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Europe and the Nation-State

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Despite past and present affirmations of the "end of ideology", we are living in a period deeply charged with ideology, whether proclaimed with genuine faith or far less altruistic motives of market speculation. One of the side-effects of this is a tendency towards historically superficial and above all short-term explanations of the current crises, whose inadequacy is only too apparent. Little more than a year ago - the year of the bicentenary of the French revolution and the collapse of the communist regimes of eastern Europe - the historical explanations of what was happening were permeated with ideological expectations of a brave new world. Today, nationalism is re-emerging in the xenophobic forms of the half century between the 1880's and the 1930's, recession is pricking the balloon of complacent certainty of the spokesmen of the western market economy as a universal panacea, war is displaying the fragility of the independent equilibrium of international relations. Discussion of the relationship between Europe and the nation-state has shown itself to be as superficial and ahistorical.

At moments of rapid political and social change, historians - like other social scientists - are less confident about the assumptions on which they have based their interpretations and look afresh at their theoretical premises. Given the acceleration of the pace of change over the past fifty years, historians of my generation have been forced or privileged (the choice of term depending on personal humours and inclinations) to stand back and reflect critically on what they do, more frequently and more continuously than their predecessors over the past two centuries, who for the most part derived a greater self-confidence from the values of the society and age in which they lived and through which they interpreted the past.

Historians have always enjoyed a privileged position because their subject matter is regarded by the general public as more accessible and understandable than that of their social science colleagues. History, after all, is close to story-telling - and indeed is regarded by many among the general public, both ordinary folk and politicians, as possessing as tenuous a tie as literature to reality and matters of practical relevance. History, because of its very accessibility to one and all, makes the historian particularly vulnerable. He or she can take refuge (like his or her social science colleagues and indeed all the professions) in the opacity of a specifically developed technical jargon that is guaranteed to keep the uninitiated at arm's length. But in so doing, he not only loses that privileged relationship with his audience. Far worse, he voluntarily renounces his pedagogical role, his deep though often unexpressed belief in the explanatory (although not the predictive) function of history. He abandons the field to the amateurs and worse, that motley crowd of superficial and racy narrators, in whose company he feels as uncomfortable and unfriendly as did the emerging profession of medical doctors in the 18th century towards the nature-healers whom they described uncharitably as "charlatans".

The result is what some have begun to call a "crisis of history"(1). The phenomenon is not a new one, and its very recurrence at moments of dramatic change merits serious reflection by historians about the relationship between what they do and their reading public, given the ambivalence of the function of history in society. Nowadays, whatever their desire to instruct and not merely to entertain, historians cannot but question the remoteness of their specialised production from a socially highly differentiated but expanding reading public. The potential of such a market in this post-modern, quintessentially consumer society has been more ably assessed by those whom historians dismiss as popularisers, who display a greater sense of the attraction of the simple and

At first sight, the specificity of Europe may seem so obvious as not to merit further discussion. Whether in literary or iconographic form, from the narrators of ancient Greece or the cartographers of the middle ages and early modern period, "Europe" - as we call it - is represented at the centre of an expanding world. It is an image that continued, unchallenged, until the cataclysm of the second world war definitively revealed Europe's relative weakness. Although Chinese cartography offers a very different representation of the world, although Greek culture may have owed much to Phoenician and Egyptian colonisation, the Eurocentric view of the universe has remained unchallenged. Indeed, as Martin Bernal has recently argued, it was the very sense of superiority of Europe that led to the expunging from the historical record of any suggestion of the Afroasian origins of ancient Greece (2).

Our self-image of Europe is of course relatively recent, certainly not predating the high middle ages. When we write of the Greeks and Romans as the source of European civilisation, we appropriate to such an idea a geographical dimension that could not have been conceivable to any Greek or Roman. The first historically and politically significant assertion of the very existence of Europe is Charlemagne's claim in A.D. 800 to be head of a Holy Roman Empire, whose centre was to be Aachen in succession to Rome. But where an ideal continuity exists, from ancient Greece and Rome to very recent times, is the definition of this civilisation in terms of its difference from, and superiority over, the 'barbarians' outside its frontiers, whether the Persians dismissed by Aristotle, the tribes that overran the Roman empire, the Arabs and Ottomans, or, later, the Russians (3). In anthropological terms, this structural dependence of the concept of Europe on the existence of the 'other' needs no explanation. Less clear (to the point of raising at least flickers of doubt among some Enlightenment writers) was the profound difference in response

readable narration of the lives and political actions of the great, and in this can claim a direct descent from Herodotus, the ancestor of all historians.

This is not the time or place for developing such reflections. But it may serve the purpose of highlighting the need for professional historians to respond deliberately to the challenges presented to their interpretive grids by the dramatic changes of the past few years. For if they do not, the misuse of history - which has always existed because of the particular suitability of the subject for justificatory, triumphalistic or purely declamatory purposes - may in present circumstances even, indirectly, result in dangerous practical consequences. It is incumbent upon those of us who are involved at the cutting edge of historical research to attempt to suggest deeper and more plausible interpretations, based on more detached and longer-term considerations of the very ambiguities of the particular forms of historical development which have shaped and conditioned current crises. Such an agenda is far beyond the possibilities of one lecture. But in a research and postgraduate school like the EUI, characterised by its cross-national composition as a scholarly community and its constant sensibility towards the problematic interconnections between national and European identities, and for an Englishman - given the British habit of excluding themselves from what they call "Europe" -,it seems particularly appropriate at the present time to choose as the theme of the Jean Monnet lecture the subject of Europe and the nation-state.

It is in order, I hope, in an Institute like ours for an Englishman to adopt the French structure of an academic lecture. My talk will be divided into three parts, the first dedicated to Europe, the second to the nation-state, with some considerations in the final part on the implications today of the historical relationship between the two.

to the "barbarians" between the superior indifference of the Chinese and the expansive aggressivity of Europeans.

What perhaps merits a comment is how, in the longue durée, such a self-definition has influenced the attribution of the geographical confines of European civilisation. What was regarded as the area of European culture by philosophers and writers from the Renaissance, but especially from the Enlightenment, not only periodically shifted its frontiers, but was a misfit in terms of our modern geographic definition of Europe : the eastern Mediterranean of ancient Greece included Asia Minor but excluded Europe north of the Alps, Roman civilisation incorporated north Africa, the identification of Christianity with Europe implied a retraction of the south-eastern frontier with the fall of Byzantium and a successive geographic expansion northwards culminating in the "third Rome" of Muscovy. Perhaps it is the millenial identification of Europe with empire and christianity that explains why the historiography of the concept of Europe is predominantly concerned with the ancient and medieval world (4). What is clear is that the search for the cultural origins of Europe, like the discussions that it has generated, bear little relationship - except in rhetorical and chauvinistic terms - to our modern and contemporary understanding of Europe.

It is through the Enlightenment writers that Europe has acquired the particular connotations which have been passed down, with remarkably little modification, through the generations to the present day. It is difficult to argue, it seems to me, in terms of an uninterrupted historical continuity of the concept of Europe, from Greek and Roman times through to the past two centuries, except as a geographical area (and even then, as I have noted, with changing frontiers). For the idea of Europe as a cultural tradition stretching over the centuries is historically highly ambiguous, open to a multiple choice of often contradictory versions (5), of which the most influential was that spelt out

by Voltaire, Condorcet and Gibbon and elevated into a philosophy of history by Hegel. The idea of Europe, as we understand it today, is a concept constructed in the Enlightenment, consolidated in the romantic era and diffused through Europe's economic expansion and colonisation across the world in the nineteenth century. Like the idea of the nation-state, the European tradition is a cultural invention.

The success of this tradition in establishing itself as a historical reality demands an analysis of its constitutive parts. Three elements are central to the representation of the superiority of Europe over the rest of the world, elements which achieved the fullness of their form in the century between Montesquieu's Esprit des lois and the revolutions of 1848.

The first, and most widely recognised element is what Norberto Bobbio has called the "European ideology" (6). It is the affirmation that, in contrast to the despotism merited by more servile peoples, liberty has always characterised the European tradition of government. Compared to 'other' peoples, whether the subjects of the Asiatic despots or the indigenous conquered populations of north and south America, European leadership was intrinsically related to the liberty of its governance. Liberty could embrace a variety of forms of government, from republic to temperate monarchy. What was constant, at least from the sixteenth cenh century, from Machiavelli to Bodin, from Montesquieu to Hegel, with glances back to the Greek city-state, was the attribution of the superiority of European states to the liberty incorporated in their administration of the res publica, which stood in opposition to the arbitrary disposal of power typical of despotism, whether oriental or not. The passage was short from this more formally institutional definition of the specificity of the European state to the idea of Europe as the carrier of civilisation and progress. If scientific progress was conclusive proof of Europe's superiority for Condorcet, and the Weltgeist for Hegel, increasingly Europe's

civilisation and its mission were identified with the competitive entrepreneurship of economic individualism. For Carlo Cattaneo, writing in the 1840's, the primacy of Europe - in contrast to the static uniformity of eastern civilisations - was to be found in the dynamic conflict and diversity that had generated the progress of commerce and industry and ensured the passage from feudal barbarism to incivilimento (7). Cattaneo's European mission, now also bedecked in the moral tones of Christian sectarianism, was soon to become universally recognisable in the form of the European impnineteenthlism of the late nineteenth century.

The second trait which is pointed to as explanation of Europe's distinctiveness is its state system. The presence in a geographically limited area of the world of a substantial number of relatively small and independent states, no one of which was capable of imposing its rule over the others, was remarked on as early as Montaigne, once again to mark the contrast with the empires attributed to oriental despotism. The institutional particularity of such a state system, which was consolidated in the latter part of the seventeenth century, has often been equated with the concept of Europe by scholars of international relations, and utilised even by economic historians as a partial explanation of why Europe developed economically before the other regions of the world (8). By the late eighteenth century, and above all following on the Napoleonic experience, in the nineteenth century theorisation of the relative balance of power among the states on the European landmass led to the development of negotiated concerted decisions as a regulatory mode of international relations, summed up in the expression, the "Concert of Europe". Such a system, upheld by common understanding among the mutually suspicious and often hostile European states, was imposed by them on their weaker neighbours. Perhaps the most striking example was that of the Ottoman empire, whose Sultan, absolute ruler over territories whose peoples were conceived of in terms of religions and the social hierarchy of the

family, was obliged to accept the constitutional form of a European sovereign state, thus legitimating the subsequent interventions of the European powers (9). Even if the concert system was dented by the growing tendency of the great powers to retain their freedom of action, and was to collapse with the World Wars, it has remained an element peculiar to the image of Europe, at most reproduced in other parts of the world through the legacies of European imperialism.

The third characteristic of the European tradition can be located chronologically with greater precision. I am referring to the cult of administrative integration by the state. Intrinsic to the development of the absolutist state, raised to the level of a science in the eighteenth century German Kameralwissenschaft, it was through the Napoleonic attempt to integrate Europe on the model of France that the administrative state acquired its cultural charisma as a modernising force (10). Whether directly, through the experience of French rule, or indirectly, even in hostile states like Prussia, out of fear or envy of the efficacy of the French example, the legacy of the Napoleonic years was to impose a particular imprint on the practices and ideology of the nineteenth-century nation states of Europe, with the exception of England. Bureaucratic dedication and administrative centralisation underpinned the leading role attributed to the state in its relations with each national society. Above all, there can be few more lasting examples of cultural exchange than the transference to the national level of Napoleon's deliberate depreciation by uniformising administrative fiats of the historical, political, cultural, social, intellectual, regional and local heterogeneity of Europe as a whole. Nation-building, as applied to the European nation-states of the past 150 years, in the eyes at least of their political leaders, was identified only too easily with hostility to pre-existing regional, religious, or cultural identities and loyalties, which were regarded as threats to national identity, and hence to be disadvantaged by

uniformising measures inhibitive of 'other' languages, cults or traditions in the illusory expectation of attaining a monopoly of national loyalty.

The superiority of its civilisation, the peculiarity of its state system, the modernity of its administrative mode of integrating the nation-state : such are the three constitutive elements of the idea of Europe, as it has been represented and developed since the Enlightenment. Around them developed a process of civilisation recognisable by Europeans and non-Europeans alike from the later eighteenth century to the first world war : European civilisation was understood as a cluster of social phenomena, such as forms of sociability, customs and mores, even the substitution of such crude use of institutionalised violence as public execution and torture by more symbolic means, all of which, in one way or another, were closely related to the state.

It is time to turn to our second theme - the nation-state.

The concept of the nation-state, which is conventionally attributed to the French Revolution, is understood in two different senses. On the one hand, the nation-state is seen as a state in which the people are the source of legitimacy, in contrast to the absolutism of the rulers of the ancien regime states; at the same time, the sovereignty of the state and the autonomy of its actions in international relations is regarded as reinforced by the legitimation that the state derives from its identification with the people, and which enables it to demand even the sacrifice of life in the name of a higher abstract value.

To date the nation-state to the French Revolution is not to deny the existence of patriotism, a quality of supreme loyalty to place or people that stands high among the virtues from the earliest chronicles (such as the Old Testament Jews or Greeks); "pro patria mori" is a well-established tradition in medieval Europe, as Kantorowicz has outlined with great sublety (11). Similarly, it is easy to point to the examples

of states long before the Revolution where, in particular circumstances, usually of crisis and threat, the political, administrative or religious authorities could obtain the support of what we might approximate to the national community : for example, late medieval Portugal in its reconquista, Elizabethan England at the moment of the Armada, or the Dutch as they acquired a sense of nationality through their prolonged war of independence against Spain.

But, as historians of early modern Europe have clarified, it is all too clear that such ties between the state and its inhabitants were exceptional, even in major states like Spain, and that where they existed, they were located exclusively among the 'political nation', that is the élites (and, sometimes, their immediate clients and dependents). Primary loyalties were located elsewhere, at a far more local level than state or king - in family and kin, in village, town, or region. What has long been well known to anthropologists has also become increasingly clear to historians, namely that 'national'loyalty was not exclusive of other loyalties - even during the French Revolution - as identity and loyalty can operate contemporaneously at different levels and according to the situation, with different emphasis. Europe's past has been characterised by the heterogeneity of its societies at all levels. Such heterogeneity is evidence, on the one hand, of the unequal process of formation of states over the centuries, in which only a few of the hundreds of states that existed in medieval and early modern times evolved into larger and stronger units. On the other hand, heterogeneity describes the social and cultural practices, the forms of communications and exchanges, the networks of public and private powers, of relations of family and religion, of friendships and enmities, of social differences and relations with which authorities were obliged to transact as they extended their sovereignty over a territory. It is this which explains why the nation-state and nationalism, as we

understand them, are only recent phenomena of the nineteenth century.

Nationalism used to be seen as something that transcended history like a demiurge, permanent, even God-given as a fundamental instinct. In such interpretations the assumption was made that the nation was implicitly accepted as an ideal superior to other loyalties and identities, and hence that the achievement of national independence and unity was an "inevitable" development in the path of history. For nationalist historians, the nation had always existed, and the national struggle occurred whenever the "people" (however it was defined) became conscious of its identity.

This is not the place, nor the time, to enter into even a summary discussion of such nationalist historiography, which has marked our way of understanding the present so deeply - and so tragically - by its distorted and forced view of our national past. It is a historiography ex parte, which only too frequently was conveyed officially through school textbooks and at public ceremonies as if it were not only a consensual, but an actively participatory view. The peak period of such historiography coincided with that of the most exacerbated form of nationalism in Europe - from about 1870 to 1945 - when it was imposed as an instrument to nurture national identity and patriotism, whether in the new nation-states, like Italy or Germany, or the long established ones, like Britain and France. The social transformations of late nineteenth century states, with the rapid spread of literacy and political participation, as well as the rise in tension between states, offered new opportunities for such unilaterally nationalist historiography, at the same time as it rendered it imperative.

Three aspects of the history of nationalism merit attention.

First, the historiography of nationalism over the past 20-30 years has clarified beyond reasonable doubt how nationalism was not innate to the people of a given territory or race, but

was deliberately constructed, on the basis of language and a remote, often mythical historical past, all identified with popular practices seen as proof of an uninterrupted continuity, through prolonged periods of obscurity and/or so-called 'foreign' oppression. The invention of national tradition by intellectual élites was based on its rediscovery of identity incorporated in simple-and hence 'purer'- people (12). The cultural foundations of nationalism were based on the construction and standardisation of a language out of one of the various vernacular dialects and elements selected from contemporary popular culture. The sources of such an idea, of course, are not difficult to trace - from Herder's identification of Volk and language to Hegel's spirit of a people; from the late eighteenth century anthropologists' search for evidence of earlier ages of mankind to the nineteenth century romantic cult of the primitive as pure. What is common to this invention of nationalism, repeated and imitated across southern, central and eastern Europe, was the necessity of the 'other' against which to identify the national self, of the 'foreigner' whose presence provided the symbolic catalyst for the discovery of a national identity. The passage from cultural nationalism to its political expression of organisation, mobilisation and (usually armed) struggle was only possible through the identification of the 'other', hostile to the national 'self'.

Secondly, precisely this necessity of an 'enemy' explains the apparent contradiction, always noted by historians, between the 'liberating' nationalism of the earlier nineteenth century (to 1848, even to the unification of Italy and Germany) and the later aggressive, even xenophobic and antisemitic nationalism since the end of the nineteenth century. Such a change in climate of course exists - it is not an irrational Zeitgeist, but historically explicable, as it was intimately related to transformations both internal to existing states and in relations between states. But the mechanism was the same in both the earlier and the later

periods, i.e. the affirmation of one's own national identity, whether against minorities seen as a threat to the integrity of the nation-state; or as a defensive mechanism on the part of (at least some) of such minorities in order to strengthen their own bonds of identity - above all through insistence on language as an expression of culture - against the dangers of assimilation or repression.

In two respects, at least, there is a strong continuity in the forms and modes of nationalism that characterised Europe through the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century. On the one hand, as already mentioned, the legacy of administrative modernisation bequeathed by the Napoleonic attempt to integrate Europe was accepted by the ruling élites, both liberal and conservative, and applied within the confines of the nation-state. Administrative centralisation and a powerful bureaucracy were identified as indispensable elements to strengthen the nation-state, particularly the new ones, whose insistence on national loyalty increasingly turned into intolerance of regional or ethnic difference. Without the administrative force of the state, there could have been no question of putting into practice the national linguistically uniform educational systems that underpinned the policies of Magyarisation or Russification - but equally those of France, Britain or Italy. On the other hand, the very model of the nation-state, which derived from western Europe, where the state existed long before the nation, became mandatory for all aspiring national movements. In a world of nation-states, as John Breuilly has noted (13), it was inevitable that those who spoke on behalf of what they claimed were oppressed nations - whether in eastern Europe or in the decrepit Ottoman empire - should have envisaged independence in the image of the existing nation-state not just in terms of national sovereignty, but with little tolerance towards their own minorities.

The nationalism that characterised the political life of eastern and south-eastern Europe from the late nineteenth

century was different because its leaders needed to invent a nation as the basis for a state, whereas in western Europe the state had long preceded the nation. The Poles could claim their recent historic existence as a state, the Bohemian Czechs could base their national identity on their social homogeneity and economic integration, as much as on their religion. But the continuous movements of population in this vast swathe of eastern and south-eastern Europe, that accompanied the shifts in frontiers consequential on secular religious and political struggles and colonisation, made a dangerous nonsense of all attempts to obtain the identification of ethnic and territorial claims through self-determination.

What was different in nationalism from the 1890's was its social composition. In the early nineteenth century nationalist movements were composed of small groups drawn from intellectuals, the professional classes, businessmen and landed gentry, with extensions among the urban skilled artisans. By the late nineteenth century, the social tensions, fissures, and class antagonisms that resulted from the pressures of technological developments, the expanding penetration of the capitalist market, urbanisation and the rapid extension of communications and education, led to the emergence of semi-educated, status-conscious, and easily resentful petty bourgeois and white collar workers, who were to prove a receptive public for virulent nationalism. It was this nationalism that was to heighten the tensions that led to the first world war, to provide a fertile terrain for authoritarian and fascist ideologies and regimes, and now (if I may be permitted an unfashionable observation) to reemerge after the prolonged and very serious attempts of many of the communist regimes to defuse ethnic hatreds.

The third aspect that emerges from the study of European nation-states is the very subordination of the concept of Europe during the period when European power was at its height. In a century of vociferous nationalism, the

representation of Europe was essentially of two kinds: either as synonymous with the affirmation of the political and economic power of the leading European nation-states across the world; or as a form of rhetoric, to be deployed against whatever was seen as the threat of 'others'. The threat could be outside Europe in the shape of the growing power of rival states, expressed in the rhetoric of the 'yellow peril' (transferred from China to Japan) or of the anti-Americanism that left so deep a mark on the intellectuals between the interwar years and after 1945. But we should recall how the threat could also be internal to Europe, as in the reluctance of the leaders of achieved nationalisms to recognise the droit de cité of others, whether through the discriminatory distinction between 'historic' and other nations of a Mazzini, or in the harsh terms of the Realpolitik of a Bismark, who dismissed the claims of the nationalists of the Austro-Hungarian empire with the words that "New creations in this territory could only be such as bear a permanently revolutionary character" (14). It is perhaps opportune to recall the responsibility of the western states for the subversive character of nationalism in eastern Europe since 1918, with their insistence on imposing frontiers that left perhaps 20 to 25 million people as national minorities, their presumption that national independence should be accompanied by their own forms of parliamentary representation (which rapidly degenerated through manipulated elections and sham procedures), and perhaps above all with their maintenance of the economic dependence of these eastern European nation-states.

If Europe existed as more than a geographic expression, historically it has long been characterised more by the political divisions of its nation-states than by the recurrent cosmopolitan projects of its leading intellectuals.

It is time to draw together the two parts of my discourse, with some reflection on the implications of the historical relationship between Europe and the nation-state.

We have seen how the identities of both Europe and the nation-state were cultural constructs of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We have observed how the concept of Europe was elaborated exclusively by intellectuals, whereas the idea of the nation, in order to become politically significant, required broader social support. Historically, not only is this passage from a cultural invention to a political reality not inevitable; it is not always, perhaps not even usually successful. But there can be no doubt that by the late nineteenth century the nation-state had become a powerful ideological force, capable of mobilising vast sectors of society, at least at moments of real or fabricated crisis. In part, nationalism derived its strength from the profound transformations of society: marxism and ethnic minorities provided the 'other', against whom nationalists could construct an anti-socialist and anti-democratic language of intolerance, reaction and aggression that obtained a resonance among the newly participant masses. In part, the very process of nation-building, with the insistence on educational and military patriotism, slowly instilled a new loyalty to the nation-state, not necessarily superior to, or even incompatible with class, ethnic, religious or other loyalties - at least until the overwhelming force of the state apparatuses imposed a manichean straightjacket of patriotism and anti-patriotism in 1914.

The result was further to subordinate the concept of Europe to the exaltation of the nation-state. It would not be out of place to describe the role of historians in constructing such national myths in the twentieth century as an authentic trahison des clercs; which also explains their embarrassment and difficulties in coming to terms with how to view their national pasts (15). Europe between 1914 and 1945

existed primarily as the cockpit of unprecedented nationalist excesses which were in fundamental contradiction to any pretension to the superiority of European civilisation (except perhaps for its technology of destruction). It is understandable why in the decades since the end of the second world war, revulsion at the horrors of nazism and fascism, in which nationalism had achieved its most negative paroxysm, should have led to a more limited approach towards the nation-state and an upgrading of the concept of Europe. Nor is it surprising, given the pace and scale of change throughout the world over the past half century and the difficult emergence and consolidation of the European Community - an institutional structure without precedent in European history - that there should be a generous urge to substitute a 'history of Europe' in the place of the history of Europe's nation-states. But how can such a history of Europe ignore the history of its nation-states, or avoid slipping into the same dangers of the invention of tradition, the construction of a European myth? For to believe that there is a "Europe" embedded in, or the culmination of, the long, contradictory and often violent history of the societies and states of the European continent, is to risk falling into the same historical fallacy of determinism that nationalists created for their own nation-states. As nations had to be built after the achievement of independence of new states, so the construction of a European citizenship belongs to the agenda of the present and the future, far more than to the past.

To conclude, let me return to the three elements that I identified as essential to the representation of the superiority of Europe : its state system, the superiority of its civilisation and its development of administration as the instrument of modernisation. Where the Europe in which we live has been most successful - incomparably more than the statesmen of the interwar years such as Briand - has been in building on the terrible experiences of the two world wars and transforming the hostile antagonism of relations between

states into pacific collaboration, based ultimately on reciprocal trust. Where it has been least successful, in a world of pluricultural relativity, is in claims to the superiority of European civilisation. For such claims are essentially rhetorical, based on a complacent image of the European past, which is stridently in contradiction with the savage, internecine realities of this past, and lacking the moral tension and specific aims that have characterised the networks and language of those earlier European intellectual projects (such as the Renaissance or Enlightenment) on which claims of the continuity of Europe's uniqueness are based. Unless, of course, such superiority is equated, tout court, with western market capitalism.

It is the third element - administrative modernisation - that requires a more nuanced reply. I have argued that the particular identity of each nation-state and the heterogeneity that has characterised, and continues to characterise, European societies are the results of the struggles and compromises by which each successful state asserted its sovereignty over communities, with their specific social and cultural practices, of successively expanding territories. The conflictuality of such local socio-political identities was absorbed but also carried over to the larger and more complex nation-states, and was subordinated through discourses of internal solidarity and national identity primarily by being directed externally, against 'other' nation-states. Once forged, such national identities, as Tom Nairn has observed, are particularly resistant to change and attack (16).

It is undoubtedly true, as Helmut Kaelble has shown (17), that in many fundamental respects national societies in Europe have changed in a convergent manner, particularly since the 1960's. At the same time, it is unquestionable that the power of every European state has declined, both as economic units (for national economies are no longer autonomous) and in international influence. The emergence of regional

nationalism within western and eastern European states may be linked to this decline of the nation-state and can certainly be related to the dramatic economic changes and shrinking of the world through instantaneous communications over the past three decades. Such regional nationalism has arguably accentuated the sense of local identity in Europe at the very time that western national societies have converged through forms of primarily economic modernisation.

It is problematic, as Kaelble recognises, to ascribe such developments to the European Community, although the Community's policies have contributed and facilitated them. What is striking is the continuity between the methods of modernisation from above by administrative action, adopted earlier by the national states of Europe, and forged at the intra-European level by the European Community. Few would deny the economic benefits of this unprecedented development, which has stoked up the utopic expectations of the nations of eastern Europe. But perhaps it may be permitted to a historian to enter a warning word about the corollary to the faith in administrative modernisation - its innate tendency to impose a uniformising grid. Identities and loyalties cannot be regulated out of existence, except at great cost, as the nation-states have learnt so painfully. The European nation-states are still learning that national identity and national loyalty are not necessarily incompatible with, or even antagonistic towards, multicultural, multiethnic societies. How much more important must this be in the building of a European identity (in which the writing of its history plays a not insignificant role), given the cultural and historical heterogeneity that is of the very essence of Europe. Writing about France, administratively the most unified of nation-states, the great historian Fernand Braudel insisted on its diversity. His words apply with an even greater force to Europe: "La diversité est donc fille première de la distance, de l'immensité qui a preservé tous nos particularismes, venus

du fond des âges. Mais, à son tour, cette diversité de longue durée a été une force de l'histoire" (18).

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