

The Rise and Fall of Nationalism and
Internationalism

Mussolini has deified the State, Hitler has deified the Nordic, nations vilified and denounce each other and people all over the world lament that Nationalism reigns supreme. We are told we are faced with a choice: Communism and Fascism. We are told also it is not a question of Communism or Fascism, that peace can be attained when nations would be willing to remove tariff and quota restrictions and allow the free flow of international trade. Nations increase their armament expenditures and decrease their housing outlays. Everybody knows that another war will destroy Europe with more terror than the Great Flood. Yet every country terrifies its citizens with maddening preparations for war that will doom not only the living but unborn generations as well. Meanwhile, international economic conferences fail, Hull's trade treaties fail, Van Zeeland's trade proposals fail, British appeasement fails, Intellectual cooperation fails. Americans talk about Isolation and Collective Security in the event of a next war. As if the world were now at peace! And Italy and Germany wage war right before our eyes and ears in our very midst. Fascist propaganda reaches the masses all over the world and adds to the disintegration. Disintegration! This is the word that describes the present condition of the world--lack of direction, lack of convictions, lack of understanding; and on the other side, disillusionment, cynicism and indifference.

To understand the present trouble it is necessary to go back to the French Revolution. The French Revolution promulgated the two great principles of Nationalism and Liberalism. Not only the privileges of the aristocracy were abolished, but also every trace of the old regime: the administration system, names of places and rivers, internal tariff divisions, weights and measures and the calendar. France became One and Indivisible, completely and extremely centralized. To overthrow the feudal yoke it was necessary to have "patriots", soldiers of the nation. And the nation was determined by Nature. To recover the "natural" boundaries of the land, which was actually done, became the war cry. The Nation, then, was an organization in Nature.

Indissoluble with the principle of Nationalism was that of Liberalism or Individualism. The welfare of the individual was tied up with the integrity of the Nation. But Reason dictated that all men had equal rights and that the government should rest, not on divine right or the unreasonableness of descent, but on the majority rule of individuals. The individual was guaranteed his civil liberties. The road to fame and wealth was opened to all talent in defiance of the old aristocratic traditions.

During the 19th century the ideas of the Revolution were carried all over Europe. In the name of Nationality and its corollary, Self-Determination, Napoleon fought to liberate the Germans, Italians, Poles, Bohemians. And it was also in the name of Nationality that the Allies aroused the masses to overthrow Napoleon. Despite the Holy Alliance, Nationalism and Liberalism, hand in hand, spread over the continent. The revolutions in the '20's, '30's and '40's, European in scope, testify to the strength of these principles. And after 1848 it was still the power of Nationalism that unified Germany and Italy.

At the same time, Nationalism promoted great cultural achievements. Geniuses in art, poetry, music and literature, though their work was universally valid, were acclaimed as national heroes. Individual languages were exalted and made objects of pride. The Nation was bound together by its literature and art, what Delaisi has called its "moral patrimony".

Austria-Hungary, however, was a pre-national achievement, that is, the State was not coincident with any nationality. Magyars, Poles, Czechs, Rotes, etc. lived and intermarried within the Empire. The cultural characteristics of the many nationalities were allowed to flower instead of being erased and the Empire lived in harmony if not in uniformity.

Meanwhile, the industrialization of Europe was proceeding apace. New machinery increased production, trade prospered and industry developed and expanded. Capitalism was nurtured by the doctrine of a Liberal Nationalism. Private property (for the ruling classes) was considered the essential prerequisite for freedom. Industry, trade, colonization and finance, fostered by the nations, added to the prosperity of the nation as well as of the capitalists. It was the age of Laissez-faire in political economics, with the State, not "interfering" but "protecting" and "fostering" private enterprise. The techno-

logical advance of pre-war days was a boon to capitalistic development. The Nations of Europe began a scramble for world markets which culminated in the War.

The greatest of all wars was one of the shortest of all wars. It was marvelous how quickly scientific implements could kill hundreds of thousands of men. In 4 years the destruction was over. A volcano had shaken the earth and people made believe it was only a bad dream. what a paradox! The world War was settled on a Nationalistic basis. The four year slaughter had not made any impression on the national statesmen.

The War, of course, had created problems of its own. Every man, woman and child in the orbit of the civilized world had been involved. Every class in society had been mobilized for the struggle - capitalists and laborers, teachers, doctors, farmers and youth. Property, lives, ideals had been destroyed by the War. What was going to be done about it? Who was going to pay for it? But the statesmen of the day were either shortsighted or powerless and the settlement, if it can be called such, was along pre-war nationalistic lines. The entire task of reconstruction, a problem for the whole world, was to be attacked by individual nations. The profound contradiction of such a settlement, which was made obvious to the "victors", was shown by the matter of reparations. The only way Germany could possibly pay was with goods. But this, naturally, would upset the French national economy. The great problems of the war, the problems of working together, of world production and distribution, of conservation of resources, were left unsolved. Instead, pre-war slogans of prosperity and progress and national sovereignty veiled the reality.

Something happened towards the end of the War that has made a deep impression in the history of the world: the Russian Revolution. In 1919 Communist leaders thought the moment ripe for the world Revolution; but since it had already happened (the War), the attempt was painfully abandoned and the Bolsheviks finally proceeded to the necessary organization of that vast continental expanse, the USSR.

The Revolution aimed at the whole world. It rightfully recognized that the problem of the proletariat could not be solved by individual nations. But the people of the rest of Europe were not all proletarians and the ruling classes

had more to lose than chains. In their confusion in ~~the~~ face of the realities of the war and in their fear of Bolshevism, there seemed nothing more solid to cling to than national traditions. This confusion, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ mixed with fear and hatred of Bolshevism, is exemplified by the rise of Mussolini in Italy. He himself declares that the Fascists had no program or doctrine in its struggle for power. They ~~had~~ knew only that they were against many things- against Liberalism, Socialism and Democracy.

American money, which poured into Europe after the war, helped to stave off the day of judgment. The depression came in 1929, the end of the capitalistic era. Unemployment, loss of foreign markets, poverty, hunger- all these faced the world as they still do. Again the solution was attempted by individual nations. The slogans of progress and prosperity were still so powerful that the realization of the calamity was put off for several years. It did not seem to matter that a currency change in England affected prices all over the world, or that a tariff change in one country reacted in all others. The dawning consciousness that national solutions were impotent was reflected ~~by~~ by Socialist and Communist gains on the Continent. There seemed to be a sub-conscious urge for the workers of the world to unite and cast off national barriers. The "liberal" democratic nations, still failing to grasp that a world-wide depression called for a world-wide solution, spelled their ultimate doom by making possible the rise of Adolf Hitler.

Fascism is the last refuge of Nationalism. National Socialism is a great and terrible transitional stage. It is the last effort~~ed~~ of Nationalism to solve the problems of a technological world. It marks the end of the combination of Nationalism with Liberalism: it is Nationalism without Liberalism and Socialism without liberty.

If Nationalism outwardly seems to have reached its peak today, what are the evidences of its fall?

Nationalism is wearing itself out. The strain of worshipping national gods at the terrific pitch of recent years is reaching its breaking point. Too much candy causes regurgitation. Too much nationalism causes nausea.

Nationalism, furthermore, has taken on a new coat called Racialism. Racialism is the devil's way of breaking down national sovereignty and keeping the worst features of Nationalism arrogance. This new step itself repudiates the concept of Nation as a "natural" and geographic unit comprising people of the same language and literature. Racialism breaks down the barriers of national walls by including all "Aryans" regardless of nationality. It has reached the point where anyone who will accept Nazi beliefs is a member of the Third Reich.

More significant than these trans-national ideas are actual facts and events. The economic and cultural interdependence of the world is well known. Hitler may have thought he did not want to incorporate non-Germans in the Reich, but he found it necessary. Economically, morally and militarily the world today is divided not into nations but into blocs. England and France dare not act without one another and they both depend on the U.S. Russia is a bloc by herself. And Central Europe is forming its unity in spite of Mr. Boner decrying the end of the "sovereignty of independent nations". Germany needs the products of Central and South-eastern Europe and the latter countries need German goods regardless of the violations of orthodox economics. Poland, Roumania, Hungary, Greece, Bulgaria -- not one is sovereign and independent. Not one can act without the advice and consent of its masters in Europe.

In view of this it is anemic to talk of national or inter-national relations. International relations assumes relations between equals, between sovereign and independent units. But as members of trade unions, or manufacturers associations, or medical societies or churches, we find our interests cannot be met by national action. They are trans-national and do not recognize the capacity of the national unit to cope with them.

International relations means the League of Nations and Hull's trade treaties. The League assumed that every member nation, having one vote, ~~was~~ on equal terms, ~~and hadxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ with every other. It assumed that all were equally desirable judges of one another. Secretary Hull believes our trouble is matter of trade barriers and that the solution can be reached by independent and equal nations. As if Bulgaria or Esthonia or Uruguay could be treated on equal terms with the British Empire or Germany! As if reciprocal treaties could solve the world economic

problems when the Great industrial and economic entity of the new German Reich is not even included. What a petty solution. It is still another attempt to solve world problems on a national basis. No statesmen has the guts today to admit that the day of national sovereignty is over. Even Roosevelt's letter to the dictators led for a recognition of the sovereignty and independence of a score of de-pendent nationalities.

All this has not meant to discredit Nationalism, but to announce its death. The Nation has been a real stage in our historical growth. "National" types, music, literature have added to the variety and interest of life. In national units we have exploited resources, discovered new territories and encouraged the development of machinery and the progress of technology.

But the Nation has passed as the desirable unit of political organization. With the Nation ~~is~~ undesirable and recursive, to talk of relations between Nations or International relations is likewise cold, passive, academic. The new sov reign unit will be the "bloc" or continent. It will be an economic unit. It will go beyond the Nation and therefore, in its creativeness, will be able to inspire the masses. Secretary Hull, instead of making trade treaties with every single nation in Europe will then make only two: one with Europe and one with Eurasia.