

PREFACE

In March 2002 a group of historians from Ghent University and the Catholic University of Leuven¹ organised an international conference on national identities and national movements in European history. With the help of an eminent programme committee² and with support from the Fund for Scientific Research – Flanders (Belgium) (F.W.O. – Vlaanderen) a host of renowned international speakers were invited.³ The contributions of six of them have been included in the present collection.

The aim of the conference was to explore three fundamental themes in the field of nations and nationalism studies:

(1) Nation formation and national identity: When is a nation? Which factors have an impact on nation formation?

(2) National identities in the Ancien Régime and modern times: Was there such a thing as national identity in the Ancien Régime? What did it consist of? Did it evolve into a modern national identity? How do the pre-modern and modern identities compare?

(3) Elite agitation and mass support in national movements: What has been the share of elites and masses in national movements? How have they related to each other? When have national movements been successful? How have they got mass support?

In the present volume the first theme is tackled by Montserrat Guibernau, Michael Hechter and Ulf Hedetoft, the second by Rees Davies and Joep Leerssen, and the third by Miroslav Hroch.

¹ Bart De Wever (Leuven), Bruno De Wever (Ghent), Idesbald Goddeeris (Leuven), Véronique Lambert (Ghent), Ludo Milis (Ghent), Jan Roegiers (Leuven), Maarten Van Ginderachter (Ghent), Louis Vos (Leuven).

² Wim Blockmans (Leiden University), Gerhard Brunn (University of Siegen), Ulf Hedetoft (Aalborg University), Miroslav Hroch (Charles University Prague), Niek Van Sas (Universiteit van Amsterdam).

³ Rees Davies (Oxford University), Montserrat Guibernau (The Open University, UK), Michael Hechter (University of Washington), Ulf Hedetoft (Aalborg University), Miroslav Hroch (Charles University Prague), Joep Leerssen (Universiteit van Amsterdam), Piet Leupen (emeritus professor Universiteit van Amsterdam), Brendan O'Leary (London School of Economics), Jan Penrose (University of Edinburgh).