

To what extent should we embrace nationalism? essay sample



Nationalism has been viewed as both a positive and a negative force, and both positions have been demonstrated today and throughout history. It is the biggest social and political force of the world. It unifies people and makes them stronger. It can lead to a stable economy, patriotism and even ultranationalism. But, one could argue that all these things, especially ultranationalism have had bad consequences such as crimes against humanity, fascism and clouding a nation's ability to interact properly with the rest of the world.

In my opinion nationalism is only a positive force among people who share the same nationalistic view. When every nation is looking out for it's own national interest this creates competitiveness to be on top. Conflicting nationalities have caused the great wars we read about today, slavery, deaths, and international problems. Nationalism does provide more strength and power but often at the cost of other nations. Therefor it has had few benefits internationally. It has lead us to rely on military forces to solve problems and made us look away from the interests of our neighboring nations.

A good example of this would be after World War One. France and Britain had both signed treaties leaving them in control of much of the middle eastern territories and peoples. France and Britain had previously agreed to divide up these territories according to ethnic, cultural and religious nationalities. To thank the Arabic people for helping them fight the Turks and Germans they promised them their own independent home land. But their loyalty to the contract was not delivered. Oil had recently become valuable and the allies were concerned about securing a source. So instead the Arabic

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people were scattered throughout different nations and forced to share their nation state with several different cultural groups. The Arabian people were insulted and betrayed. But the allies were far too concerned about getting their own oil source and believed they should be looking out for their own national interest before anybody else's. Many countries like Iraq, and Lebanon are also rich in this profitable resource so many racial groups like the Iraqis were not given their promised nation-state either. They were separated from each other and divided into small regions so that more colonies could be set up in the oil rich areas.

In 1928 Germany was severely struggling economically. The treaty of Versailles had left them with millions of dollars to pay in war debt, land loss, limited military and 650, 000 people unemployed. High inflation and political instability continued to be a problem and the struggling German people had a weak sense of patriotism. Then in 1933 Adolf Hitler was offered the position of Reichstag. Immediately Hitler began taking control of all media to alert the German people about the evils of communism, and that if they joined him they would receive the money, power and revenge they deserved. The election held afterwards revealed the people of Germany agreed with him. Soon the Nazi group was created. Though it started out small, the Nazis were soon everything and everywhere. The Nazis created thousands of jobs by producing massive war weapons from German factories.

This offered employment, and enabled Germany to secretly rebuild their army. The Nazis positively effected every aspect of German life including education, clubs, and heath. The Nazi symbol of the swastika was proudly
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hung everywhere. Patriotism returned once again. Germany was now a single party state and the people no longer had to worry about being mistreated by communists. In 1935 they had officially stabilized their economy and were strong enough to start invading surrounding countries. And by 1938 Germany had risen back to the wealthy European superpower it once was.

Though the people of Germany benefitted from Nazi nationalism this was not the case for everyone. Hitler believed Germany was in need of ethnic cleansing, and that the Nazis should not consist of any non-nationalist loyalties or cultural pluralism. He labeled the Jews as “foreigners” who invaded their economy and took away jobs. The Nazis created a Jewish genocide, also referred to as the Holocaust. Over six million Jews were brutally murdered by the German Nazis. They were shot, stabbed, beat up and sent to concentration camps. All survivors were forced to go into hiding. By 1945 only one third of the Jewish population was still alive. Though the Jewish nation was the most affected the Nazis also killed millions of Freemasons, Jehovah witnesses and any other political party members. The Nazis committed crimes against humanity though, to their benefit, they did provide prosperity for their nation.

By the start of the great depression Japan had already began losing several major trading partners. Therefore their number of exports had decreased drastically, leaving many Japanese people unemployed . Famine had also began to take it's effect due to rice crop failure. To make matters worse Japan was running out of natural resources putting a halt to their industrial revolution. So in 1931 Japan invaded Manchuria, China in hopes to start <https://assignbuster.com/to-what-extent-should-we-embrace-nationalism-essay-sample/>

creating an Asian empire and obtain more resources such as oil, rubber and slave labor. As Japan began invading more areas of China and Asia they took pride in their successful war leaders and developed a collective consciousness of their military accomplishments. Soon the Japanese government was military operated and their passion and dedication to nationalism had also developed into ultranationalism. This was definitely proved official when the Japanese invaded the city of Nanjing and murdered over 200 500 citizens including children. They burnt all the houses, stole cattle, and left thousands of dead bodies in the streets. But by doing this the Japanese people were no longer hungry, unemployed and instead rich in resources.

Japan's ultranationalism was extremely threatening, and many countries like the United States were concerned that they would never surrender.

President Harry. S Truman believed that if they were to invade in September, 1945 as planned about 250 000 American soldiers would die, and their army would be weakened. Truman was not willing to sacrifice his military so on August 6, 1945 an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and three days later another in Nagasaki. Japan had no choice but to surrender and World War Two was over. The United States got the quick ending they wanted and saved their peoples' lives. Unfortunately for Japan the effects of the nuclear bomb were devastating. The two cities were completely ruined and the death toll was over 140 000 people. Many of those who did survive died later of starvation or sickness. Even years after the bomb was dropped it still affected people.

The high radiation had caused millions more to die of leukemia and other cancer related illnesses. Another example of ultranationalism would be the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Since most nation states are multinational it is not surprising that there are many disputes over national status. The two leading ethnicity's in Rwanda are the Hutus and Tutsis. But during the Belgian rule they were seen more as an economic status. Hutus meaning poor and Tutsi meaning rich. When the Belgians left Rwanda they granted ruling political power to the Tutsis whom they favored. But the Hutus believed that since they held the majority of the population they should be controlling the government and in 1962 took over by force. The Hutus were constantly campaigning against the Tutsis convincing others that they were enemies of the nation, and deserved to die for the previous hardship they had caused.

In April 1994 a plane carrying president Habyarimana was blown up by an unknown shooter and the Hutus were convinced the Tutsis were responsible. Propaganda campaigning on the radios were telling all Hutus to kill the national enemy- the Tutsis. It was said that if Tutsis were not killed they would ruin the civic nation the Hutus had built. The genocide then began. In just one hundred days the Hutus had already slaughtered over 500, 000 people. The overall estimated death toll was about 800, 000 people. It was one of the biggest Genocides in history, all because the Hutus wanted to protect the civic nation they had created.. To this day many Hutus still believe it was necessary for their survival.

Nationalism has also effected the way countries deal with war refugees.

Afghanistan has been a victim of war for over twenty years, leaving many of
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it's citizens to flee to neighboring countries for safety. Both Pakistan and Iran had refugee camps that were home to millions of Afghani refugees. Many of these camps had been open for years and though several organizations had contributed money it was still costly to keep these camps open. Neither of the countries were in the economic position to keep these camps open for such a large amount of refugees, especially since they were not even citizens of the nations they occupied.

Therefore, last February Pakistan closed the largest refugee camp in the area, and many Afghans left for home where they would face the dangers of absolute poverty and conflict. But with the camp closed Pakistan struggles less economically. Iran also discovered that because of the high population of Afghani's in their country they were seeing a higher number of terrorist activities. Therefore, they forced out 90 000 refugees leaving them with nowhere to go but " home". But by getting rid of refugees Iran and Pakistan have avoided economic hardship and conflict. They both made these decisions to protect their own nationalistic interests.

Nationalism can also lead to a type of fanaticism that can lead, although not to the extent of war, to fighting among nations. Many nations show their pride by supporting their teams in such things as the Olympics, and the most popular sport worldwide, soccer. The Euro cup is one of the biggest sports events and countries from all around the world come to watch and support their team. They often have flags, t-shirts and tend to show off for their country. But when people have so much patriotism and pride for their nation sometimes the national rivalry becomes bigger than the game itself and the <https://assignbuster.com/to-what-extent-should-we-embrace-nationalism-essay-sample/>

competition is no longer just on the fields but it the stands and on the streets. Several cases of such violence have been reported.

In conclusion, although nationalism has pulled peoples together to the benefit of their own nation, the means used have often been harmful to other nations involved. It's good that every nation has it's own distinct identity to create a sense of belonging and pride, so that it's people will want to contribute to the cause and well being of their nation. But to what extent nationalism can be considered a positive force depends upon the use of violence and unjust treatment of other distinct nations or sub-nations. In such cases nationalism leads to the demise of peoples.

Sources used:

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