



Forum: Special Political and Decolonization Committee (GA4)

Issue: The Question of the Rise of Nationalism

Student Officer: Žan Ciglar

Position: President

“Why must I cling to the customs and practices of a particular country forever, just because I happened to be born there? What does it matter if its distinctiveness is lost? Need we be so attached to it? What's the harm if everyone on earth shares the same thoughts and feelings, if they stand under a single banner of laws and regulations? What if we can't be recognized as Indians anymore? Where's the harm in that? No one can object if we declare ourselves to be citizens of the world. Is that any less glorious?”

*Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay
Bengali novelist and short story writer of the early 20th century*

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, we have tried to be united. We seem to be doing well on this issue, yet we are still divided. Not only by different beliefs or opinions, languages and knowledge, but also by our nationality. The concept of nation appeared in the French Revolution and the first nation appeared.

To protect a nation's beliefs, history, culture or just to get the political support there have involved an ideology. The ideology of nationalism. By its definition, there is nothing wrong with the ideology. Problems occur when the nationalism is used as a part of propaganda, which exalts a nation over another one. This happened in the 1940s during Hitler and Mussolini's reign.

Nowadays we may think that we do not have any problems with such extremes of nationalism as in the past, but latest major events (for example migrant crisis) caused the nationalism to rise again and this time not only in the Europe but also in the whole world.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Nationalism: a complex, multidimensional concept involving a shared communal identification with one's nation. It is a political ideology oriented towards gaining and maintaining self-governance, or full sovereignty, over a territory of historical significance to the group (such as its homeland). Sadly, the nationalism can quickly become racism or any other inhumane belief.

Nation: a large group or collective of people with common characteristics attributed to them, including language, traditions, mores (customs), habitus (habits), and ethnicity. It is a cultural-political community that has become conscious of its autonomy, unity, and particular interests.

Fascism: a form of radical authoritarian nationalism.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Nationalism started developing in the other half of the 18th century. The event, which started the political movement called nationalism, is the French Revolution. The French revolution made French people to unite not just in the name of the new republic but also as the first nation in the world. Since then, the idea of nationalism began to spread across the Europe, especially among Italians and Germans (German nationalism arose as the answer to the foundation of the Confederation of the Rhine).

Nationalism caused that many nations became independent (Serbian Revolution, Greek war of independence) or united in one country (German speaking countries united in the German Confederation and Italian speaking countries united in the Kingdom of Italy).

The idea of nationalism did not only stay in Europe but also appeared in South America. This prompted the Latin Americans wars for independence between the years 1810 and 1820. One of the consequences was that Spain lost almost all its colonies in South America (except Cuba and Puerto Rico).

In the early 20th century, the first fascism movements appeared in Italy during the World War I. In the 1930, Adolf Hitler came to power with the idea of Nazism and he and Mussolini collaborated before and during World War II. They glorified their nations and they initiated expansionist militarism. Third Reich and Italy occupied many countries not only in Europe but also in Africa. Crimes against humanity were carried out under their rule.

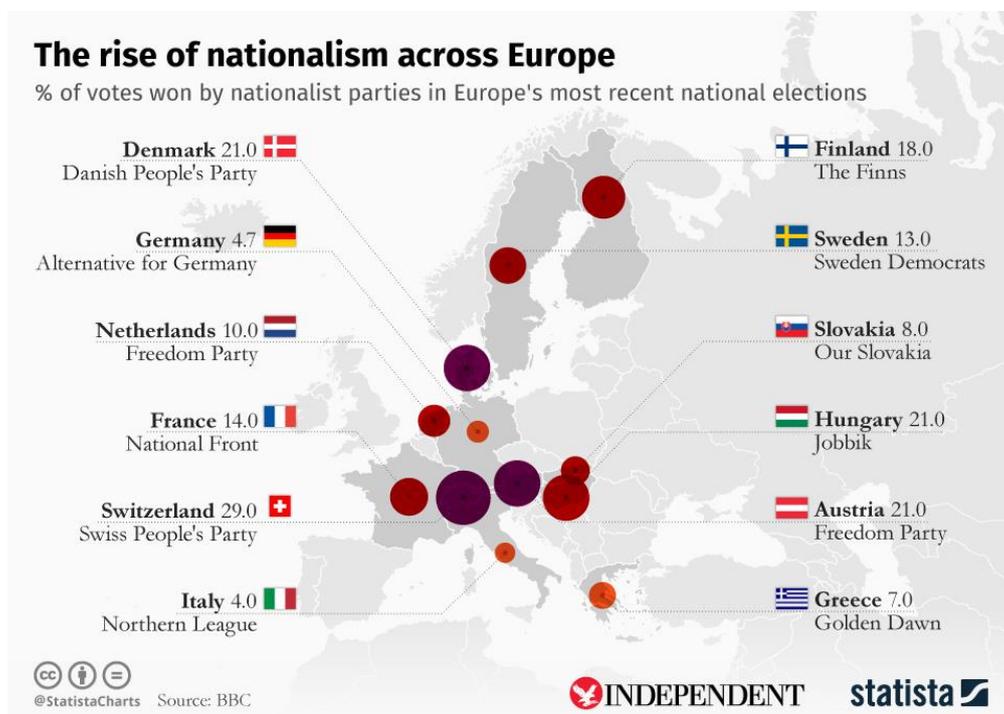
After the World War II, many nationalist movements arose in Africa, which led to decolonisation in the 1950s and 1960s. The processes of decolonisation were usually peaceful, but there were also cruel civil wars.

Nowadays the idea of nationalism and fascism are still alive. Their popularity arises in difficult times, such are the time of the global financial crisis, immigration crisis in Europe, the election of the new president of the USA, etc. To control the nationalist movements, every state has its procedures. Mostly the movement is limited by a country's legislation. But lately the situation has worsened, especially in the Europe and in the USA.

In the Europe many right parties have been gaining the number of followers. In Austria there was a critical point during the presidential elections in 2016. It could have happened for the first time after the World War 2 that a candidate from a right-wing party won the elections. There were 2 candidates, Mr. Norbert Hofer, who was the candidate from a right party FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria) and an independent candidate Mr. Alexander Van der Bellen, who won the election. This election showed that the nationalism is still alive and people still sympathise with it.

The year 2017 will be one of the most strained years in the Europe, because there are going to be many different elections. For example, in France, the Netherlands, Germany. In many states in the Europe, there will be candidates from both sides. There exists the fear that the right parties' candidates will win the elections.

In November 2016, the US presidential elections were held. The new president is Donald Trump, who is known especially for his controversial statements. Since the election there have been reported different attacks inspired by racism, xenophobia or any other form of intolerance, yet there were also demonstrations against violence, inequality and hatred many Trump supporters and new Alt Right supporters endorse. Furthermore, an important factor of the spread of nationalist ideas is also fake news, as evident, for example, from this year's US election. The fake news has not appeared just in the USA but also elsewhere in the world.



NEO-NAZI GROUPS

Neo-Nazi groups are groups which still follow the ideology of the Nazi Germany nowadays, although they are forbidden in many countries around the world. Many States try to prevent establishments of the Neo-Nazi groups by prohibiting the usage of Nazi and Neo-Nazi symbols. Not only that the Neo-Nazi groups use the ideology to gain followers but also they use the media. Using media enables them to spread their ideology to a broader public and to connect to other Neo-Nazi groups on the global level. A lot of the Neo-Nazi groups have become far-right-wing parties, which have their seats in parliaments, yet not the majority.

MAJOR PLAYERS

The European Union

In almost every state which is a member of the EU, there are right parties. Their support has been rising since the beginning of the immigrant crisis in the 2015, especially in the East European countries. The immigrant crisis showed that the EU policy for immigrants is not efficient enough and the Schengen border system enables the immigrants to travel around Europe more easily. Therefore, many countries put up a fence on their borders to limit the immigrants' movement. The common belief is that the immigrants are not only people who are looking for asylum to apply for the refugee status but also economic immigrants and members of the Islamic state. According to another belief the immigrants want to Islamise the Europe.

The United States of America

In the USA, the issue of racism and ethnic discrimination has been a major issue since the colonial era and the slave era. There have been many protests and movements to change and to dull the impact of racism in the everyday life. In the last years, many activist groups such as Black Lives Matter have arisen to combat the racial, ethnical or any other type of discrimination. Many believed that the election of the first African American president showed that something would be done on the issue. However, after the election of a new president Donald Trump, there have been reported many discriminatory acts, which were inspired by the rhetoric and ideology of the president. During his presidential campaign, he promised to deport all illegal immigrants, to build a wall on along the southern border in order to keep Mexican citizens out of the USA and to make Mexico pay for the wall, to ban Muslims to enter the USA, etc.

The Russian Federation

Ethnic Russian nationalism has been growing since the fall of the Soviet Union, along with attempts by the regime to suppress it. Until the early 2000s, Russia was fragmented among different groups supporting the restoration of the USSR, anti-Westernism and anti-Semitism. Since 2000, nationalist sentiment has turned against "culturally alien" migrants (those from Central Asia and the Caucasus). There has been growing support for preferential treatment for ethnic Russians, as seen in the "Russia for Russians" movement. In annexing Crimea, Putin managed to steal the thunder of the supremacist Russian nationalists. But as long as waves of migrants who are perceived as culturally alien keep coming, the storm clouds will still exist and influence Russian politics. The regime will have the unpalatable choice of allowing the growth of radical forces that vehemently oppose democracy, even its "managed" variety, or yielding to popular demands to create an apartheid state. In fact, Russia had the highest level of hate crimes anywhere in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Some Russians were frustrated by the regime's unwillingness to vigorously to support ethnonationalist causes inside and outside Russia. This frustration, at times, manifested itself in violence against those perceived to be culturally different. Verkhovsky (director of SOVA Information and Analysis Centre) argues that the Russian government began to repress and co-opt the radical nationalist movement in 2008.

In particular, he notes the “totally unexpected anti-migrant campaign conducted over several months on Russian television” in 2013, which featured vigilante groups assisting federal police authorities in raids on migrant dormitories and led to “an unprecedented rise in ethno-xenophobia in society”. Many politicians and political scientists argue that the 2014 annexation of Crimea showed President Vladimir Putin’s desire to construct the “Soviet Union 2.0”– and direct global affairs once more. Nationalism has been used to explain everything from Russia’s intervention in Syria, Russia’s unusually large number of hate crimes, and the regime’s rush to host sporting mega-events such as the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics and the 2018 World Cup.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

One of many attempts to solve the issue of nationalism and its extremities was the idea of the *melting pot*. It should help assimilate migrants in a new society. They tried to teach migrants the language that was spoken in the new society, and to organize educational programmes such as preparation for public schools. But in the USA, the Americanisation was quickly misused. This is the consequence of the lack of government’s interests to fully support the Americanisation, without setting unified Americanisation’s aims. The melting pot was later used as a propaganda against migrants.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

On the one hand, we cannot ban nationalism, because we must be aware that nationalism is a political ideology, which is present since the French Revolution. Without nationalism, we probably would not know so many different states, which are products of nations’ fights for independence.

On the other hand, we must not allow any political party to develop nationalism in any kind of extremes. History shows us what happened in the 1940s and we should never allow this to happen again. We should convince states that have nationalist governments not to violate the Declaration of Human Rights. We could suggest the states confronted with the issue launch programs which aim to prevent rising nationalism.

APPENDIX

Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, 23 December 1994,
A/RES/49/146.

USEFUL LINKS

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalism>
- https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/05/30/surveys-show-russian-nationalism-is-on-the-rise-this-explains-a-lot-about-the-countrys-foreign-and-domestic-politics/?utm_term=.99f1e2d7a86a
- <https://www.statista.com/chart/4901/the-rise-of-nationalism-across-europe/>
<https://mic.com/articles/140107/racism-in-america-today-is-alive-and-well-and-these-stats-prove-it#.PpZuEroEP>