

# Nationalism: Its Conservative, Liberal, and Radical Conceptions

written by Farid Zulfugarli Fərid Zülfüqarlı

Historically, people have been loyal to their ancestral traditions, native lands, defined territories, and existing power-holders. But new trends that were emerging in human society (e.g. Enlightenment movements, Industrial Revolution) at the end of the eighteenth century began to drive people to nationalism. Therefore, as a modern concept, nationalism emerged in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries in Europe and appeared in various forms at different times in several European countries. Subsequently, nationalism became a generally accepted and indivisible sentiment in social and individual life as well as the only determining factor in the contemporary history. The French and the American revolutions can be given as examples as the first powerful manifestations of nationalism. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, nationalism spread widely across Central Europe and it subsequently penetrated Latin America and later Eastern and Southern European countries. At the beginning of the twentieth century, nationalism began to flourish in ancient Asia and Africa. Thus, while the nineteenth century is called “the century of European nationalism,” the twentieth century is considered the century of Asian and African nationalism (Kohn 2018, par. 1-2).

The correct understanding and promotion of concepts such as nation and nationalism are one of the necessary factors in the building of a strong nation state, particularly in early stages of nation building. Therefore, historical roots and evolution of nation and nationalism, the conditions and causes of their emergence as well as the forms of their manifestations in different countries should be thoroughly

explored and studied. Nationalism, derived from historical necessity, should be widely studied as a philosophical-cultural concept, socio-political idea, ideology, and a form of struggle. In addition, its positive and negative sides should be examined, too. Countries which regained their independence in last decades and still faces threats from great powers could take actions in the direction of building a strong nation-state by taking advantage of its positive sides.

Although (nation) nationalism was separately studied until World War II, after the war, it was studied broadly and systematically – as a “given social category” or “modern age concept,” from the context of “ethnic past and cultural factors” – in the USA and Europe by **historians** such as Carlton Hayes, Hans Kohn, Alfred Cobban, Louis Leo Snyder, **modernists** such as Karl Deutsch, Elie Kedourie, Tom Nairn, John Brully, Eric J. Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, and since the 1980-90s, by **ethno-symbolist** John Armstrong, **theorists** such as Anthony D. Smith and John Hutchinson (Nasibov 2015, 7-9).

In the present study, concepts of nation and nationalism as well as liberal, conservative, and radical conceptions of nationalism have been studied by using diverse literature, academic articles, and other Internet resources (encyclopedia, etc.). The aim of the study is to discuss the emergence and formation of European nationalism and contemporary views on nationalism by analyzing various approaches to the concepts of nation and nationalism, and also to demonstrate the specific characteristics of liberal, radical, and conservative conceptions of nationalism. One of the goals set forth in the study is to answer the following question: “is nationalism a negative or a positive phenomenon?” The study consists of five parts. In the first part, various views, explanations, and approaches to the concept of nation and nationalism are discussed as a form of debate. In the second and the third sections of the study, three forms of nationalism – liberal, conservative, and radical nationalism – are discussed and

their distinctive features are analyzed. The fourth part explains the need for more theoretical and scholarly investigation of this nineteenth century phenomenon by distinctly explaining some pejorative attitudes towards nationalism. In the last part, the general findings and conclusions of the study are summarized.

## **NATION AND NATIONALISM**

Until the nineteenth century, no state or territory under any leadership was determined by its nationality. Nation-states had not existed for the largest part of history and for a long period of time it was not recognized as a perfect system. While people put their trust in cities and dynasties, feudal lords, religious groups or sects, they did not have a confidence in nation-states. In the first fifteen centuries of Christianity, the universal world-state (such as the Holy Roman Empire as well as the *res publica christiana* (Christian republic)) was accepted as a fundamental ideal and separatist forces were not supported. In the period in which nationalism was widely spread, the principle of self-determination – a freedom of each nation to establish its own state – and a goal that this state should unify all representatives of a particular nation within its borders were taken as an ideal (Aggarwall n.d.).

In a modern sense, European nationalism was born as a result of a desire of any society to preserve its unity and independence. The French Bourgeois Revolution, which shook the European peoples, had further aggravated certain movements that occurred in the nineteenth century in the purpose of realization of nationalistic desires (Aggarwall n.d.), and the after the revolution, the principle of sovereignty was taken from absolute rulers in favor of nations (Nasibov 2015). The revolution of which core ideas were freedom, equality, and fraternity led to the formation of a nationalist spirit. Despite the fact that the essence the Napoleonic Empire was invasions, it gave a form of unity, and revolutionary ideas of

equality and nationalism to Europe. A new concept, which brought people together with the feelings of “belonging” and “unity,” had emerged. Thus, nations began to be formed by people who shared common customs, cultures, and territories (Aggarwall n.d.).

There is no particular definition to explain the concept of nation. However, in general, it can be described as a group of people or a community who share one homeland and promote solidarity through factors such as society or culture, language or territory (Hoffman and Graham 2015, 262-284). “For the primordial and the perennial historians, nation is the most natural and justifiable political organization; contemporary nations are [current] extensions of centuries-old existing association; nations can be found not only in the middle ages, but also in antiquity; the only thing that has changed is the outward forms of nations; ‘national essence’ remains the same. According to defenders of this view, nation is a community created by people who share a common culture, history, language, and territory” (Nasibov 2015). According to James Kellas (1993), a nation is a group of people who are connected to one another with historical, cultural, and common ancestral ties. Nations have “objective,” such as territorial, language, religion, or common habits (although they all do not exist all the time), and “subjective” characteristics, such as national awareness and love for its own nationality (Hoffman and Graham, 2015, 262 -284).

According to John Stuart Mill (1806-73), “a portion of mankind may be said to constitute a nationality if they are united among themselves by common sympathies which do not exist between them and any others – which make them co-operate with each other more willingly than with other people, desire to be under the same government, and desire that it should be government by themselves, or a portion of themselves, exclusively. This feeling of nationality may have been generated by various causes. Sometimes it is the effect of identity of race and descent. Community of language and

community of religion greatly contribute to it. Geographical limits are one of its causes. But the strongest of all is identity of political antecedents; the possession of a national history, and consequent community of recollections; collective pride and humiliation, pleasure and regret, connected with the same incidents in the past" (Mill 1961 [*Considerations On Representative Government*], chp. XVI). In other words, Mill considered national feelings (consciousness) as a key factor in the creation of the nation.

Ernest Renan, who played a major role in the formation of the notion of nation in France, explained this notion with the "will" factor. He argued that ethnographic factors did not play any role in the creation of modern nations. France consisted of Celts, Iberians, and Germans; Germany consisted of Germans, Celts, and Slavs. No country is more diverse than Italy in terms of its ethnographic structure. Galles, Etruscans, Pelasgians, Greeks, and many other elements were extensively intertwined in Italy. At the same time, according to Renan, race, religion, language, trade or borders did not play any role in the nation-building process, and it is power (state) that brought different tribes together. "The noblest countries – England, France, and Italy – are those in which blood is the most mixed. Is Germany in this respect an exception? Is it a purely Germanic country? What an illusion!" (Renan 1882, trans. Rundell 1992, 6).

Herder and Johann Fichte (1762–1814) believed that environment and language were the key elements in the formation of the national character and the national unity, respectively (Nasibov 2015). According to George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), each nation is distinguished by a special developmental stage of national spirit (*volksgeist*) and this national spirit is the main feature that distinguishes every nation. Hegel thought that national spirit was "spirit that created a real world out of itself, it (...) exists in its own religion, culture, customs, state and political laws, in all institutions, actions, and deeds" (Hegel 1935, 75).

In contrast to the idealistic worldview which claims that the role of “culture, state, and psychological factors” are the main factors that form nations, the Marxist worldview rather considers economic factors – especially, economic life, class structures, proletarian internationalism and the role of bourgeois nationalism – as the main factors in the evolution and progress of nations. These ideas, which were defended by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, later played a role in development of views of European social-democracy and socialists (Nasibov 2015, par. 7). According to Josef Stalin, “nation is the highest stage of ethnic unity; a union of people based on psychological characteristics such as language, territory, economic life, and culture” (Stalin 1946, 296-297). He claimed that if any of these mentioned factors is missing, this “union of solidarity” of people can no longer be considered a nation; it “can only become a nation if all these characteristics exist simultaneously” (Stalin 1946, 296-297).

**Nationalism** has been explained in two main – French and German – methods. According to the French method, anyone who accepted loyalty to the civil French state was “a citizen.” In practice, this also implied an implementation of significant degree of homogeneity, such as elimination of regional (vernacular) languages. Civic inclusive nationalism, which was adopted by the United States, was also similar to the French method. However, the German method, which was driven by the political situation, used to describe the concept of “nation” on ethnic grounds. Even though, practically speaking, after accepting the name “German” for all citizens and speaking in German language, ethnic affiliation in Germany has relatively lost its importance, in the German-speaking Slavic middle classes (Agram, etc.) in Prague, ethnicity has a greater importance compared to Germany. In practice, it can be argued that nationalism always results in aggressive, irredentist, and chauvinistic outcomes, but the nature of nationalism requires certain boundaries. If these boundaries were purely civic, successful nationalism, in many cases, would manage to

create favorable conditions for a large group of outsiders (foreigners) to have a more prosperous life in a "nation-state" (Halsall 1997 par.1).

According to Johann Herder (1744-1803), nationalism, a great political power of the nineteenth century, was established on an increasing desire and excitement for romantic "feeling," "identity," and liberal demands, which claimed that legitimacy of state should be based on the governance of "people" rather than an authority of a family, a god (or gods) or an empire. Both romantic "identity nationalism" and liberal "civic nationalism" had mostly been "middle class" movements (Halsall 1997, par. 2).

Nationalism is based on, according to Hoffman and Graham, beliefs and self-perceptions of people/nation (2009, 264-285); according to Heywood, how people understand an ultimate importance of nation in their collective actions and behavior; and for Miskiewicz, moral, cultural or political achievements and sustainability of states (Miskiewicz, *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* 2014, par. 1-4). As mentioned above, there are different definitions of nationalism. For example, according to the Guibernau, nationalism is "the sentiment of belonging to a community whose members identify themselves with a set of symbols, beliefs and ways of life and have [a political] will to decide upon their common political destiny" (Guibernau 1996, 47, quoted in Hoffman and Graham 2009, 262). This definition incorporates three major goals of nationalism defined by Smith: national identity, unity, and sovereignty (Smith 2013, 43). Common symbols and beliefs provide a sense of national identity and unity while political will of the people promotes autonomy.

There is a new agreement in this area that nations develop over time and they are formed by various cultural, political and psychological factors (Heywood 2000, cited by UKEssays, 2013, par.7). As mentioned, these factors include common language, history, memories, traditions, stories, myths, as

well as shared territories and laws (Smith 2013, 41-44). These factors play a crucial role in the cultural, psychological, and political development of a nation because common history, territory, and laws create collective identity, and collective consciousness or loyalty among a group of people (Heywood 2000, cited by UKEssays, 2013, par. 7).

However, these common factors and especially the latter notion of "collective identity" are not unanimously accepted. For example, Anderson imagines nation as a culturally man-made notion in terms of common language and time. He describes nations as "imagined communities" which are a subjective rather than an objective concept. For members of a particular nation do not communicate with one another; instead they recognize or know one another through common stories, events, and media. Moreover, borders, powers, and class differences among our nations are limited and understood by our own perceptions (Hoffman, Graham and Goodwin 2010, cited by UKEssays, 2013, par.8).

Hobsbawm's (1990) definition of nationalism is distinguished by an openness and originality it gives to the debate; he perceives "nationalism as a socially constructed phenomenon and claims that any definition of nationalism is doomed to fail because it would always be possible to find exceptions" (Hobsbawm 1990, 5). Hobsbawm defines nationalism as an ideology, a changing, evolving, and a modern construction of political and national unity. By emphasizing the importance of the role of political, technical, administrative, and economic conditions such as administrative and educational infrastructure in the emergence of nations, he argues that nationalism was built in a top-down fashion. "Hobsbawm believes nationalism is constructed from above, although it needs to be studied from below as this is where it takes root and is most powerful and volatile". (Hobsbawm 1990, pp. 5, 9-10 cited by Killashandra et.al 2013, par. 6).

According to Hobsbawm, for the purpose of manipulation and



social control, ruling classes establish fake collective identity by constructing “modern” traditions such as nation, national state, national symbols, and national reflex. He divides traditions into two distinct parts – past (pre-modern) traditions and constructed traditions that caused World War I – and argues that there are fundamental differences between them. Past traditions did not include political demands based on religions and vernacular languages, but the later traditions were created in order to unite the masses and gain power and territory during the war (Hobsbawm 1983, 9, cited by Killashandra et.al 2013, par. 13). Nevertheless, Smith claims that these theories ignore the importance of emotional ties and moral will while he believes that nation is not just a social structure, but a mixture of cultural, social and political influences (Smith 2010, cited by UKEssays, 2013, par. 10).

### **LIBERAL NATIONALISM**

If we talk about liberal nationalism, it is impossible to ignore French nationalism. The nationalism of the French Revolution derived most of its ideas from Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). He argued that the general co-operation of everyone in the sovereignty of the people and the formation of national will is important. In general, most academics agree that the first liberal thinker who defended nationalism was Rousseau. He defended the principle of association of individual freedoms with the general will of the people. His theory has helped to shape a liberal nationalism based on ideas of democratic governance (Hoffman and Graham 2009, pp. 174, 195, 264). According to Rousseau, democracy connected liberalism and nationalism with each other, which led to a just outcome with a majority of votes by providing equal opportunities to all individuals. Rousseau was able to influence other thinkers such as Mazzini (Heywood 2003), who promoted nationalism in all Europe by creating “Young Europe” movement, and Mill, the author of the theories of “free institutions” and self-governance (Goodwin, 2010, cited by

UKEssays 2013, par.14).

The nationalism of the French Revolution was not limited to this, it was a glorious expression of a rational belief in humanity and liberal progress. This prominent motto, "liberty, equality, fraternity" as well as the Declaration of the Rights of the Man and of the Citizen were not only applied to the French nation, but also to all nations. Values such as individual freedom, equality of humans, and the brotherhood of all peoples were the common grounds of liberal and democratic nationalism. This inspiration began to form new traditions such as new rituals, holidays, ceremonies of old years, and celebrations: festivals, music, poetry, national holidays, and patriotic speeches. Nationalism has entered to all aspects of life in the most diverse forms. As in America, the rise of French nationalism has created a new phenomenon – an armed nation – in the art of war. Uneducated civilian armies, which were fighting with a nationalistic enthusiasm, in America and France proved to be superior to highly trained professional armies without a nationalistic spirit. Revolutionary French nationalism considered decisions of free individuals as the basis of the formation of nations and explained the creation of nations by giving a reference to the right of self-determination of all members. The election was regarded as a key tool for expressing the will of the nation. In America, as in revolutionary France, nationalism was understood as a loyalty to the universal progressive idea of the common future of freedom and equality instead of looking at the past, which was characterized by authoritarianism and inequality (Kohn 2018, par 11-12).

"In the first half of the nineteenth century, Europe was full of liberal nationalists who maintained the ideas of universal brotherhood and sisterhood, human fellowship, moral reciprocity, commitment, and sympathetic understanding. They firmly believed that the fight for the independence and freedom of any country was a common cause. As Ernest Gellner noted, liberalism and nationalism, in the nineteenth century,

were allies, even brothers; only later, would their paths diverge" (Donskis 2009, 78). In the first half of the nineteenth century, liberal nationalism, which was the first stage of nationalism, was regarded as a synonym for liberalism itself. Liberal nationalism, which is against falsification and exaggeration of history, has always been and continues to be an interpretative and a normative framework for the critical thinking about society and culture. Liberal nationalism, as a social and moral philosophy, has created a model of intellectual culture of which essence is critically modernization of society and culture. Liberal nationalism allows cosmopolitan thinking in politics and public discourse as well as critical modernization of its policies and culture. Liberal and democratic nationalism is the guarantor of our modern-intellectual and moral sensitivity (Harrison and Boyd 2010, 154-195).

According to this school of thought, humanity is naturally divided into nations that have equal rights to all the lands with some territorial boundaries. Each nation must be sovereign and self-governed by its own political institutions. National rights are universal and, also similar to human rights. This form of nationalism is perfectly compatible with more internationalist, pacifist, and idealist elements within liberalism. A world of sovereign nations will respect one another's national rights and will easily cooperate with international organizations. This, of course, was the hope of liberal nationalists like Guiseppe Mazzini in Italy (Harrison and Boyd 2010, 154-195). Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), a leading liberal nationalist of his time, wrote in his "Europe: Its Condition and Prospects" essay that:

It was not for a material interest that the people of Vienna fought in 1848; in weakening the empire they could only lose power. It was not for an increase of wealth that the people of Lombardy fought in the same year; the Austrian Government had endeavoured in the year preceding to excite the peasants against the landed proprietors, as they had done in Gallicia;

but everywhere they had failed. They struggled, they still struggle, as do Poland, Germany, and Hungary, for country and liberty; for a word inscribed upon a banner, proclaiming to the world that they also live, think, love, and labour for the benefit of all. They speak the same language, they bear about them the impress of consanguinity, they kneel beside the same tombs, they glory in the same tradition; and they demand to associate freely, without obstacles, without foreign domination, in order to elaborate and express their idea; to contribute their stone also to the great pyramid of history. It is something moral which they are seeking; and this moral something is in fact, even politically speaking, the most important question in the present state of things. It is the organisation of the European task. It is no longer the savage, hostile, quarrelsome nationality of two hundred years ago which is invoked by these peoples (Scott, 1880 266, cited by Halsall 1997, par. 6).

In general, all the revolutions in Europe in 1848 were strongly influenced by liberals, and in most cases, they had been defeated by cautious states. Such nationalism was in favor of respecting the rights of ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities. This form of nationalism was popular among liberals and some socialists in the early nineteenth century. After World War I, the right to "national self-determination" was raised in the League of Nations on the grounds of collective security principles. After World War II, the ideas of this form of nationalism were used to regulate human rights, free trade and international economy in the United Nations and other liberal international organizations (Harrison and Boyd 2010, 154-195).

With the failure of the liberal revolution in Germany in 1848, liberalism began to be crushed under reactionary threats of the Catholic Church. While the missionary waves of the Church, beginning in 1848, spread to thousands of German cities and villages, as well as great lands such as Rhineland and Baltic, they were devastating to the ideals of liberalism and

enlightenment for two decades. Thousands of religious and conservative people, mostly the Jesuits, the Franciscans, and the Redemptionists, joined the movement[\[i\]](#). Although the government noticed that mass demonstrations might create a public problem, it allowed the Church to promote its more conservative, yet moderate movement (Watson 2010, 421-425).

In terms of culture, educated liberals of Germany saw the revival of the period of ignorance and backwardness in the rise of Catholicism. This was the backwardness of the middle of the eighteenth century that led to many obstacles in the rise of the country to the 1870s Germany with its von Liebig, Clausius, Helmholtz, Siemens, Hayne, Koch, Zeiss, and Virchow. Although liberals won the war against Catholics, they were defeated in their fight against Bismarck (Watson 2010, 421-425). Their victory over the Church was much smaller than their defeat to Bismarck, which would result in the emergence of radical political parties (which posed global threats) such as Nazism and Fascism. New radical political movements in Germany and Italy could not allow nationalism, a political phenomenon, to remain uninfluenced by these radical impacts. Therefore, while the first half of the nineteenth century was the flourishing period of liberal nationalism, with the defeat of 1848's revolution, nationalism became a victim of rising radical political processes in Europe.

### **CONSERVATIVE AND RADICAL NATIONALISM**

Conservative tendencies of nationalism have emerged through the establishment of the European states and simultaneously started their political activities. Such trends emerged from the complex division of power between a large number of units and the collapse of the medieval unity, which was characterized by mutual cooperation and competition formed over centuries between emperors and priests. The second half of the twentieth century was reminiscent of the further revival of various forms of conservative nationalism. Initially, protests against the ideas of internationalism

which were widespread in the first decades after the World War II, resulted in the elimination of the socialist or the communist version of internationalism (Holbraad 2003, 97-121).

In contemporary Europe, conservative nationalism typically represents a more pessimistic view of human nature, politics, and history. It is inclined to be realist in terms of portraying the international community as a multitude of sovereign states, which function in a mutual competition that sometimes results in conflicts and wars. Conservative nationalism, a state-centered form of nationalism, recognizes European power (authority) as a fundamental political unit and assumes that these units act in accordance with their personal interests. The main themes of conservative nationalism are the same as those of conservative internationalism (for example, provision of national security and, ultimately, a struggle to survive). The differences are the means and programs that the former proposes. Conservative nationalism is not only egoistic<sup>[ii]</sup> in character, but also a retrospective<sup>[iii]</sup> in terms of its orientation. It mostly takes its inspiration from past concepts and descriptions of people, and very rarely from the future predictions of the international community. Its description of the past can be extremely selective and may include mythical elements originating from the earliest times of national history, as well as parts based on the successes and experiences gained in subsequent moments. Loyalty to culture and history of the nation can be moderate and rational or more extreme and fanatical. Policies and programs that are based on this form of nationalism can be essentially defensive or very aggressive. Such differences in quality were evident in conservative nationalism that developed in some countries in the nineteenth century (Holbraad 2003, 97-121).

Although radical nationalism emerged after World War I, many researchers claim that its roots lie in the French Revolution. Radical nationalism is a desire to change the regional and international order in favor of your nation. Radical nationalism appears in two forms: its first form has a

fundamentalist right-wing political view while the second form has an anti-colonialist view. The radical right-wing nationalist form condemns the old order, privileged classes, and the obsolete institutions on the grounds that they have betrayed their nation. Radical nationalism, which often demands a renewal of nation by requiring real and serious social, economic, and political reforms, had sought to present the working class as an alternative to the internationalism of communism and socialism after the Russian Revolution (Harrison and Boyd 2003, 158).

The defeat in the war created an incentive for such tendencies in Germany and Turkey, as well as a stimulus for radical nationalism in Italy and France. This form of radical nationalism does not tolerate minorities, refuses to see them as genuine part of the nation, and it usually possesses aggressive irrendentist claims against its neighboring states. It believes that its own nation is absolutely superior to another nation; therefore, according to this view, it is the right of this superior nation to fight in order to expand its territories. This nationalism can easily be tied to Fascism (Harrison and Boyd, 2003, pp. 158-159). This form of nationalism, which is based on fundamentalist right-wing political views, had been shaped under the influences of the Nazi and Fascist regimes in Germany and Italy, accordingly, and had resulted in great human tragedies.

But radical nationalism can also choose anti-colonial struggle against reactionary and imperialist radical nationalism. In this form, by using nationalistic values, it can claim its independence from a political structure that puts pressure on members of this nation. This form refers to the doctrine of national self-determination and the doctrine of national independence (Harrison and Boyd 2003, 158-159). This conception of radical nationalism contributed to the formation of the Turkish Republic and its struggle for independence.

During the decades following World War II, nationalism played

an important role in the collapse of the European empires. At the same time, this form of nationalism often covered a large part of the social environment as a result of the overthrow of social values of indigenous peoples as well as the overthrow of colonial dominant classes. After independence, this form of nationalism resisted the Western economic, cultural, and political domination, and led many developing countries to nationalize the assets of multinational companies based in their own territories (Harrison and Boyd 2003, 159).

### **A DIFFERENT EXPLANATION TO THE PEJORATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS NATIONALISM**

First time I became familiar with a different explanation of nationalism when I took classes from Professor Leonidas Donskis at Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania. The late professor emphasized that since the threat of invasion of small states by the great powers still exists in the period of postimperialism, nationalist principles were of great importance for the existence of small states. He argued that nationalism is an important phenomenon – which emerged as a result of historical necessity and determined the collapse of imperialism, and even gave an opportunity for small nations to establish their own states, as well as giving a right to each individual to choose his/her own nation regardless of his/her ethnic, religious, racial, and geographical background – and incorrect depiction of nationalism and, most importantly, promoting these purposefully misleading and the pejorative images of nationalism are unacceptable. In his article titled “Postimperialism and Small Nations” in his book *Troubled Identity and The Modern World*, Professor Donskis gave his different interpretation to the pejorative approaches of European and American researchers to nationalism. In order to explain my point in this article, I am going to summarize the related parts from the Professor’s book.

Professor Donskis believes that most American and European researchers use nationalism as a pejorative term. He claims



that neither terms such as “suicidal nationalism,” which was appended by the former US president George Bush, nor extreme approaches to nationalism would be helpful for analyzing this phenomenon of the nineteenth and the twentieth century. Instead of eliminating nationalism, which has been the main factor in the formation of contemporary consciousness, the author, by citing Alexander J. Motyle, states that it is crucial to examine it academically:

further complicating the definitional problem is that users of the term often ascribe to it an exclusively pejorative connotation. The adjectives that are frequently appended to the word—such as suicidal, irrational, hyper and emotional—reveal that nationalism is merely a code word for exaggerated national sentiment ... Indeed, Conor Cruise O’Brien explicitly defines nationalism as ‘a conglomerate of emotions. ...’ (So, too, I add, are love, hate and, alas, virtually everything else!)’” (Motyl, 1992, 309 quoted in Donskis 2009, 100).

Professor Donskis argues that attempts by some researches to explain “the dramas of the twentieth century” with nationalism is similar to “frightening the world with the monster of nationalism” (2009, 87). He points out that while the great powers present their nationalism as “authentic patriotism (...) the reaction it creates among smaller nations is presented as being suicidal nationalism” (Donskis 2009, 100). Therefore, he adds, “within this identity paradigm, the big and powerful nations appear as movingly patriotic, whereas the small ones remain fiercely nationalistic. At this point, a patriot relates to a nationalist much in the same way as a hero relates to a suicidal and homicidal fanatic” (Donskis 2009, 87-88).

In addition, Donskis argues that two world wars as well as social catastrophes of the twentieth century were the results of “the decline of empires, changed power constellations, (...) the total ‘modernization’ of the world [and] regimes guided by

global Communist and racist Nazi ideologies” rather than nationalism (Donskis 2009, 100-101). He highlights that nationalism was the main reason that determined the collapse of empires. While “the British Empire [and the French Empire were] seriously shaken by battles for Irish liberation [,] the Mahatma Gandhi movement [and] the war in Algeria, (...) due to the disintegration of the Russian Empire [,] Poland, Finland, and the Baltic states became independent. (...) This raises the simple question, where should our sympathies lie? With the nations that have liberated themselves from empires or with the fallen empires? Whose side are we on—of imperialism or freedom?

By stating that “everything depends on the social and political context,” Professor Donskis explains how “nationalism [like other things, such as marriage] can easily become a tool of oppression or emancipation, traditionalism or reform, subjugation or liberation” in the following way:

The life of a society and of its individual members is created by dipping into a chest of instruments that is not wide or deep. Everyone wears clothing, everyone needs food, everyone thirsts for intimacy and eroticism, and everyone seeks security and recognition. But precisely at this juncture we encounter the inevitable duality of social life: Clothing can mean both the tramp’s rags and a luxurious silk shirt; wealth can secure people’s dignity and increase their freedom, but it can also lead to their debasement; organized and legitimate power is capable of greatly diminishing the level of depravity and violence in a society, but, at the same time, it can cause the death of many innocent people; sex can become an act of brutality, violation, and humiliation, but in other circumstances, it can liberate persons and make them happy. All of this comes about from that selfsame human material, from that same person’s body and its means of self-realization (Donskis 2009, 103).

At the end of the article, Professor Donskis writes that “like

the search for an identity, nationalism and patriotism come as a promise of self-comprehension and self-fulfillment in the world of ambivalence and ambiguity” (2009, 103). He states that “if we end up as a conservative nationalist opposed to a liberal patriot, or vice versa, we do not find the way out of this predicament. The split of our faculties of the soul and of our political and moral sensibilities remains as deep as it was before our attempts to make up our mind, choosing one of the modern paths to emancipation and authentic existence” (Donskis 2009, 103).

## **CONCLUSION**

Nationalism, which was created by European societies of the nineteenth century, is a modern understanding of the social and political life of the world. The industrial revolution and enlightenment movements that took place in the eighteenth century created some demands in European societies that political power should belong to the public instead of a single family. These demands resulted in massive popular revolts and, ultimately, revolutions in America (1765-1783) and in France (1789-1799). These revolutions were the major political and social processes that led to the emergence of the first manifestations of nationalism – especially, liberal nationalism. While nationalism in Europe had more liberal views, and ideas of unity and solidarity in the first half of the nineteenth century, in the second half, it was increasingly defensive, mass-oriented, ideological and doctrinal.

Different definitions of nation and nationalism have been proposed; thinkers and researchers who share distinct world-views tried to explain these concepts by numerous factors such as common language, religion, territory, history, traditions, as well as ancestral or psychological, cultural and ethnic affiliations. Therefore, there are many answers to the question “what is nation and nationalism?” and they are explained by many different definitions.

Liberal nationalism emerged as the primary form of nationalism in European countries and give rise to the development of European societies during these periods. Liberal nationalism began with the French Revolution and since it values the concept of human rights, equal nations and citizenship, liberal nationalism was easily reconciled with liberal values. Liberal nationalism is based on the concept of self-determination and the world of nation-states, as well as fight against external pressures and the protection of sovereignty. Liberal nationalism believes that these principles are a prerequisite for peace and security in the world.

Radical nationalism, emerged after the World War I, largely developed in two ways. It, based on fundamental political views, is similar to Fascism in terms of its values. This radical form of nationalism is very dangerous for humanity and it had very tragic consequences. One of the reasons for its emergence was directly related to the weakening of the liberal worldview that was dominated in Europe in 1848. With this defeat of the liberal movements which were influenced by the French Revolution, Europe entered a new era of radical ideas. Emergence of political trends, such as Fascism and Nazism after World War I, led to the radicalization of nationalism and, ultimately, dragged Europe into major disasters and World War II. In contrast, radical nationalism which chose the path of anti-colonial struggle in Turkey had helped to win the war against the imperialists, and contributed to the formation of a modern and stronger state.

After the 1989 Soviet multinationalism experience, nationalism is now recognized as a positive, vital phenomenon in modern political, cultural, and social life as well as new extensive researches are conducted on nationalism. Researchers are working on nationalism for a more thorough investigation of this concept (Encyclopaedia of Nationalism 2018, par.1-2). Since my answer to the question "whether nationalism is a positive or a negative phenomenon?" had already been perfectly stated by Shtromas, I would like to end my article with his

words:

Insofar as a nation tries to establish itself in the world as an entity independent from another nation's rule and recognisable as a separate and equal partner by other nations and the world at large, that nation's nationalism is justified in the same way in which is justified the demand of the individual for the recognition and guarantee of his right not only to liberty but to life itself—for a nation is a kind of collective personality which, differently from an individual human being, cannot survive without liberty even in sheer physical terms; it will, in the end, either get assimilated by the nation-state in which it lives ... or it is going to be otherwise annihilated. In all other respects the rights of nations as collective personalities are akin to the human rights of individuals, too. In today's world of nation-states, this translates itself, in the first place, into each nation's equal right to self-determination and sovereign statehood. Therefore, as long as nationalism is understood as 'primarily a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent' [this is Ernest Gellner's definition], as long as it demands for each nation the equality of political condition, it is a healthy nationalism deserving in my view the wholehearted support of every fair-minded person and every free and democratic nation (my [original] emphasis) (Shtromas, 1994, 201–2, quoted in Donskis 2009, 102–103).

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[\[i\]](#) **The Jesuits**, the member of the Society of Jesus in 1534, a Roman Catholic spiritual order created by Saint Ignatius Loyola, Sacred Francis Xavier and others. The Order required selfless struggle against any progressive reform. Despite persistent persecutions, it had a major influence on Catholic thought and education.

**The Franciscans** are a group of related mendicant religious orders within the Catholic Church, founded in 1209 by Saint Francis of Assisi. These orders include the Order of Friars Minor, the Order of Saint Clare, and the Third Order of Saint Francis.

**The Redemptionists**, a worldwide congregation of the Catholic Church, dedicated to missionary work and founded by Saint Alphonsus Liguori at Scala, near Amalfi, Italy, for the purpose of labouring among the neglected country people around Naples. Members of the congregation are Catholic priests and consecrated religious brothers and ministers in more than 77 countries.

*(Translator's note: Information about the Fransiscans and the Redemptionists are taken from their respective Wikipedia pages by the author).*

[\[iii\]](#) Egocentrism (ego – “I”, *centrum* – “center”) – an

individual does not accept any opinion other than his/her own. Egocentrists consider themselves and their own ideas or interests more important and reliable. Egocentric people cannot fully comprehend or accept the ideas of others and the fact that the reality might differ from what they can accept.

[\[iii\]](#) Retrospective – looking back on or dealing with past events or situations.