

Nationalism: an Obstacle to the Revolution

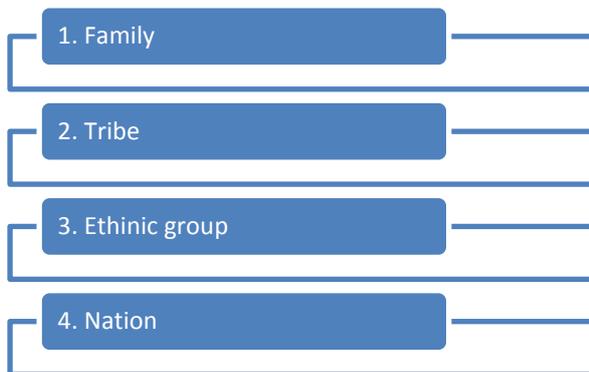
In the online dictionary, nationalism is described as:

'Identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations'.

When you hear the word 'nationalism', what comes to mind?

- Culture
- Ethnicity
- Country
- Identity
- Language

These are just some of the ideas that come to mind when the word 'nationalism' is mentioned. Nationalism is the extension of the family bond. And it is a bond that brings confidence, courage, security and comfort. The bond extends in the following way:



Nationalism brings a sense of togetherness and unity, especially against a foreign foe. But it can also bring disunity, as the principle idea is unity against all other 'people'. And since we are not all alike: we do not speak the same language, we do not have the same skin colour, we do not share the same cultural practices, there is the danger that what should bring unity could bring us eternal difference and disunity. This need for security and wellbeing can be satisfied in the wrong way, nationalism being one of them.

Is there any wonder then that we see nations and their leaders following a deep rooted greediness in going about securing the interests of their nations to the exclusion of any humanity or kindness?

The leading capitalist nations are quintessential examples of this greed. America, France, UK, Russia are willing to go to proxy wars to secure their interests, not giving a hoot about the human and environmental costs that wars result in.

Whether it is oil, land, gas, military presence and expansion, building and military equipment contracts, access to business markets and populations, nation building, so that nations favour them over others etc., you name it, any kind of interest, these nations are willing to kill and destroy anyone who stands in their way. And when it suits them, these nations will encourage ethnic groups to rebel against their

governments and states so that they can secure some benefit. They do not really believe or respect nationalism since it is only proposed if it is in their benefit to do so.

Henry Kissinger once said that:

'America has no permanent friends or enemies, only interests.'

And so, in politics and beliefs held by nations and politicians, there are no absolutes. For example, you are either a terrorist or a freedom fighter; this depends entirely on whose view you accept. For example, the PKK or the Kurdistan Workers' Party based in Turkey and parts of Iraq are seen by the Turkish government as a terrorist group, but their supporters say they are freedom fighters. So, one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.

Nationalists in theory should not allow any external influence in their own domestic or international politics or dealings but the short term benefit or carrot can go a long way. And so, the politicians of the West and of the East are corrupt.

Human beings can and do affiliate with each other based on a number of bases. One such basis is territory. It is something that has stayed with human beings from our primitive animal past and has remained throughout our evolutionary past. This is because we see this 'group' or 'pack' mentality in animals, where they ally with each other to protect their family for food or to protect their homes and areas. As the minds of human beings have developed, so has the need for security and wellbeing.

If we observe gangs, it is a classic case of pack mentality. Some gang affiliation is based on a territorial basis. It sometimes comes down to which postcode one is from in order to become a member of a particular gang. While writing this I am absolutely flabbergasted that human beings can bond with others simply based on the postcode. It seems so arbitrary. And the bond goes to the extent that gang members are willing to kill or be killed simply because they come from a particular area.

There are 195 countries in the world today and I would think that the overriding idea which forms them is a feeling of a distinct and unique entity of a nation state. This feeling of nation state is so dangerous, it should be chucked into the scrapheap of history.

Nationalism is justified as the right of each nation to seek its own self-determination and destiny. The problem with this is there are so many different ethnic groups who want self-determination; it is a recipe for disaster. There is not a single country in which there are many different ethnic groups who want a say in their own destiny. To represent all ethnic groups is difficult but not impossible. This is because each ethnic group or nation is different in its outlook, values and ways of doing things. Care must be taken by a communist state to cater for each and every group no matter how difficult this may seem. If this does not happen, then workers have to unite and struggle for a better society.

As such, nationalism has been and is the cause of many wars. Primarily civil wars, where one ethnic group seeks to take power and control of other ethnic groups.

Look to Iraq, Syria, Libya, North and South Sudan, Yemen etc. all facing destruction due to this concept of nationhood and nation state. These states are mainly Muslim states. But according to Islam there is no such thing as nationalism when it comes to the basis of bonding with other Muslims.

Certainly this is a foreign idea when it comes to Islam. In Islam nationalism or the bond between two people based on ethnicity is an alien concept. But rather in Islam, the bond between two people should be based on the basic tenets of faith or 'aqeeda' since Muslims are all brothers and sisters bonded by the Islamic belief.

Nationalism is accepted as a praiseworthy concept in today's day and age. But this idea has been used by capitalist states to control, separate and divide its enemies and target countries with a view to weakening them. Nationalism is particularly popular when a nation is at war with another nation. This explains why leaders of nations at war are usually very popular and jingoism is prevalent amongst the masses. Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler and Margaret Thatcher all enjoyed the praise of their populations.

So, after the Second World War many states fought for 'independence' from colonial powers. But they fought for something which would take them out of the frying pan and into the fire. Those seeking independence did not see that the basis on which they wanted independence (nation state) would cause them further separation and strife and would not ultimately give them any independence at all. They would still be under the indirect control of the colonial powers who would still be pulling the strings of the 'national' governments.

Part of the history of nationalism goes back to imperialist Europe and in particular Britain. This idea of nationalism was proposed and propagated by nationalist organisations whose work indirectly assisted the imperial powers who took on board that they could no longer rule directly so could split the nations and rule them by proxy. Placing rulers and leaders in place who would do the bidding for them alone. It has to be said that there was a struggle between imperialist powers to influence their people in favour of their state alone. There was, for example, a struggle between Britain and America vying for influence in the Muslims states, after the Second World War. And this struggle for influence continues to this very day.

Ideas usually start with an individual, if that individual shares or propagates the idea, it will be tested by others through investigation and discussion. The idea may take off and large swathes of people may be influenced by the idea. The strongest ideas are those based on reality. If it agrees with reality, it is easily accepted, and if it is contrary to reality, it may be rejected.

They say that if an individual believes something contrary to reality, he is mad. If a group holds something contrary to reality, it is a religion. Certainly, if large numbers of people hold the same belief it takes its moment in history. The popularity of an idea also depends on how passionate the protagonists of the idea are. Are they really living by the idea? How much sacrifice are they willing to make for the idea? How voracious are they in their calling to the idea?

There really is no way of telling the future course of an idea. Will it be successful? Will people like it? What will be the reaction of the masses to it? But nevertheless, the

propagation of an idea should have some planning and thought should be given to how to propagate the idea to the masses. And so, nationalism has gained popularity with people and is propagated on a national and international level. This is because the leading nations of the 19th and 20th century planned and implemented the separation of peoples based on their national identity.

If we look at human history, we can place it broadly into three categories: hunter gatherer, agricultural and industrial. These three distinct phases of human history goes some way to explaining human development over millennia.

The hunter gatherer (or the Cave Man) was possibly primarily concerned about looking after himself and his immediate family, with the female remaining at home to look after things, whilst the strong and agile man went out to hunt for food.

The agrarian or agricultural human needed to work with others in society and was geared towards living within a community.

The third type of existence is living in an urban environment and the human being, certainly for work, has to interact with others and be sociable. However, with the advent of Capitalism and industrialization, people seem to be alone and live increasingly isolated lives. It is current knowledge that there exist more people who live their lives isolated and alone in their homes than previous generations. The stories of old from the older generations east, west, north or south of the world state that things were better in previous generations and that society was more caring and sharing; that people lived together and helped each other.

What we are currently seeing is the results of the capitalist ideology, which promotes individualism. And it has to be said it is now facing the repercussions. People are starting to fight back and are rejecting this merciless ideology.

In Communism things are done in a communal way. The individual is not left alone to his or her devices. Things are done by all for the greater benefit of all. And so this type of ideology is more appealing and engaging for the human being.

I call for each and every ethnic group to let go of its ethnic or national values for the betterment of society and a rich and cohesive society so that we may take a step forward to a communist society.

It has to be said that nationalism presents an obstacle to the revolution now happening all over the world. The revolution against the capitalist ideology. It presents an obstacle in that people may mistake the communist revolution for a nationalist revolution and as such it should be made clear to the proletariat (who will ultimately fight in the class war) that we are providing a leadership to a wider and deeper value than just nationalism.

Whether we like it or not society is continually changing, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. When we observe the changes, we see that two opposing ideas conflict to make a third idea. The third idea is sometimes progression or it could also be regression. But the fact that this conflict happens is crucial to society's development. This is where political movements come in. They have to instigate society's continual and ultimate advancement. If we want to change

society, we have to consider this process of change. We have to initiate the clash of ideas so that we may progress.

What I mean by instigate a better tomorrow, is that we have to take the concerns of the proletariat and expose how they are being used by the capitalists and how life would be much better under the communist way of life without different classes and everyone being equal.

Differences of language and custom does not have to be a source of conflict, but rather a celebration of what human beings have achieved throughout history. So, one does not have to be a nationalist to be a communist.

It is my view that a cultural awareness and identity is fine as long as it does not reach to the level of nationalism. Cultural practises are to be celebrated as long as there is no harm or it is not a backward practise and it does not threaten societal unity.

It is also my view that nationalism is a form of racism and forms no other purpose than to separate people on the basis of race and tribalism. Wars are fought over national identity. It is against humanity and serves only to divide people and is a major obstacle to the global revolution. So, friends let's take the bull by the horns and deal this idea a lasting blow and bring relationship of people back to the basis of the communist ideology and comradeship.

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