Slovakia became part of the kingdom of Hungary. Based on the venerable traditions of the kingdom of Bohemia, Czechs consider themselves a "historical nation"; the Slovaks, as subjects of the Hungarian crown, do not have a comparable history of independence and consequently have been labeled as one of those Central European peoples "without a history."

Czechs and Slovaks also have two relatively distinct religious traditions. The Czechs identify themselves with the Hussite form of Protestantism that developed in the fifteenth century, although many of them reconverted to Catholicism in the seventeenth century. The majority of Slovaks are Roman Catholic.

Furthermore, Czechs and Slovaks were confronted with two different foreign ruling classes. The Habsburgs thoroughly broke the back of Bohemia in the seventeenth century and introduced a German-speaking upper class that demoted Czech to a language of serfs and servants. The Slovaks encountered a predominantly Magyar nobility that pursued their own "national interests" on a regional scale, even though they, in turn, were subjects of the German-speaking Habsburgs themselves. Thus the Czechs had to struggle against Germanization, and the Slovaks had to contend with Magyarization.

After World War I, the Czechoslovak Republic attempted to create a common Czechoslovak national identity, and for decades after World War II the Communists pursued a variation on the idea of unity by promoting the ideology of proletarian internationalism, which made class more important than nationality. After the "Velvet Revolution" in Czechoslovakia in 1989, it gradually became evident in constitutional debates about the future structure of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic that disparate Czech and Slovak ideas about the objectives and pace of political and economic reform, as well as Czech condescension and the agitation of Slovak separatists, would present a formidable challenge to Czechoslovak unity.

There was an important distinction in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic between "federal" and "national" powers or, to use American terminology, federal powers and states' rights. There was, for example, no joint or federal ministry for culture in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic but, rather, two "national" or "state" ministries: one in Prague and the other in Bratislava. The drafting of the new Czech and Slovak constitution was shipwrecked on an acrimonious debate over the division and distribution of federal and national powers between the Czech and Slovak halves of the republic. From the Slovak point of view, the main problem was the Czechs' lack of preparedness to recognize Slovakia as an autonomous and equal partner. The inability of Czechs and Slovaks to resolve their differences ended with the "Velvet Divorce" at the beginning of 1993. Many Czechs felt that the division of the Czechoslovak state into two smaller and independent Czech and Slovak states has enhanced their chances for "returning to Europe." Not many Slovaks feel the same way, but this is part of the ambiguity of their newly gained independence.

The "Jewish Question"

Most European peoples participated in the rise of nationalism during the nineteenth century, but the Jews were an exception. Certainly Jews had understood themselves as a "nation," a chosen people, for centuries. But they did not participate in developing a new collective or national identity during the nineteenth century to the same extent other peoples did. On the contrary, the Jewish consensus on what it meant to be a Jew disintegrated parallel to the development and consolidation of new national identities elsewhere in Central Europe. Jews, instead of becoming more Jewish, assimilated into dominant national cultures by becoming Germans or Magyars or, to a much lesser extent, Czechs or Poles.

The emergence of "Jewish nationalism" and Zionism at the end of the nineteenth century was, comparatively speaking, a belated development. Neither the idea that Jews should be recognized as a linguistic and national or ethnic group (and consequently agitate for their national rights as other national groups had) nor the vision of establishing a Jewish homeland was a product of the type of nation building that other peoples experienced. Rather, these ideas were reactions to the success of modern nationalism among other peoples as well as responses to the rise of modern anti-Semitism. They also were issues on which Jews themselves did not agree. In this respect, the "Jewish question" was considerably different from the other national questions in Central Europe, and it was a major issue because most of Europe's Jews lived in Central Europe.

At the end of the eighteenth century, three-fourths of Europe's 1.5 million Jews lived east of the Elbe River, the overwhelming majority of them in Poland-Lithuania. There is a relatively simple explanation for the density of Jews in this region: In the mid-thirteenth century, Poland-Lithuania established a charter that discriminated against Jews but also defined their station in society and protected the residual rights related to it. Unlike the other Christian rulers of Europe, who retracted the rights of Jews and periodically or systematically expelled them, the Polish kings continued to observe the stipulations of their medieval agreement with the Jews, and this made Poland-Lithuania the safest place in Europe for Jews to live. Therefore, the primary pattern of Jewish migration in Europe until the end of the eighteenth century was west to east, because Poland-Lithuania was Europe's principal haven for the religiously persecuted: Jews who fled Christian persecution starting in the Middle Ages and Protestants who sought refuge from Catholic intolerance thereafter. This does not imply that Jews did not periodically face pogroms and anti-Semitic abuse in Poland-Lithuania, but their status there was the most stable and secure in all of Europe.

Each swell of anti-Semitic persecution in Western Europe produced a new wave of Jewish immigration to the east. The Polish–Lithuanian nobility also welcomed Jewish immigration because the Jews, who came mainly from Western European cities, brought with them commercial know-how, connections, and sophistication, and the nobility protected Jewish interests because they directly or indirectly benefited from the fruits of Jewish labor. In this respect, Jewish immigration, the "flight to the east," served purposes similar to German medieval immigration, *der Drang nach Osten*. The indigenous "hosts" profited from the foreign "guests."

As a result of the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Republic in the late eighteenth century, Polish Jews became Prussian (and eventually German) and Austrian Jews or Russian Jews: Central European Jews in the former cases or Eastern European Jews in the latter. Prussia had expelled most of its Jews in the seventeenth century and had only a small Jewish community of a few thousand in Berlin when it acquired 100,000 Jews along with its piece of the Polish–Lithuanian Republic. Despite the periodic expulsions and pogroms that Catholic anti-Semitic zeal had inspired, the Habsburg Empire had a relatively large number of Jews—an estimated 150,000 split between the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary—when Poland was partitioned. The Austrian empire incorporated 250,000 Jews into its domain along with its "new" province of Galicia. Czarist Russia, which had previously banned Jewish immigration altogether, absorbed more than 1 million Jews with its portion of territorial booty. The Jewish populations in these empires increased dramatically during the nineteenth century. Shortly before World War I, 617,000 Jews were living in the German empire, approximately 2.5 million in the Habsburgs' realms, and 6 million in Russia.

The Jews who became Prussian and Austrian subjects were in a much more fortunate position than those incorporated into the Russian empire, because tolerance was part of the program of the Prussian and Austrian strains of enlightened absolutism. The philosophy of the Enlightenment and the gradual evolution of political liberalism in Germany and the Habsburg realms paved the way to assimilation and eventually to the establishment of equal rights for Jews in the second half of the nineteenth century. In Russia, however, into the twentieth century, vacillating but systematic discrimination, blatant anti-Semitism, and periodic pogroms were the basis of czarist policies toward Jews.

The Enlightenment dramatically changed the status of Central European Jews. Although various forms of institutionalized anti-Semitism and discrimination were a feature of Christian rule, Jews were in some respects similar to other feudal social bodies, such as estates, corporations, or guilds, in that they had a special status: Their communities and lives were circumscribed by prohibitions and rights unique to them as a group. Enlightened absolutism introduced policies aimed at dispensing with many of the traditional rights, privileges, and obligations of specific social groups. The gradual elimination of traditional discriminatory policies toward Jews—which.

next to the abolition of serfdom, is generally regarded as one of the great achievements of enlightened absolutism—actually threatened the traditional Jewish way of life. Dismantling the barriers of discrimination also entailed tearing down the walls that had protected or insulated traditional Jewish communities.

By enlightened standards, the traditional Jewish communities of Poland-Lithuania were "backward": self-contained ghettos steeped in orthodoxy and poverty. Therefore, the "improvement" of the Jews was one of the pedagogical aspirations of enlightened rulers, and throughout the nineteenth century the "Jewish question" revolved around making Jews "normal citizens" and more productive participants in a secular society as a whole. The legal emancipation of the Jews was not a continuous or linear process. In the case of the Habsburg realms, Joseph II's Patent of Tolerance in 1781 marked the beginning of the formal, political emancipation of the Jews because it granted them rights that up to that point only Christians had enjoyed. Emancipation lagged in the first half of the nineteenth century, was fueled by the revolutions of 1848, and was formally completed in 1867 when the Austrian and Hungarian constitutions established the principle of equality for all citizens. The Jewish responses to the challenges of the Enlightenment were ambivalent and complex. Reactions ranged from radical secular "modernists," who abandoned Judaism by advocating complete assimilation, to severe "traditionalists," who pleaded for orthodoxy and self-imposed segregation, and they included many different admixtures of innovation and tradition between these extremes.

The fortunes of Central European Jews were intimately bound with the ideas of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and nineteenth-century liberalism. Previously the traditional avenue of Jewish assimilation had been conversion to Christianity and baptism; the modern alternatives that enlightenment and liberalism proposed were faith in reason and progress. Enlightened philosophy was imbued with secular humanism and based on the premise that science and rationality would create a new kind of humanity. In this respect, Jewish "backwardness" was not essentially different from the backwardness of other peoples. Education provided everyone with a path out of their figurative ghettos and, for Jews, out of their literal ones.

Some Jews abandoned Judaism altogether and sought their salvation in "enlightened" political ideologies such as liberalism—or, later, socialism and communism—because they were secular and facilitated assimilation. There also were more moderate approaches. At the end of the eighteenth century, Moses Mendelssohn was instrumental in establishing the Haskala, a Jewish school of the Enlightenment in Berlin inspired by German philosophy. Mendelssohn sought to reconcile the benefits of secular enlightenment and German culture with the ethics and humanism of Jewish traditions in a manner that would allow Jews to participate fully in the modern world without completely abandoning their heritage. In other words, if Jews learned to interpret their own traditions in the spirit of the Enlightenment, they would see how enlightened Judaism was. Throughout the nineteenth century, one of the ongoing debates among "modernists" and "traditionalists" in Jewish communities dealt with questions of degree. How much reform or innovation was desirable or tolerable? Some Orthodox Jews also rejected change because they considered it to be sacrilegious and to contribute to the destruction of Jewish institutions and religious traditions.

If enlightenment were based on education, then Central European Jews had to find a school of enlightenment to emulate and a corresponding culture to adopt. The Central European paradigms for science and culture *par excellence* were German: *deutsche Wissenschaft und Kultur.* Linguistic assimilation—abandoning Yiddish and Hebrew for German—was the prerequisite for modern education, and the language of instruction was German at many of the schools that the Habsburg authorities established for Galician Jews, as well as many of the most reputable universities in Central Europe. Education also qualified Jews to participate in the larger literary community of the "German linguistic and cultural nation." The universality of (German) science and the all-embracing tolerance of (German) humanistic culture appealed to modernist Jews, who, in many cases, "Germanized" and understood themselves as members of a German linguistic and cultural nation.

In the nineteenth century, there were two complementary patterns of Jewish assimilation. First, the ideas of German science and culture moved east, making into advocates of "German culture" those "Polish" Jews in the Habsburg province of Galicia who were interested in education, assimilation, and the opportunities they entailed. Second, there was a substantial increase in Jewish migration within the Habsburg realms during the last third of the nineteenth century: west to east from Bohemia and Moravia to Hungary and east to west from Galicia to urban centers in Austria and Hungary. Between 1869 and 1910, for example, the Jewish population of Budapest increased from less than 45,000 to more than 200,000 (from 16 to over 23 percent of the city's population) and in Vienna from 40,000 to more than 175,000 (from 6.6 to 8.6 percent).[27]

Not all these Jews assimilated, and they were spread across the entire social spectrum from paupers and panhandlers to bankers and industrialists. The most successful became members of the middle, upper-middle, and entrepreneurial classes in urban centers. They participated in the economic boom of liberalism and recognized that higher education often led to prosperity and assimilation. Jews accounted for less than 5 percent of the population in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, but at the end of the nineteenth century, well over a quarter of the students enrolled at the universities of Vienna and Budapest were Jewish. Jews were strongly represented—or, in relation to their overall percentage of the population, overrepresented—in professions such as teaching, law, medicine, and journalism, as well as in business and finance. There also were pronounced differences between the "western Jews," who actively sought integration, and the "eastern Jews" in or from the Galician hinterland, whose traditionalism or orthodoxy prohibited them from doing so. Assimilated western Jews frequently were the most ruthless critics of the "backwardness" and orthodoxy of eastern Jews, and the relationships among nonreligious, Reformed, and Orthodox Jews were often acrimonious.

German language and culture initially played an important role in Jewish assimilation, and they continued to do so for those modernist Jews who lived in Galicia, the German-speaking parts of the Habsburg realms, or Bohemia and Moravia. The identification of Jews with German culture frequently went hand in hand with a strong sense of allegiance to the institutions of the Habsburg monarchy, and some historians have argued that assimilated Jews were among the Habsburgs' most loyal subjects because they shared the humanistic and cosmopolitan assumptions of German culture. These attitudes corresponded well to the dynastic program of the Habsburgs, who maintained that their own interests transcended the narrow concerns of specific ethnic, religious, or national groups in their multinational empire.[28]

There also were alternatives to Jewish Germanization. Many Jews in Hungary, for example, who had been raised on German language and culture in the spirit of Jewish enlightenment, eventually became advocates of Hungarian language and culture in the last third of the nineteenth century. Reform-minded Hungarian Jews developed a fortuitous relationship with those representatives of Hungary's political elite who promoted liberalism, nationalism, and Magyarization as a means of assimilating the kingdom of Hungary's minorities into one linguistic and political nation. In this respect, Jews not only could become Germans; they also could become Magyars. In Bohemia and Galicia, some Jews also sought assimilation into the respective dominant Czech and Polish national cultures.

As long as Central European nationalism was liberal, linguistic, and cultural, it gave Jews an opportunity to assimilate, and one can actually speak of a success story for the Jews and the societies into which they assimilated during the last third of the nineteenth century.[29] By 1900, however, the incorporation of racial theories into nationalistic ideologies, the alliance of modern anti-Semitism with nationalism, and the dynamics of nationalism in the Habsburgs' realms had changed the tenor of politics and the prospects of Jewish assimilation. Assimilated Jews frequently were stranded in between different national fronts. In Bohemia, for example, Czech nationalists attacked assimilated German-speaking Jews as agents of "Germanization," whereas German national anti-Semites insisted that they were not Germans, but Jews. Nationalistic demands for excluding the Jews and the emergence of Jewish strategies of self-exclusion—Jewish nationalism and Zionism—document equally well the faltering of assimilation and the "success" of nationalism on all fronts.

Nevertheless, many of the best representatives of the cultural blossom associated with fin de siècle Budapest, Prague, and Vienna were assimilated Jews. Milan Kundera described them as "the principal cosmopolitan, integrating element in Central Europe: they were its intellectual cement, a condensed version of its spirit."[30] The stellar array of "Habsburg Jews" includes Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis; Ludwig Wittgenstein, one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century; the composers Gustav Mahler and Arnold Schönberg; the founder of the Austrian Social Democratic Workers' Party, Viktor Adler; and the author Franz Kafka, who, because of his heterogeneous background, is claimed by Germans, Austrians, Czechs, and Jews as a "national author." These assimilated Jews made great contributions to enlightened and humanistic German culture, and they considered themselves as representatives of German traditions in the arts, letters, and sciences. But German nationalists, who adopted anti-Semitic and racist doctrines, adamantly refused to recognize these contributions as German. Rather, they condemned them, along with many of the precepts of cosmopolitan enlightenment and secular humanism that had facilitated Jewish assimilation, as Jewish.

8

The Demise of Imperial Austria and the Rise of Imperial Germany

1848–1890

In 1815 the Congress of Vienna diplomatically sealed the victory of the old European dynastic order over revolutionary France, an event that marked the beginning of thirty-three years of peace and stability in Europe. In the same year, the czar of Russia, the king of Prussia, and the emperor of Austria concluded the "Holy Alliance," an anti-revolutionary pact that obligated them as Christian sovereigns to adhere to patriarchal principles of government, and this triad of absolutists cooperated relatively well until the middle of the nineteenth century. The reestablishment of the old European order also is frequently identified with the career of Prince Clemens Lothar von Metternich, a Habsburg diplomat from Germany who played a central role in restoring and maintaining this order and whose tenure as Austria's foreign minister became synonymous with domestic policies of press censorship, police surveillance, and systematic oppression throughout the German-speaking world.

Henry Kissinger, the most important architect of U.S. foreign policy during the Nixon administrations in the 1970s, maintained in his study of Metternich as a diplomat, *A World Restored: The Politics of Conservativism in a Revolutionary Age,* that neither peace, "conceived as the avoidance of wars," nor justice provides the basis of a stable international order but, rather, "legitimacy." Kissinger defined legitimacy as "the acceptance of the framework of the international order by all major powers . . . [which] does not make conflicts impossible, but it limits their scope," and he admired Metternich as one of the main architects of the "legitimate" European order established after the upheavals of the French Revolution. From Kissinger's foreign policy perspective, the essence of revolutionary power is that it "possesses the courage of its convictions" and is willing to "push its principles to their ultimate conclusion" in a manner that erodes the "legitimacy of the international order."[1] Armed with the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, revolutionary France and Napoleon shook the very foundations of the legitimacy of the old European order, and Metternich helped restore it, thereby making the nineteenth century a period in which conflicts were limited in scope.

An analogous diplomatic and historical lesson for Kissinger was that the "revolutionary foreign policy" of Nazi Germany—the revision of the Treaty of Versailles—was a direct result of the victorious powers' failure after World War I to establish an international order acceptable to all of the major powers. The defeat of Nazi Germany also established a completely new European order that had to be legitimized. The Soviet Union as a revolutionary superpower and the threat of thermonuclear extinction made the potential consequences of conflict in Europe so ominous that the maintenance of "legitimacy," a balance of power between the East and the West, was the preeminent goal of foreign policy, and this is exactly what Kissinger pursued as a student of Metternich: détente. Given the possibility of a conflict that could lead to what strategists call "mutually assured destruction"—the acronym of MAD is poignantly appropriate for describing the consequences of a full-scale nuclear conflict—Kissinger and almost all other leading diplomats and statesmen of the West saw their roles in Metternichian terms. The "legitimacy" of the European order established at Yalta in 1945 and reinforced during the decades of the Cold War appeared enduring because MADness was one of the possibilities inherent in any future attempts to change unilaterally the status quo.

Timothy Garton Ash, one of the most astute contemporary observers of Central Europe, has noted the affinities among the "peace and stability" established by the Vienna Congress in 1815, Metternich's or the "Vienna Europe," and the stable order established in 1945, the Cold War or "Yalta Europe." In his attempt to "find a year in European history comparable to 1989," he arrived at the precedent of 1848, the year a series of revolutions called the "springtime of nations" shook the dynastic order that Metternich's diplomacy had legitimized.[2]

Although Garton Ash expresses his reservations about brief comparisons (as any respectable historian is required to do) and does not underestimate the importance of economic and social factors as motors and motives of change, he emphasizes the importance of the role that intellectuals, ideas, and ideals played in the preparation and peaceful execution of the various national reform-revolutions of 1989. This point is significant because intellectuals and students also were the vanguard of the revolutions of 1848, which, given the bloody standards established by the French Revolution, were initiated relatively peacefully. The affinity between the principles of reform promoted by the revolutionaries of 1848—constitutional government, civil rights, the end of serfdom, liberalism, and nationalism—and the aspirations of the dissidents and intellectuals in the Communist states of Central Europe in the 1980s to create "civil societies" embodying the same precepts also is striking.

Although it is too early to tell whether or not the revolutions of 1989 will ultimately lead to more peaceful and prosperous democratic societies, they were a success insofar as they managed to dislodge the Communist regimes. At this point, however, the comparison with the revolutions of 1848 breaks down because they failed to topple the old order. Therefore, understanding the motives of the revolutionaries and the reasons for their failure is important. If the success of liberal democratic revolutions is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Western European political experience, their relative failure has been an essential attribute of most Central European ones. There were no Central European democracies before 1918, and of the many established following World War I, only Czechoslovakia managed to maintain a democracy throughout the interwar period.

The "Springtime of Nations": The Revolutions of 1848

Events in France provided the revolutionary spark for the various proverbial powder kegs of Europe in 1848. In Paris at the end of February, a classic example of royal crisis mismanagement—using firearms for crowd control—brought the masses into the streets, and the barricades went up. King Louis Philip was the first member of the old European order to go down, and after his abdication, moderate protagonists of political reform and radical adherents of social revolution with dissimilar visions of the traditions of 1789 in their heads began their struggle for domestic power in a new republican France. Disunity among the various promoters of change, programmatic radicalism, the agitation of the masses, and the violence that accompanied it gradually drove the moderate representatives of constitutional government into the arms of the reactionaries, and the revolution ran its course in four months. It ended in June with a bloodbath on the barricades of Paris and a Second French Republic that was much less social and democratic than the instigators of the revolution had envisioned in February.

The Parisian precedent inspired people across Europe. In Germany, for example, a series of uprisings organized by the middle class and students and supported by artisans, workers, and peasants led to major concessions in early March by the rulers of various states in the German Confederation—Baden, Württemberg, Bavaria, Darmstadt, Nassau, Kassel, and Hannover—without much bloodletting, by French standards. The subjects from these states of the old reactionary order wanted to be treated like citizens in a new constitutional one, and the demands they made were not revolutionary in the French sense of the word: constitutional monarchy based on some form of popular representation, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and of assembly, an extension of the right to vote, trial by jury, and arms for the "people" in the form of national or citizens' guards. In Vienna, for example, the first "revolutionary" act was the submission of a petition for change by students and members of the middle class. Imperial troops fired on the crowd, and the barricades went up. On March 13, Metternich resigned and fled to England, and the Austrian emperor, Ferdinand I, yielded to popular demands for reform, among them the right of his subjects *as* citizens to draft a new constitution. Five days later, King Frederick Wilhelm of Prussia conceded to comparable demands under similar circumstances.

The main issues that the revolutions of 1848 raised in Central Europe are interrelated: the revolution of 1848 in the German Confederation, Prussia, and the Habsburg Empire and the subsequent attempts to create a single German state; the Czech response to the idea of a unified German state and the "Austro-Slav" strategy for maintaining the Habsburg Empire; and the Hungarian struggle for national independence.

Although there also was an uprising in Posen, the Prussian partition of Poland, as well as revolts against Habsburg rule in northern Italy, I will not discuss these events here. The Poles were confronted with a different set of problems because of the partitions, and given the magnitude of their uprisings in 1830, 1846, and 1863, 1848 was a subordinate affair instigated by German liberalism and then squelched by German nationalism and Prussian troops. (Norman Davies called 1848 in Polish history the "springtime of other nations."[3]) Austrian Field Marshal Joseph Radetzky also smothered Italian national uprisings in the Habsburg's northern Italian provinces, but his victories were not enduring. The provinces that Radetzky held in 1848 were lost in wars with Italy, which was supported by France in 1859 and Prussia in 1866, and their acquisitions were milestones in the process of Italian unification.

Although there was a broad spectrum of political opinion in Germany, the majority of the German "revolutionaries" of 1848 were not advocates of radical democracy, but of liberal reform. They did not remotely aspire to create the type of turmoil and bloodshed associated with revolutionary France, and they frequently viewed the achievements of England—a constitutionally limited monarchy—with the greatest admiration. When the rulers of the various German states were challenged by the people, they lost their nerve and acquiesced to change, but unlike the historical precedent of Louis XVI after 1789, they did not lose control of their state bureaucracies and armies, nor did they lose their heads on the guillotine. The German revolutionaries of 1848 believed in peaceful reform and legal continuity, and they based their hopes on the somewhat naive assumption that if the people behaved civilly, then the rulers would, too. Above all, they wanted to draft their own constitutions and to participate in the establishment of one German state.

The fact that the term "constitutions" appears in the plural is important. Reformers in Prussia and Austria had their own conventions to work out constitutions for their respective states, and representatives from all forty member states of the German Confederation, including Prussia and Austria, had been invited to meet in St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt to work out a constitution for one German state. It also is important to note that the Austrian Constituent Assembly was multinational. It included representatives from the non-German-speaking nations of the Habsburg Empire outside the kingdom of Hungary: Czechs, Poles, Ruthenes, and Slovenes. The Austrian Constituent Assembly was German national, too, in that it dispatched German-Austrian delegates to Frankfurt.

Although it may appear far fetched, the most adequate formal historical parallel that can be drawn to illustrate the constitutional aspects of the German National Convention in Frankfurt is perhaps the situation of the colonies after America's Revolutionary War. The thirteen colonies had to work out individual state constitutions and to send delegates to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia to draft a federal constitution.

Although there was a wide spectrum of political opinion among the 600 delegates at the Frankfurt Assembly—centralists and federalists, monarchists and republicans—the National Convention intended to create one German state with one constitution: a new German Reich, which relied heavily on the old borders and confederative traditions of the old Reich, the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, as well as the idea of one modern national state for all Germans. During the initial planning sessions for the German National Assembly, an invitation was extended to the famous Czech historian, František Palacký, to represent the kingdom of Bohemia in Frankfurt, because it had been part of the Holy Roman Empire, but he declined, pointing out: "I am a Bohemian belonging to the Slav group of nations."[4]

Palacký's reply shows how difficult it would have been to use the old idea of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation to create a modern German national state because it would have had to incorporate the members of other nations—not only Czechs, but Dutch and Danes in the north, Poles in the east, Slovenes and Italians in the south. His statement also underlines the precarious position of the Habsburg Empire in the entire process of German unification. Approximately half the Habsburg realms had been part of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, but the rest—the kingdom of Hungary, the provinces of Galicia and Bukovina in southern Poland, and some holdings in northern Italy—had not. Moreover, if a modern German state were to include all Germans, it would have to extend as far as the Baltic provinces of imperial Russia as well as down through the central Danube Valley and into Transylvania.

The liberals at the National Convention in Frankfurt, however, were not interested in incorporating non-German territories into a German state, nor for that matter, were the Habsburgs interested in dismembering their empire for the sake of a unified German state. In the process of debating the future frontiers of Germany in Frankfurt, three terms came into vogue: *Anschluss* (literally, "to join"), *grossdeutsch* ("greater" German), and *kleindeutsch* ("small" or "lesser" German). To unify Austria with the rest of Germany was the *Anschluss* or "greater" German option.[5]

This idea was based on the assumption that the German-Austrians would be willing to abandon the Habsburgs' multinational empire (which in the summer of 1848 appeared to be deteriorating into its constituent parts) and that the Habsburg dynasty would assume a leading role in a German state.

The "little" German option would exclude Austria from a German state, which meant that Prussia, because of its size and strength, would assume a dominant position in the new Germany. German nationalists did not really know what to do with the polyglot Habsburg Empire. Needless to say, the Habsburgs were not interested in a deterioration scenario that would allow a greater German solution—German-Austrians in Germany and the rest of the empire gone—although there was some vain speculation about bringing all of Austria's non-German territories into some kind of a confederative German state that would ensure the Habsburgs' hegemony in Germany, not really a greater German state, but a greater Habsburg Empire.

Some representatives of the Slavic nations in the Habsburg Empire also expressed their interest in reforming it on the basis of confederative principles. In June 1848, František Palacký, the Czech historian who had rejected an invitation to the German National Convention in Frankfurt, organized a parallel "counterconference" for Slavs in Prague. Outstanding representatives of the Slavic national groups from the Habsburg Empire attended this international Slav congress, along with a few émigré Poles from the Russian partition, and they discussed the future of the Slavic peoples based on a democratic and federal transformation of the empire. As a Czech nationalist, historian, and student of Herder, Palacký was afraid that a unified greater German state would overwhelm its smaller Slavic neighbors, and so he opposed the greater German solution. But, as a liberal Western Slav, he feared czarist Russia and the imperialistic form of Pan-Slavism that it propagated, as well as the possibility of a "Russian universal monarchy." (Czechs historically have understood themselves as Western Europeans; consequently, their Eastern or Pan-slavist orientation has traditionally been weak, although a small group of Czech intellectuals flirted with the idea of czarist patronage as a means of liberating the Czechs from Habsburg-German dominion.)

According to Palacký, the only chance that the smaller nations living between Germans and Russians had was to consolidate and to confederate. Given the probability of the German threat and the magnitude of the Russian menace, the only viable alternative for Palacký was to reform the Austrian empire by turning it into a federation of semiautonomous and democratic national units held together by some form of central government and administration that would coordinate common concerns like foreign affairs, defense, finance, and trade. At that point in his career, Palacký was a representative of a philosophy called "Austro-Slavism," and his most frequently quoted observation was

> that the South-East of Europe bordering the Russian Empire is inhabited by many nations . . . all of whose ethnic origins, language, history, and traditions vary widely and who, individually, are too weak to resist forever their mighty neighbor in the East; this they can do only if they are united by a strong, single hand. . . . Indeed, had Imperial Austria not existed already for so long, it would—in the interests of Europe, of humanity itself—be essential to create it.[6]

Although the Habsburgs' subsequent inability to solve the nationalities problem in their multinational empire dissapointed Palacký, the revolutionary atmosphere of 1848 made the idea of a confederation of smaller nations appear to be a viable alternative. Austro-Slavism justified the Habsburgs' multinational empire in the age of nationalism, but as A.J.P. Taylor pointed out, "To provide a central Europe neither German nor Russian was the last, and least genuine, of the Habsburg 'missions.'"[7] Palacký eventually became so disillusioned with the Habsburgs' inability to turn their multinational dynastic empire into a more democratic confederation of national states that he converted to Pan-Slavism later in is life and placed his hopes in a liberalization of czarist Russia.

Nevertheless, Palacký played an influential role in those traditions defining Central Europe in terms of smaller nations whose existence has historically been jeopardized by German and Russian imperialism. This narrow definition of Central Europe therefore excludes "imperialists"—Russians, Germans, and Austrians—from being Central Europeans.

It would not be advisable to turn Palacký into some kind of visionary, but the collapse of the Habsburg Empire after World War I created a situation in which both of Palacký's worst-case scenarios came true: first a German Central Europe under Hitler and then a Russian one under Stalin. Variations on the idea of a confederation of smaller Central European nations and states were part of many of the schemes for reforming the Habsburg Empire into a "United States of Central Europe" before World War I; they were discussed by East Central European politicians and Allied strategic planning staffs during World War II; and they enjoyed a brief renaissance in Central Europe after 1989.

The first international congress of Slavs was theoretically and historically important but politically impotent. Minor clashes between Czech nationalists and Austrian imperial troops in the streets of Prague provided the commander of imperial forces, Prince Alfred Windischgrätz, with the pretext he needed to dissolve the congress by force. The shelling of Prague showed that the representatives of the old order still had the army at their disposal and that they were prepared to use it. Meanwhile, the National Convention in Frankfurt drew up a constitution for a vaguely defined but nonetheless unified Germany, and reformers in Vienna and Berlin worked on turning dynastic monarchies into constitutional ones. In theory, Frankfurt was the most important scene of events because the National Convention had been recognized as a supreme body whose legislation was to be applied to all German states. In practice, however, the most important political decisions were made in Vienna and Berlin because the Habsburgs and the Hohenzollerns were the revolution's most formidable opponents.

In the summer of 1848, the city of Vienna gradually fell under the control of radical democratic elements. They demanded greater political and social reform, and the revolutionary apparition of 1789 displaced the moderate visions of legal reform and continuity that most of the 1848 liberals continued to entertain. The Habsburg court fled the city, and in October imperial troops under the command of Prince Windischgrätz, the "victor of Prague," marched on Vienna and, despite the valiant attempts of the revolutionary elements to defend it, took the city by force. The advisers of Austria's Emperor Ferdinand, a dull-witted ruler at best, permitted the moderate reformers and would-be parliamentarians of the Constituent Assembly, who also were shocked by the violence of the masses and the imperial troops, to withdraw to a provincial site in Moravia to continue their work on a constitution. This tactical ploy gave the imperial advisers time to prepare to end the revolutionary interlude.

Then Emperor Ferdinand abdicated in order to give young blood an opportunity to rule. In December 1848, his nephew, the eighteen-year-old Francis Joseph I, assumed the imperial throne, a position he filled conscientiously if unimaginatively for the next sixty-eight years. Shortly after coming to power, Francis Joseph ended constitutional experimentation, despite his initial promises to allow it, and he had Austria's Constituent Assembly in the provinces dispersed by force. Then the emperor issued by decree a new imperial constitution that had been hastily prepared by his advisers. Francis Joseph thus gave the people a constitution, but neither one they designed for themselves nor one based on the sovereignty of the people, and even this constitution he retracted shortly after it was decreed. Neoabsolutism became the basis of the "new" order that violated the "historical rights" of the constituent parts of the empire in an attempt to create a modern centralized state.

The corresponding victory of the old order in Prussia followed the same pattern, although it was faster and less bloody. The transfer of the constitutional convention to the provinces, the proclamation of martial law, and the declaration of a new Prussian constitution hastily drawn up by the king's ministers all took place within a month, between the beginning of November and the beginning of December 1848. From the perspective of the Hohenzollerns and the Habsburgs, two-thirds of the Germany's revolutionary problem had been solved, and the remaining one-third was the National Convention in Frankfurt, which clung to the vision of a constitutionally unified German monarchy, an idea scuttled by machinations of the restored orders in Vienna and Berlin. Heroic but futile attempts to salvage the accomplishments of the revolution by organizing armed resistance ended with bloody victories of the Prussian army in the summer of 1849. The vision of a unified German constitutional state evaporated and the political status quo ante, the forty states of the German Confederation, was reestablished. However, the Revolution of 1848 made perfectly clear to contemporaries the problems of German unification, a "little" or a "greater" Germany, and the precarious position of imperial Austria as a German yet multinational state. Nothing illustrated this point better than the Hungarian Revolution of 1848/1849.

The kingdom of Hungary enjoyed a privileged status among the Habsburgs' conglomeration of lands because as kings of Hungary the Habsburgs continued to observe certain traditions. For example, the Hungarian Diet, the representative body of the nobility or the "Hungarian nation," ceremoniously crowned the Habsburgs as kings, and it retained a number of legislative powers. The concessions that Emperor Ferdinand made to his subjects when the Revolution of 1848 broke out in March in Vienna had immediate consequences for Hungary which was pregnant with the same spirit of dissatisfaction with imperial rule and desire for liberal reform.

Furthermore, age-old Hungarian aspirations for greater independence coalesced with nineteenth-century liberalism and nationalism. A combination of imperial panic and Hungarian initiatives led to the recognition in mid-March of the Hungarian Diet as an autonomous legislative body. Less than one month later, when Emperor Ferdinand sanctioned the Diet's first wave of reform legislation (including the final abolition of serfdom, an achievement of the revolutions of 1848 throughout Central Europe), he effectively recognized Hungary as a separate state. The Habsburg Empire was thus split in two. As emperor of Austria, Ferdinand had to contend with the representatives of constitutional reform in Vienna, and as king of Hungary, he had to deal with the liberal and national aspirations of the Hungarian Diet. Between the intentions of those German nationalist Austrians who wanted to abandon the Habsburgs' multinational empire for the sake of a greater German state and the designs of Hungarian liberals and nationalists who wanted increasing amounts of independence, the prospects for the dynasty were not promising.

The dynamics of the Hungarian revolution were complicated.[8] Hungarian liberals, who recognized that some type of accommodating relationship with the Habsburg dynasty was necessary, were initially responsible for governing Hungary, and they were confronted with two great domestic problems, insubordination and insurrection. First, Croat nationalists from the kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia, a subordinate state that had been incorporated into the kingdom of Hungary at the beginning of the twelfth century, started making demands for more independence, arguing that they wanted for Croatia from Hungary what Hungary had achieved for itself in Vienna, and the Hungarian revolution produced one great Croat national hero: Josip Jelačić.

A rebel by Hungarian standards, Jelačić was the imperially appointed governor of Croatia, who first sought to assert the "historic rights" of Croatia against Hungary and then allied himself with the Habsburg imperial forces in their subsequent invasion of the Hungary. (Croat nationalism has historically been directed against the nation's immediate political overlords. In the nineteenth century, it was more anti-Hungarian than anti-Habsburg, and in the twentieth century it became anti-Serb.[9] Analogously, Slovak nationalism was anti-Hungarian in the nineteenth century before it became anti-Czech in the twentieth.) Second, Hungary's own national minorities—Germans, Slovaks, Ruthenes, Romanians, and Serbs—became increasingly restive, and in the ethnic and religious mosaic of southern Hungary, Hungarian and Serbian nationalists managed to inspire people who had lived peacefully together for centuries to start massacring one another.

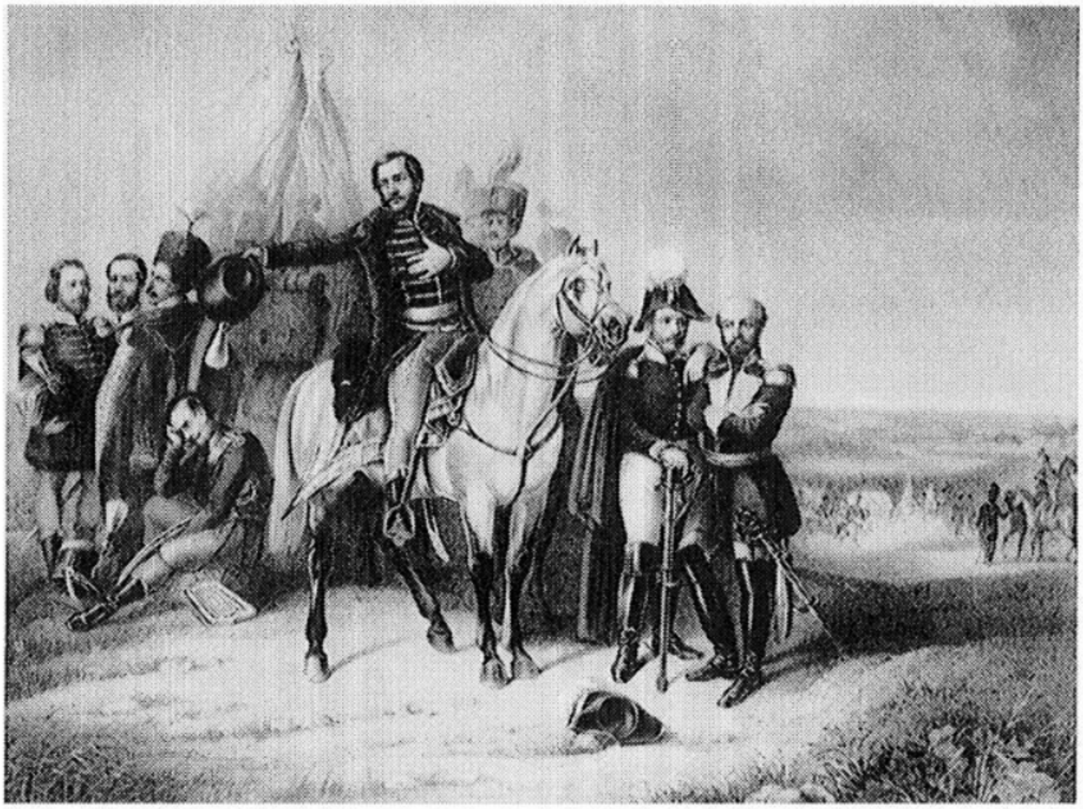
As the relationship between Vienna and Hungary deteriorated during 1848, Louis Kossuth, a radical democrat and protagonist of Hungarian independence, emerged as the leader of national resistance. After having militarily settled matters with the revolutionaries and reformers in the Austrian half of the empire, the Habsburgs dispatched the imperial armies that had been successful in reinstating the old order in Italy, Bohemia, and Vienna to deal with the Hungarians at the beginning of 1849. However, a hastily organized Hungarian "revolutionary army" initially held its own against the imperial forces, and in April 1849, the Hungarian Diet revoked the crown from the Habsburgs, proclaimed independence, and appointed Kossuth as Hungary's governor-president.

Kossuth, the greatest national hero that the Hungarian revolution of 1848/1849 produced, was a passionate patriot and inspiring leader. But the time for a compromise with the Habsburgs had long passed, and Hungary's prospects for success were illusory. The imperial court in Vienna turned to czarist Russia for assistance, and the combined operations of the Austrian and Russian imperial armies in the summer of 1849 brought the Hungarian revolution to a quick and bloody end. Kossuth fled the country to agitate for Hungarian independence as an émigré until his death. He never abandoned the notion of breaking completely with the Habsburgs. Later in his life, he considered the idea of a confederation of states along the Danube—Hungary, Romania, Serbia, and Bulgaria—that would ensure Hungarian independence and prevent German-Habsburg or Russian-czarist encroachment on the Balkans.

Along with their revolution, the Hungarians lost all their old historical privileges, but their sacrifices did pay off in the long run. After several futile attempts at centralization, the Habsburgs sought a compromise with the Magyars, the most influential non-German nation in their multinational empire, and this led to the reestablishment of the kingdom of Hungary with considerable autonomy as well as the reorganization in 1867 of the Austrian empire as the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. In other words, the Hungarians lost the revolution of 1848/1849, but they eventually won the compromise of achieving a special status within the empire as a nation that enjoyed political parity with the German-Austrians.

This national experience was repeated under much different circumstances in the twentieth century. The Hungarian revolution of 1956 also was a brief and bloody struggle for national independence that ended with a Russian military intervention, but the sacrifices were not in vain. Thereafter, Hungary enjoyed an exceptional status within the Soviet empire that allowed Hungarian Communists to exercise a certain amount of liberalism and to experiment with domestic reform in a way not tolerated elsewhere in the Soviet bloc.

The Hungarian historian Iván Berend observed in the mid-1980s that one of the primary differences between the histories of Hungary and Poland was that the Hungarians had lost their revolutions (in 1848/1849 and 1956) but had "won" the compromises with the victors (the Austrians in 1867 and the Soviets after 1956). The Poles, however, lost their revolutions (in 1830, 1846, and 1863 and the "Solidarity Revolution" of 1980/1981) and lost the compromises as well, insofar as the revolts produced either greater repres-



"Farewell to the Fatherland": Louis Kossuth (mounted), flanked by the leaders of the Hungarian Revolutionary Army, emigrated after the failure of the Hungarian Revolution in 1849. (Austrian National Library, Picture Archive)

sion or, in the short term at least, negligible results. (This comparison ceased to be valid in 1989 when the Polish opposition spearheaded by Solidarity literally forced the Jaruzelski government to the "round table" negotiations marking the beginning of the end for the Communist regime.)

After 1848, the next year of revolutions in Central Europe was a long time in coming; 1918 was not an expression of the principles of liberalism as 1848 was but the result of the empires' exhaustion at the end of World War I. According to A.J.P. Taylor, in 1848 "German history reached its turning-point and failed to turn."[10] The implication (or insinuation) here is that if German history had turned at this point in the nineteenth century and Germany had become a more liberal and democratic state or, analogously, if Austria had succeeded in transforming itself into a more democratic federation of nations, Europe perhaps could have been spared two world wars in the twentieth century as well as the experience of National Socialism and Communism.

Although the neoabsolutistic dynasties in Prussia and Austria gradually made considerable concessions to the spirit of liberalism in last third of the nineteenth century, the "exceptional path" (*Sonderweg*) of German history—characterized by the presence of a developing industrial economy and modern capitalistic society; the relative absence of liberal democratic institutions and values in public life; and the persistence of traditional national elites, autocratic political structures, and authoritarian attitudes—began with the failure of the revolution of 1848. If the rise of a modern capitalistic and industrial economy unleashes social forces that promote democratization, as many historians assume, then German history in the nineteenth century was an exception. That is, Germany produced a modern economy and society without developing correspondingly modern liberal democratic attitudes and institutions.

The Prussian Unification of Germany, 1866–1871

The processes of Italian and German national unification had a number of parallels. They were promoted by individual states: Piedmont-Sardinia in Italy and Prussia in Germany. Ministers with an exceptional amount of diplomatic cunning and skill masterminded these operations: Camillo Cavour for Piedmont-Sardinia and Otto von Bismarck for Prussia. In each case, the first phase of national unification forced the Habsburgs out of the one of their traditional spheres of interest: for Piedmont-Sardinia, northern Italy, which the Habsburgs had ruled since the early eighteenth century, and for Prussia, Germany, where the Habsburgs had played a leading role since the Middle Ages.

Piedmont-Sardinia relied on the *assistance* of other major European powers to achieve Italian national unification. France supported Piedmont-Sardinia in a war against the Habsburg Empire in 1859 which led to the acquisition of the northern Italian provinces of Lombardy, Tuscany, Modena, and Parma, and a Piedmontese alliance with Prussia in 1866 resulted in the Habsburgs' forfeiture of Venice. Conversely, Prussia relied on the *inactivity* of other major European powers to achieve its goal, the establishment of Prussian hegemony in Germany and the unification of Germany into one Prussian-dominated state. In 1866, Prussia trounced the Habsburg Empire in a brief war and then booted the venerable dynasty out of the realm of German politics. The fruit of the Prussian victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/1871 was a unified German imperial state with a Hohenzollern emperor. Neither England nor Russia came to the aid of Austria in 1866 or France in 1870/1871. Prussia's rise to the status of a major European power was nothing less than meteoric. The unification of Germany did not take centuries or even decades; it was accomplished in a few years by Bismarck's consummate foreign policy and realpolitik.

If one is prepared to use "greatness" as merely a descriptive term for influencing the course of events, the "great German" politicians cited most often are Frederick II of Prussia (1740–1786), Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898), and Adolf Hitler (1889–1945). (Helmut Kohl, the "unification chancellor" of the Federal Republic of Germany, will inevitably will be included in this list sometime in the future; death is usually a prerequisite for such an honor.) Frederick the Great was the enlightened absolutist responsible for modernizing Prussia and laying the foundations for its future expansion; Bismarck, the Prussian minister responsible for unifying Germany, was the diplomatic founding father of the Second German Empire; and Hitler, the inaugurator of the Third Reich, "restored" the German empire in 1933.