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The Problems of the Spanish Nation-Building Process around 1900

It has been recognized that the Spanish nation-building process during the nineteenth century was slower and less thorough than in most other West-European countries.¹ The integration of the peripheral areas, the acceptance of the State and the dissemination of the Castilian language progressed slowly and already by the end of the nineteenth century regional movements in Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia tried to propagate their own separate identity and language. Thus, whereas the Catalan and Basque regions within France became almost completely integrated into France and developed no significant regional movement, on the Spanish side of the border the authority of the central state was seriously contested.² The existence of a unified Spanish nation and the use of the dominant Castilian language (which outside the country is simply called Spanish) were fundamentally challenged in the periphery.

There are various factors that hampered a faster and more thorough nation-building process. Most historians coincide in stressing the weakness of the central State, the slow general modernization process in Spain and the lack of a foreign threat to explain the lack of nationalistic zeal among the political and cultural elite. This concerned not so much the economic and legal unification of the country as the process which could be called the nationalization of the masses. As in other European countries internal economic and legal barriers were removed during the nineteenth century. A national stock exchange was created in 1831, the Bank of Spain in 1856 and taxation and the currency were unified on a national basis in 1845 and 1868 respectively. From the 1840s onwards railroads were constructed, for the first time establishing good connections between the different parts of the country. Legal unification took somewhat longer to achieve as Spain, like Germany, had rejected the *Code Napoleon*. Thus a Penal Code was introduced in 1848, whereas the completion of the Civil Code had to wait until 1889. Both economic interchange between the various regions and the penetration of the state-administration in the countryside did progress however slowly; this tardiness becoming most apparent when Spain is compared with the major European countries.³

More serious in this respect was the lack of an official policy to nationalize the masses. In 1890 the liberal government of Sagasta had introduced some measures to stimulate participation of the citizens in the governing of the nation. As part of this process of inclusion universal male suffrage was introduced along with trial by jury. The third part of this nation-building programme, the introduction of general conscription (which would mean the

¹ Stanley Payne even maintains that probably 'in no other European country has nationalism been weaker than in Spain prior to 1936': Stanley G. Payne, 'Nationalism, regionalism and micronationalism in Spain', *Journal of Contemporary History* XXVI (1991) 479-491, especially 479.

² Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries. The making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley & Oxford 1989) 280-298.

³ Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpúrua, 'Centre and periphery 1900-1936: national integration and regional nationalisms reconsidered' in: Frances Lannon & Paul Preston eds., *Élites and power in twentieth-century Spain. Essays in honour of Sir Raymond Carr* (Oxford 1990) 33-45, Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpúrua, 'Centralismo y localismo: la formación del Estado español' in: Guillermo Gortázar ed., *Nación y Estado en la España liberal* (Madrid 1994) 77-91, Borja de Riquer i Permanyer, 'Aproximación al nacionalismo español contemporáneo', *Studia Histórica. Historia Contemporánea* XII (1994) 11-31, Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas, *Los nacionalismos en la España contemporánea (siglos XIX y XX)* (Barcelona 1999) 18-31, Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, 'Historia e actualidade dos nacionalismos na España contemporánea: unha perspectiva de conxunto', *Grial* XXXIII, 128 (oct-dec. 1995) 497-541, and José Álvarez Junco, 'The nation-building process in nineteenth-century Spain' in: Clare Mar-Molinero & Angel Smith eds., *Nationalism and the nation in the Iberian Peninsula. Competing and conflicting identities* (Oxford & Washington 1996) 89-107.

abolition of the possibility of redemption by paying a sum of money affordable only to the rich) was however halted by an unwilling Parliament.⁴ With this new legislation the government wanted to convert the citizen into voter, judge and soldier, and thus make him co-responsible for the well-being of the nation. All the same, these measures were not accompanied by an effort to educate the population. In the countryside especially illiteracy was still the rule. In 1900 approximately 56 percent of the total adult population could neither read nor write. By comparison analphabetism in Italy had declined substantially and by 1900 more than fifty percent was literate. In contemporary France only 17 percent was illiterate, whereas in Germany, England and the Netherlands this cipher had dropped to under 3 percent.⁵ The poor performance of Spain is generally attributed to the way primary education was organized. A law of 1857 had made the municipal government responsible for elementary education, but since most municipalities suffered a chronic lack of funding almost no new schools were created and the quality of existing schools did not improve substantially.⁶

It was not only the institutions of the army and the schools who failed to perform their nationalizing functions, also on the symbolic level Spain lagged behind. There was no uncontested national flag, nor a national anthem or a national holiday. Little was done to embellish the capital, nor to honour the national heroes. A national pantheon was not established until 1902, and compared with other countries few monuments and statues were built. As Spain was an old nation-state there was no need to legitimate the state as was the case in new states like Belgium, Germany and Italy. Nor did the leading politicians feel the need to defend the restored monarchy with pompous celebrations, national holidays and impressive World Fairs as was the case in France after the establishment of the Third Republic.⁷

Thus far, most historians do agree. However, in my view, there are a number of factors which have not received the attention they deserve. Although all of these themes have already been signalled before in studies of Spanish nationalism, I would like to underline the importance of the loss of the last remnants of the Spanish colonial empire. Another issue that is not seriously studied as directly related to the process of nation-building is the role of political clientelism. Finally, I will argue that nationalism is not one coherent body of thought, but should be studied in its ideological context, as every political current professed its own version of nationalism.

Empire and nation

In 1898 Spain lost the last major remnants of its once huge colonial empire. In a short war Spain suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the United States of America. Cuba, which had been the cause of the war, was declared independent, and Spain also lost Puerto Rico and the Philippines. In general 'el Desastre', as the defeat was simply called, was seen as a turning point in Spanish history, but in the last few years most historians are inclined to assert that 1898 was grossly overvalued. As Spanish investments returned from the colonies the economy of the mother country even profited from the loss. The war debts were redeemed

⁴ Melchor Fernández Almagro, *Historia política de la España contemporánea 2. 1885-1897* (1968; Madrid 1969) 43-90.

⁵ Gabriel Tortella, *El desarrollo de la España contemporánea. Historia económica de los siglos XIX y XX* (Madrid 1994) 10-17.

⁶ Núñez Seixas, *Los nacionalismos*, 24.

⁷ Eric Storm, 'El tercer centenario del Don Quijote en 1905 y el nacionalismo español', *Hispania. Revista Española de Historia* LVIII (1998) 199, 625-654. See for flag, anthem and national holiday: Carlos Serrano, *El nacimiento de Carmen. Símbolos, mitos y nación* (Madrid 1999) 77-131 and 313-331, and for the monuments build: Carlos Reyero, *La escultura conmemorativa en España. La edad de oro del monumento público, 1820-1914* (Madrid 1999).

within a few years, and the political crisis of the Restoration Regime did not begin until more than a decade later. The 'regenerationist' movement that came to the fore after the defeat was quite a superficial phenomenon, and the so-called Generation of 1898, consisting of famous authors like Unamuno, Azorín and Baroja, had nothing to do with 'el Desastre'.⁸

Only in respect to the national question did the defeat and the loss of the last major colonies have a substantial impact, particularly because these events formed an important stimulus for the regional movements in Catalonia and the Basque Country. As the Catalan bourgeoisie lost its colonial markets and became disillusioned with a weak central state that wasn't even capable of suffocating a colonial rebellion in Cuba and defend its possessions against a North-American attack, the upper classes in Catalonia *en masse* joined the already existing regional movement. 'El Desastre' also formed an important starting point for the Basque movement. Thus central authority was increasingly contested from the most industrialized regions in the periphery. Instead of internal unity against the threat of Cuban insurgents or a Yankee attack, the nation became internally divided. Spanish nationalism now had to face two rapidly developing regional movements. Most students of this period agree that the weakening effect on Spanish nationalism was caused in the first place by the challenge from the periphery. The loss of the colonial empire was important only insofar as it stimulated the regional movements. It didn't have much effect of itself.⁹

But, we may ask ourselves, is this the only possible way to comprehend the loss of empire? Before being able to present an alternative interpretation, we first have to understand the theoretical background of the generally accepted interpretation. The majority of Spanish historians accept the current theoretical paradigm as to the origins and nature of nationalism. This paradigm holds that nationalism is an invention imposed from above - either by the ruling elites, or by bourgeois intellectuals longing for power - or an inevitable consequence of the general modernization process. Most scholars, like Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson and Eugen Weber, defend a mixture of both positions, seeing the elites as agents of the modernization process.¹⁰ In the main Spanish scholars follow this interpretation, which is understandable both as a reaction, on the one hand, to essentialist Spanish nationalism as it was defended by the Franco-regime, and, on the other, to essentialist interpretations of Galician, Catalan and Basque nationalists which are still to be heard. Authors like Fusi, Álvarez Junco, Serrano, and to a lesser extent Riquer and Núñez Seixas try to show the invented and artificial nature of both Spanish and peripheral nationalisms, presenting them as a fundamentally recent historical phenomenon.¹¹

Seen in this light 'el Desastre' of 1898, apart from stimulating the regionalist movements, didn't have much direct influence on the subsequent development of Spanish nationalism. As the economy recovered almost immediately the modernization process in

⁸ See for example: Juan Pan-Montojo ed., *Más se perdió en Cuba. España, 1898 y la crisis de fin de siglo* (Madrid 1998) and Octavio Ruiz-Manjón & Alicia Langa eds., *Los significados del 98. La sociedad española en la génesis del siglo XX* (Madrid 1999). The most notable exception to this trend is: Sebastian Balfour, *The end of the Spanish empire 1898-1923* (Oxford 1997).

⁹ De Riquer, 'Aproximación al nacionalismo español', 18-20, Núñez Seixas, *Los nacionalismos*, 40-41 and 85-89, Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, 'Questione nazionale e crisi statele: Spagna, 1898-1936', *Ricerche Storiche XXIV* (Jan-April 1994) 87-118, Álvarez Junco, 'Nation-building', 104-105, and José Álvarez Junco, 'La nación en duda' in: Juan Pan-Montojo ed., *Más se perdió en Cuba. España, 1898 y la crisis de fin de siglo* (Madrid 1998) 405-477, especially 463-469.

¹⁰ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Ithaca 1983), Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (Oxford 1998), Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger eds., *The invention of tradition* (1983; Cambridge 1995), Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1870. Programme, myth, reality* (1990; Cambridge 1995), Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (1983; London & New York 1991) and Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen. The modernization of rural France* (Stanford 1976).

¹¹ Except from the works already cited, the best example of this trend is: Inman Fox, *La invención de España. Nacionalismo liberal e identidad nacional* (Madrid 1997).

Spain was not fundamentally hindered by the loss of the colonies. Other factors, like the continuing influence of political clientelism, formed a more serious obstacle to the modernization of the Spanish countryside. It can even be said that the defeat had a positive effect as the ruling elites became acutely aware of the need to stimulate Spanish nationalism, and major efforts were undertaken to rouse national feeling. Thus in 1902, to celebrate the coming of age of Alfonso XIII, six statues were placed in Madrid, and a plan to build an impressive national monument dedicated to his father was admitted. Three years later the third centennial of the publication of the *Don Quixote* was celebrated on a large-scale.¹² Thus the negative effects of the defeat of 1898 for the nationalization process should be mainly attributed to the falling away of the common colonial enterprise and the subsequent rise of the regional movements in the periphery.

On the international historiographic level, however, there exists another interpretation of nationalism, which finds its main defender in Anthony Smith. In his view, nationalism is not seen as a broad movement either imposed from above or an inevitable result of the ongoing modernization process, but is understood from the perspective of the individual, as part of someone's identity. Smith acknowledges that during the modern age man's sense of territorial belonging underwent a transformation in which local identity slowly was relegated by national identity. But, contrary to the other scholars, Smith doesn't see this as a fundamental break. Human beings always identify themselves in a territorial sense as they also possess a familial, class, religious, ethnic and gender identity.¹³ Seen as an almost psychic need to define oneself - as part of a broader identity - in a geographical way, nationalism can be interpreted in a wholly different way, as national identity.

From this perspective, the possession of a colonial empire in a period of rapid imperialist expansion can hardly be overvalued. Colonies meant not so much profit and power but status, and this status also radiated upon the individual. Collective self-respect thus demanded colonial conquest. This was especially true for late-comers like Germany and Italy. A brief look at the world map was sufficient to understand the unjust distribution of colonial wealth and status. Thus German and Italian nationalism especially expressed itself in a somewhat irrational longing for colonial empire. In Germany this became manifest in the immense popularity of the *Flottenverein*, and in the Emperor's desperate attempts to bring about an international crisis on the Moroccan question. The later Nazi stress on *Lebensraum* can be seen as the quest for a kind of colonial *Reich* within Europe. Italy also wanted its share, and invested enormous amounts of soldiers and money in the conquest of Libya and Ethiopia. The longing for empire also expressed itself in Mussolini's wish to restore the Italian dominance in the *Mare Nostrum*.

Whereas in Germany and Italy the longing for colonies was projected onto the future, Spain's status as a colonial superpower after 1898 was irremediably relegated to the past. Later colonial incursions into the north of Morocco, or attempts to revive a kind of neo-colonial cooperation with the former American colonies under the name of *Hispanismo* couldn't alleviate this loss.¹⁴ Thus, already in May 1898 Lord Salisbury's 'dying nations' speech touched an open nerve in Spanish society. In this speech he divided the world in living and dying nations, and most Spaniards understood perfectly well that according to the English statesman they belonged to the last category.¹⁵ After the war was lost most commentators

¹² Storm, 'El centenario del Don Quijote', 631-633.

¹³ Smith has written a whole number of studies on nationalism. See for example: Anthony D. Smith, *National identity* (Harmondsworth 1991) especially 1-18.

¹⁴ See for the Hispanismo-movement: Frederick B. Pike, *Hispanismo 1898-1936* (London 1971).

¹⁵ José María Jover Zamora, 'Introducción. Después del 98. Horizonte internacional de la España de Alfonso XIII' in: *La España de Alfonso XIII. Es Estado y la política (1902-1931) I, De los comienzos del reinado a los problemas de la Posguerra*, Historia de España. Ramón Menéndez Pidal XXXVIII (Madrid 1995) I-CLXIII, especially L-LII.

were well aware that Spain had been degraded to a third-rank position with a status similar to that of Denmark. This not only explains the turning away of the middle and upper classes in the periphery and the sudden rise of the Catalan and Basque regional movements, but also the increasing difficulty to integrate the masses into a national project that was robbed of its aura by the loss of the colonies. This, for example, became clear in the fast growing numbers of conscripts that tried to escape from military service.¹⁶ Their numbers increased *after* and not during the war. It was not so much the hardships suffered during the colonial war as the falling away of a common goal, of a national imperialist enterprise that induced them to avoid military service. The loss of the colonial empire not only affected some conscripts but seriously hindered the nationalization project. Identification with a wounded nation that fell behind in the international imperialist race was not a very attractive option. And as a common colonial enterprise could not unify the nation from 1898 onwards, internal discords became more prominent and were hard to overcome.

Political clientelism

Another factor to explain the weakness of Spanish nationalism is the persistence of political clientelism especially in the countryside. This point usually evades the attention of most authors and when it is alluded to its importance is generally toned down. Probably most historians see the prominent role of clientelism in Spanish politics as a symptom of the lack of enthusiasm for the nation-building process among the ruling elites.¹⁷ Recent studies have shown that the situation was more complex, and that the role of clientelism in Spanish politics had its own dynamism. It was not a custom that survived from feudal times, but was rather a new phenomenon, which was in many ways institutionalized in 1876, after the Bourbon-Monarchy was restored. In order to avoid the instability that until then had been paradigmatic for Spanish politics, a two party-system was installed in which the Conservative-Liberal Party of Cánovas del Castillo and the Liberal Party of Sagasta governed alternately. Elections were controlled from above. Every district sent one representative to Parliament, and beforehand in most districts it was clear who would be elected. This was only possible as all major politicians had their own extensive clientele-networks, which on a local basis 'organized' the desired electoral results for them.¹⁸

The source of inspiration for this type of centrally 'organized' elections probably had been the France of Napoleon III, with its 'candidats officiels'. Whereas in France the government - under the Third Republic - for the first time lost elections in 1877, in the south of Italy, in Portugal and in Spain elections could be 'controlled' well into the twentieth century.¹⁹ In general, one can argue, this was due to the slow modernization process, however

¹⁶ Carlos Serrano, *Le tour du peuple. Crise nationale, mouvements populaires et populisme en Espagne (1890-1910)* (Madrid 1987) 19, 33-34 and 291-305.

¹⁷ Fusi, 'Centre and periphery 1900-1936', 36, and Núñez Seixas, *Los nacionalismos*, 28-29.

¹⁸ The description of the functioning of political clientelism, which will continue in the following paragraphs, is essentially based on: José Varela Ortega, *Los amigos políticos. Partidos, elecciones y caciquismo en la Restauración (1875-1900)* (Madrid 1977), Joaquín Romero-Maura, 'Caciquismo as a political system' in: Ernest Gellner & John Waterbury eds., *Patrons and clients in Mediterranean societies* (London 1977) 53-63, Javier Moreno Luzón, 'Teoría del clientelismo y estudio de la política caciquil', *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, 89 (July-Sept. 1995) 191-225, Antonio Robles Egea ed., *Política en penumbra. Patronazgo y clientelismo políticos en la España contemporánea* (Madrid 1996) and Javier Moreno Luzón, *Romanones. Caciquismo y política liberal* (Madrid 1998) 67-193.

¹⁹ Frédéric Bon, *Les élections en France. Histoire et sociologie* (Paris 1978) 28-43, Gabriele Ranzato, 'Le elezioni nei sistemi liberali italiano e spagnolo', *Revista di storia contemporanea* 2 (1989) 244-263, Fernando Farelo Lopes, *Poder político e caciquismo na I.ª República Portuguesa* (Lisbon 1994) 143-164, and José Varela Ortega, 'Orígenes y desarrollo de la democracia: algunas reflexiones comparativas', *Ayer* 28 (1997) *El reinado de Alfonso XIII*, 29-61.

this is but a truism. To understand the impact of political clientelism on the nation-building process closer scrutiny is indispensable.

In many areas of Spain the state was looked upon as a necessary evil. Most ordinary people only were confronted with the state solely in a negative way, paying taxes (particularly the locally levied 'consumos' were extremely unpopular) or being drafted for military service. Exemptions, both from taxes and conscription, could be obtained by maintaining 'friendly' relations with the local boss, the so-called *cacique*, whose authority depended not so much upon a formal position as on a close relationship with a leading provincial or national politician, who in turn functioned as his informal protector. On a local level the *cacique* was the intermediary between an analphabete peasantry and the state, translating the abstract bureaucratic rules in concrete measures. General rules were thus transformed into personal favours, which required counterfavours, like voting for the official candidate. The building of a bridge, a road or a school accordingly was understood, not as a quasi-automatic return for payed taxes, but as the sole responsibility of the district's deputy or the local *cacique*. Concrete personal and local improvements thus depended on loyalty to a local boss, on clientele networks, and not on the functioning of a national state, which could be influenced by voting the party with the best overall programme. This also applied to the national scene. Politicians in Madrid often referred to the interest of the nation in a theoretical way, but most of their time was actually spend in receiving visits from their local and provincial clienteles and trying to bargain practical favours for their own district.

Identification with the national state was seriously hindered as the state was mainly perceived as a source of extraction, whereas practical benefits were seen as the result of the influence of the *cacique* or a locally known politician. The same was true at the national level, where local interests prevailed over national ones, and daily politics were dominated by the necessity to attend the needs of the personal clientele network. A policy of nation-building, that is of stimulating the national consciousness and at the same time the political awareness of the population, would in fact be counterproductive as it would make it more difficult to control the elections and remain in power. Thus after the alternation in power of Cánovas and Sagasta started to function well in the 1880s there was no incentive to change the situation. Politicians from the two governing parties had a practical interest in maintaining the status quo.

Although this complex of political clientele networks didn't exclude feelings of patriotic pride, as became clear in the patriotic outbursts during the war over Cuba,²⁰ a more coherent nationalist policy was not compatible with it. Nationalism in a way was incongruent with the *cacique*-system, and nationalists generally denounced the continuing dominance of political clientelism in Spain and the continuous infringement of the national interest by conceding individual favours. This became especially clear after the defeat of 1898. Until then the benefits of the peaceful alternation in power of two political parties that tried to integrate oppositional forces from both the left and the right clearly had dominated over the more negative aspects. Political stability and relatively efficient governments mattered more than electoral manipulations and the prevalence of local interests. The 'Desastre' radically changed the panorama. The leading political parties lost a great part of their credibility ensuring that endemic clientelism and the consequent manipulation of electoral results were now became widely criticized. Nationalism seemed to offer a solution, and after 1898 it was clearly on the rise. But, as we have already seen, this happened exactly at a moment when it was increasingly unattractive to identify with a state that had just lost its last remaining colonies. Thus a paradox emerged, at a time when nation-building seemed more urgent than ever, it had

²⁰ Sebastian Balfour, "'The lion and the pig': nationalism and national identity in *fin-de-siècle* Spain' in: Clare Mar-Molinero & Angel Smith eds., *Nationalism and the nation in the Iberian Peninsula. Competing and conflicting identities* (Oxford & Washington 1996) 107-119.

become more difficult to achieve. A more detailed analysis is needed to see how different groups dealt with these diverging trends.

Two nationalist answers

Apart from king Alfonso XIII and the military, who both increasingly identified themselves with the nation, two different nationalistic answers came to the fore after 1898. Both of them already existed before 'el Desastre', but their diffusion in wider circles only took hold in its wake. The first response was formulated from within the Conservative Liberal Party, whereas the second had its root in the progressive political forces and could be called social-liberal.

On the right wing, during the greater part of the nineteenth century, nationalism was frowned upon. Nationalism was associated with the plea for national sovereignty, and thus had clear democratic and participatory implications, it was openly rejected by catholic reactionaries. According to them Spain should only be identified with catholicism and with a hierarchical social order as existed before 'foreign' ideas had lead the country from the right track. Their patriotism, thus, was of a xenophobic and reactionary nature.²¹ The more moderate conservatives shared this aversion to the progressive implications of nationalist ideology. Nevertheless, at the end of the nineteenth century, in the context of a general revision of classical liberal suppositions and its corollary of no state-intervention, leading members of the Conservative Liberal Party began to reconsider their position.

A first battle took place over the convenience to introduce new protective measures as a consequence of the agrarian crisis that effected the whole of Europe in the 1880s. The conservative liberals were more inclined to introduce new tariffs to protect the national agrarian and industrial interests than their liberal colleagues, who stuck to their free trade principles. However, their plea for protection should not be misinterpreted as conversion to full-scale nationalism. For example, Joaquín Sánchez de Toca, a prominent conservative publicist and politician from a catholic background, propounded the erection of prohibitive tariffs, thus isolating Spain from the volatile fluctuations of the world market. His defense of national interests, more than a sign of modern nationalism, was the expression of an almost xenophobic mentality.²² Later developments, however, would make him change his mind.

As the Liberal Party developed serious plans to introduce universal male suffrage in Spain Sánchez de Toca wrote an extensive study to criticize this measure. Conferring the right to vote to a still largely illiterate and uneducated population would have disastrous effects, as it would make parliamentary government more difficult and in the long run lead to chaos - caused by utopian dreamers - or dictatorship. He therefore pleaded for a greater role of the monarch and both a more moral and authoritarian policy. This, in general, was also the message he tried to convey in the debates over the social question, that were held most notably in the years between 1890 and 1895.²³

²¹ See for example Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles* (Madrid 1881) III, 5-26 and 832-836. A superb satire of this kind of xenophobic thinking could be found in the novel: Benito Pérez Galdós, *Doña Perfecta* (1876; Madrid 1997).

²² Joaquín Sánchez de Toca, *La crisis agraria europea y sus remedios en España* (Madrid 1887) 357-381. See for the more moderate point of view of the leading conservative statesman: Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, 'Ideas sobre el libre-cambio y la economía política en general. A propósito de un tratado de comercio. (Discusión parlamentaria, sesión del 22 de abril de 1882)' in: Idem, *Problemas contemporáneos* (Madrid 1884-1890) II, 475-505.

²³ Joaquín Sánchez de Toca, *El régimen parlamentario y el sufragio universal* (Madrid 1889) 4-27, 323-327 and 358-374, and Joaquín Sánchez de Toca in: Francisco Silvela, 'Extracto de la discusión habida en la Academia acerca de "El Socialismo de Estado"' (1894-1895), *Memorias de la Real Academia de Ciencias Morales y Políticas* VIII (Madrid 1898) 393-473, especially 406-411, 427, 446-447 and 451-459. Cánovas arrived at similar conclusions: Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, 'La cuestión obrera y su nuevo carácter (Estudios económico-

Although a major faction within the Conservative Party, led by Francisco Silvela (who in 1899 would form his first government), wanted to pursue a more activist social and economic policy as advocated by Sánchez de Toca, no consistent nation-building policy could be discerned before 1898. Until then the conservative liberals had rejected the possibility of a more active nationalism. In the wake of the war with the United States Sánchez de Toca, however, began to advocate a truly nationalist policy and he would not be the only one. In an extensive study on Spain's naval power, written partly before the war, but published after the defeat, Sánchez de Toca in first instance pleaded for a more active international policy and the strengthening of the navy to suffocate the rebellion on Cuba. In the second part of his book, after Cuba was lost, he tried to sketch a new policy of intimate cooperation with the former colonies, under paternal guidance of Spain, to form one powerful 'nationality', comparable only to the ancient Roman Empire.²⁴ This book certainly was heavily influenced by the circumstance of the war in which it was written. Nevertheless, as Antonio Maura succeeded Silvela as the leader of the Conservative Liberal Party in 1903 nationalism became an integral part of its policy.

As Minister of the Interior in a cabinet led by Silvela Maura wanted to mobilize the 'neutral masses'. In the elections of 1903 he therefore refrained from any 'guidance' from above, as he wanted the respectable middle classes to express their vote in a honest way. However, as the local caciques, unhampered from above, did their work as they were used to, the results were more or less the same. Maura thus concluded that before being able to mobilize the rural middle classes, he had to strengthen Spanish civil society. Thus when he himself became prime minister at the end of 1903 he started a reform programme with clear nationalistic but defensive overtones. Instead of stimulating nation-building through schooling, he toured the country with Alfonso XIII, the young king, taking him even to the chronically turbulent Catalan capital Barcelona. His government also approved the building of a new impressive Central Post Office - in a style that could be defined as a mixture of cosmopolitan French monumentality and national neo-plataresque ornamentation - and in later years it spent huge amounts of money on the restoration of the National Theater. Maura's scheme to rebuild the navy was carried through partly at the expense of the Education Budget. Social legislation and a protective economic policy completed the picture of his policy of national regeneration from above. As a sign that Maura had given up his initial mobilizing strategy, during his second term as Prime Minister, between 1907 and 1909, he tried to introduce an electoral reform conferring local corporations the right to vote part of the municipal councillors. And a moralizing campaign combined with a harsh policy of law and order now had to educate and discipline the population.²⁵

Maura's policy to educate and nationalize the masses was of a conservative nature. He wanted a disciplined, hierarchical and orderly society, with a strong fleet to protect its national interests and - insofar financial means allowed - a lavish official culture both to represent the country on the international stage and to impress the population. His liberal and republican adversaries fiercely rejected his policy as authoritarian, reactionary and clerical. And to counteract Maura's defensive nation-building programme they had to develop a similar strategy of their own.

sociales; Discurso en el Ateneo de Madrid , 10-11-1890' in: Idem, *Problemas contemporáneos* (Madrid 1884-1890) III, 451-523, especially 493.

²⁴ Joaquín Sánchez de Toca, *Del poder naval en España y su política económica para la nacionalidad Ibero-Americana* (Madrid 1898) 346-348, 380-388 and 419-422. Sánchez de Toca seems to have been influenced at this time by Miguel de Unamuno's *En torno al casticismo* (1895) and by Angel Ganivet's *Idearium español* (1897).

²⁵ See: María Jesús González, *El universo conservador de Antonio Maura. Biografía y proyecto de Estado* (Madrid 1997) passim, and for the Post Office: José Ramón Alonso Pereira, 'El Palacio de Comunicaciones en la arquitectura madrileña', *Villa de Madrid* XVII, 66 (1980) 43-51.

The liberals and republicans needed more time to adapt their political programme to the new needs of society. Most of them fervently defended the *laissez faire* principle of classical liberalism and it was therefore more difficult for them to adopt a more interventionist position. During the 1890s only a small minority, of which José Canalejas was the most important, began to plea for governmental action to improve the situation of the working classes.²⁶

Social liberalism, however, clearly came to the fore after the defeat of 1898. Most so-called 'regenerationists' that published critical studies after the war could be defined as social-liberals. The most important of them, Joaquín Costa, tried to mobilize the productive classes. As they payed taxes, he argued, they should participate in political decision-making and the state's economic policy should encourage and stimulate their activities. The endemic corruption therefore should be ended as soon as possible, and an efficient state policy should stimulate the economic development of the nation. Schooling was indispensable to combat the passivity and ignorance among the population, and to form responsible and active citizens. A mere reform of the existing political constellation would not be enough to implement his interventionist policy in an effective way, and he therefore tried to set up a new political force in order to ensure a radical break with the existing two party-system. The interest of the nation should be paramount. Costa's nationalistic intentions became manifest in the names with which he baptized his organizations. In a *National* Convention of the Chambers of Agriculture he first founded the *National* League of Producers, which in March 1900 merged into the *National* Union.²⁷

As all these movements finally ended in failure, Costa directed his attacks to the system of political clientelism, which had prevented a major electoral breakthrough. In a detailed analysis he denounced the existing political system as 'oligarchy and *caciquismo*', he published it and simultaneously sent it to a great number of leading intellectuals and politicians, hoping to mobilize public opinion as the Dreyfus Affair had done in France. Political clientelism, as it inescapably led to favoritism, nepotism, corruption and localism, was an obstacle that impeded the progress of the nation. Private and local interests prevailed over national ones, and an efficient state policy was impossible as long as the oligarchs and the caciques continued to have their stranglehold on Spain. An increasingly desperate Costa even advocated the coming to power of an 'iron surgeon' to radically extirpate this cancer.²⁸

Costa, however, remained a somewhat excentric and isolated figure and in 1903 he bitterly turned his back upon politics, returning to village where he was raised. Nevertheless, within the Liberal Party and among the other progressive political forces things started to change as well. Especially after the death of Sagasta in 1902 a social-liberal current slowly attained more influence. In general, the nation-building that was propagated within these circles particularly stressed the need to improve the educational system. Furthermore it was recognized that the government should furnish the population with the means to improve their economic situation. A nation of hard-working, civilized citizens that in a responsible way governed their own affairs was their goal. Their project to nationalise the masses inevitably clashed with Maura's. Whereas Maura advocated a kind of 'conservative socialization', guided from above by a paternal and somewhat authoritarian state and supported by the educational and social activities of an omnipresent Catholic Church, his progressive adversaries propounded a mobilisatory and educative policy to constitute a secular and responsible civil society.

²⁶ Salvador Forner Muñoz, *Canalejas y el Partido Liberal Democrático (1900-1910)* (Madrid 1993) passim.

²⁷ Eric Storm, *Het perspectief van de vooruitgang. Denken over politiek in het Spaanse fin de siècle, 1890-1914* (Baarn 1999) 97-127.

²⁸ Storm, *Het perspectief*, 136-153.

The liberals and republicans fiercely opposed Maura's policy. The building activities on the new Central Post Office thus were halted when the liberals were in power. The naval building programme was rejected, his moralizing campaign was mocked and the liberals did everything to obstruct Maura's electoral and administrative reforms. Maura for his part tried to prevent the king from visiting the festivities of the liberally inspired centennial of the popular revolt against Napoleon on the second of May 1908.²⁹

Epilogue: nation-building after 1909

The summer of 1909 drastically changed the panorama. After the Spanish army became involved in some disquieting skirmishes in the north of Morocco, reservists were mobilized to reinforce Spanish troops. But as the tiny Moroccan protectorate couldn't make up for the recent loss of the American colonies this move was extremely unpopular. Nobody wanted to fight in a worthless colony that could never return to Spain the dignity it had enjoyed as a major colonial power. In Barcelona, where troops had to embark, a popular revolt submerged the town in a week of chaos in which half of its ecclesiastical buildings were plundered and burned. This so-called 'Tragic Week' would have a profound effect on Spanish politics. Maura's harsh repression, resulting in the capital punishment of five of the presumed instigators of the revolt, seriously damaged Spain's image abroad. The king, pressed by protests from abroad, and by the liberal and republic opposition at home, forced Maura to leave office a few months later. The events thus put an end to Maura's major effort to reform the Spanish political system. Maura stubbornly refused to accept his defeat and, although he would lead a few more short-lived cabinets, he would never again get a serious opportunity to implement his conservative nation-building schemes.

The sudden outburst of primitive violence during the Tragic Week also took the liberals and republicans by surprise and it forced them to reconsider their tactics. The mobilizing strategies that some of them pursued didn't have the wholesome effects they had expected. The majority of the population seemed not prepared to exercise its civic duties in a responsible way. Many progressive intellectuals thus turned away from their mobilising activities, realising that a sustained effort to educate the masses was needed in the first place. Ramiro de Maeztu, a young progressive intellectual who lived in London since 1905 as a correspondent of a major Spanish newspaper, constitutes a fine example of this move. In 1908 Maeztu still defended the need of charismatic political leadership and the usefulness of hero-worship, building statues and commemorating national glories to arouse the enthusiasm of the masses. After the events of July 1909 however, he realized that in order to avoid a violent and pointless revolution, the intellectuals both had to defend the need of reform and to launch themselves on a campaign to educate the masses.³⁰

The same was true of Miguel de Unamuno, indisputably one of Spain's leading intellectuals. Between 1902 and 1906 Unamuno had spent a great part of his holidays, whilst he was a professor of Greek at the University of Salamanca, in giving lectures in provincial towns all over the country, making efforts to reach a more popular audience as well. In these lectures he tried to induce his audience to take part in local political affairs and to combat corruption and immorality whenever possible. In the next few years, coinciding with Maura's

²⁹ Alonso Pereira, 'El Palacio de Comunicaciones', 49, González, *El universo conservador*, 313-320, 'Nuestro gran centenario', *Faro* (3-5-1908), and 'El rey y Maura', *El Imparcial* (3-5-1908).

³⁰ Ramiro de Maeztu, 'Desde Londres. Hombres, ideas, obras', *Nuevo Mundo* (18-6-1908), Ramiro de Maeztu, 'Desde Londres. Por el sentimiento', *Nuevo Mundo* (8-10-1908), Ramiro de Maeztu, *La revolución y los intelectuales* (Conferencia en el Ateneo de Madrid el 7 de diciembre de 1910; Madrid 1911) 20-22 and 37-43, and Ramiro de Maeztu, *Obreros e intelectuales* (Conferencia en el Teatro Principal de Barcelona, dada el día 5 de Marzo de 1911) 21-22 and 28-29.

efforts to improve the state machinery, he waged a campaign for the renovation of Spanish liberalism, urging the liberals and republicans to adopt a more modern social-liberal course, following the example of Lloyd George in England. The violence that erupted on the streets of Barcelona during the Tragic Week was a sharp blow to him. He retreated temporarily from most of his public activities, turning his attention to writing more personal work, like his main philosophical work, *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida*, that appeared in 1912.³¹

The main defender of the need to educate the masses would be the young and promising philosopher José Ortega y Gasset. After the Tragic Week he defended, contrary to the general current, a policy of political mobilization. He became a member of the Radical Republican Party of Alejandro Lerroux, probably Spain's most demagogic populist. He even praised Lerroux as a 'formidable architect of collective passions'. Nevertheless, he soon became disillusioned with the merely negative anti-clerical programme of the party. Over the next few years, as the reform course of Canalejas finally failed to materialize, Ortega became convinced that before the citizens could be converted into active political subjects, an ambitious collective effort was needed to educate the masses politically. To this goal, in 1913, together with other young intellectuals he founded the League of Political Education, which was publicly launched in March 1914. However with the outbreak of the European War not much was done.³²

Maeztu, Unamuno and Ortega were not the only progressive minds that were affected by the events of July 1909. The republicans and socialists became aware that an electoral alliance was needed to finally give the working-class movement a voice in Parliament. Thus in 1910 Pablo Iglesias, the leader of the socialist party (PSOE), with the support of the republicans became the first socialist to win a seat in Parliament. The new liberal government led by José Canalejas embarked upon a reform course that clearly tried to placate popular discontent, introducing social legislation, obligatory military service and abolishing the hated 'consumos'. These measures to democratize society were accompanied by some anticlerical measures, meant to reduce the influence of the Church. But at the same time mobilizing activities sharply decreased after 1909, as no major commemorations, of which in general the liberals and republicans had been the driving force, were organized anymore. And the building of statues and monuments almost came to a standstill.³³ Instead of mobilizing the population, now it was more urgent to avoid further social unrest.

The next major blow to the nation-building activities came in November 1912 when Canalejas was shot by an anarchist. With the death of Canalejas the Liberal Party lost its natural leader, and unity between the various rivalling factions within the party would not be restored again. As Maura persisted in his attitude of wounded pride, the Conservative Liberal Party suffered a similar fate, and thus, after 1912, no longlasting and consistent reform cabinets were formed anymore. The policy of active nation-building was abandoned by the two governing parties. Instead of trying to educate the masses and let them participate in political life, it was increasingly considered too dangerous to mobilize the masses. Only socialists and anarchists would profit from further political mobilization. Now most

³¹ Storm, *Het perspectief*, 229-255, and Manuel M^a Urrutia, *Evolución del pensamiento político de Unamuno* (Bilbao 1997) 106-125 and 133-169.

³² José Ortega y Gasset, 'Sencillas reflexiones. Lerroux, o la eficacia', *El Radical* (22-7-1910), also in: Idem, *Obras completas* (Madrid 1983) X, 155-159 and José Ortega y Gasset, 'Vieja y nueva política (Conferencia dada en el Teatro de la Comedia el 23 de marzo de 1914)' in: Idem, *Obras completas* (Madrid 1983) I, 265-309. See also: Pierre Conard, 'Ortega y Gasset, écrits politiques (1910-1913)', *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 3 (1967) 417-477.

³³ Eric Storm, 'The 1905 Don Quixote commemoration and the genesis of exalted nationalism in Spain' (unpublished paper, presented at the conference "Spanish nationalism: a historical perspective" held at Tufts University, Medford (Ma) 11 and 12 October 1996) 4-5 and María del Socorro Salvador Prieto, *La escultura monumental en Madrid: Calles, plazas y jardines públicos (1875-1936)* (Madrid 1990).

politicians of the two governing parties realized that the cacique-system could function as a buffer to avoid social unrest. Thus, as before 1909 the need to strengthen the state structures and combat political clientelism was widely felt, it now slowly disappeared, at least among the major politicians. They now had no difficulty anymore in dedicating themselves to local affairs and the assignment of bureaucratic posts to their followers, as in fact they had continued to do all the time. Trying to 'serve' and reinforce their clientele would at least give the country some cohesive structure.³⁴

The parliamentary system lingered on until 1923 when a coup by general Miguel Primo de Rivera, with the tacit consent of king Alfonso XIII, put an end to it. Although the new dictator tried to rally some support within the population he finally failed. Thus in fact the nation-building process was only taken up again seriously after the fall of the dictatorship in 1931 and the establishment of the Second Republic. But now it became apparent that two conflicting nation-building projects opposed each other. One conservative, authoritarian, hierarchical and clerical, the other progressive, participatory, egalitarian and secular. As so much still had to be done, and a common colonial enterprise was missing, no compromise, it seemed, was possible anymore...

³⁴ A recent study tries to revise to some extent the bleak picture of this period: Mercedes Cabrera ed., *Con luz y taquígrafos. El Parlamento en la Restauración (1913-1923)* (Madrid 1998).