

## Lesson-3: Nationalism

### Lesson -3: Video Lecture

#### Brainstorming Question

What were the major factors behind the growth of nationalism in the 19th century?

#### Competencies

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- List down major factors for the growth of nationalism;
- Discuss the salient features of nationalism in the 19th century.

#### Lesson Overview

**Nationalism is partly an effect of the totalizing and homogenizing projects of state formation.** These projects produce an imagined sense of political community that conflates peoplehood, territory, and state.

#### 1.Nationalism

Nationalism has been the most powerful political force since the 1850s in the Western world. Nationalism's deepest roots lie in a shared sense of regional and cultural identity, especially as those roots are expressed in custom, language and religion. It influenced all classes but more so the urban than the rural peasants.

Moreover, nationalism created the atmosphere which made World War I possible in that nationalism aggravated the great international crisis of 1905–1914 and made the peoples of Europe support the war when it broke out in July-August 1914. Nationalism, of course, did not begin in the middle of the nineteenth century, but it grew and intensified from then until World War I. The following factors promoted the growth of nationalism in the 19th century:

Compulsory primary education was used by the government for state building and inculcating patriotism. Governments also used compulsory military service to inculcate patriotism and loyalty to the state and rulers. The cheap newspapers for the masses often had chauvinistic tones, but nationalism and hostile feelings towards neighboring states were also features of the “quality” newspapers for the upper and middle classes.

Much of the literature of the years before World War I was also strongly nationalist and warned against the dangers of neighboring countries. Patriotic societies were created to inculcate patriotism, to agitate for stronger armament, and sometimes also to agitate for bigger colonial empires. Nationalism was stimulated by the wars of unification in Italy and Germany and of national liberation in the Balkans. British nationalism was stimulated by the small colonial wars which Britain fought so often, though the second Boer War (1899-1902) was an unpleasant

shock which cooled down British aggressiveness for a time until it was revived by fear of Germany. In the USA, victory in the Spanish-American War of 1898 stimulated American nationalism.

Pseudo-science also stimulated nationalism and inculcated aggressive hostile feelings towards neighboring states and the idea that war was inevitable. This pseudo science is what became known as «Social Darwinism.» It was «Social Darwinism» that spread the idea that history is a struggle between states and nations for power, supremacy and even survival. The strongest state and nation, which were the best, would be the victors, while weak states and nations would be subjugated and even destroyed.

In the period between the 1880s and 1914, nationalism transformed its character in several ways: First, more and more national movements appeared in Europe and in the Ottoman Empire outside Europe. Many of these movements were towards numerically quite small numbers of people living in quite small territories. Therefore, nationalism, which earlier in the nineteenth century had appeared to work towards greater unity, as in the case of Italy and Germany, now tends towards fragmentation. Second, language and ethnicity became the major criteria, especially language for nationalism. All over Europe, submerged minority nationalities were struggling to assert the rights of their languages to equality with previously dominated languages. So there were bitter disputes over language questions.

Third, a national question became part of the domestic politics of many states, particularly multinationals like Austria-Hungary and Tsarist Russia, and others like Britain with its serious Irish question. In terms of class, the new minority nationality movements attracted the petty bourgeois, because the success of a national movement and its language would mean not just more prestige for the nationality and its language but more employment in the public sector for the language speakers. Nationalism for the government was a two-edged weapon. Nationalism could be and was used to strengthen loyalty to the state and the ruler and to divert the workers away from socialism. However, where national minorities existed, nationalism could arise from the national demands of these national minorities and cause discontent and disloyalty.

The USA was very successful in the nineteenth century in assimilating millions of emigrants who came to the USA from Europe. This success was made possible because migrants left Europe because they were dissatisfied with conditions in their home country. By becoming US citizens, they joined a country and a nation which offered them more economic opportunities and more social and political freedom.

## **Key Concepts and Terminology**

### **Nationalism**

A political doctrine which views the nation as the principal unit of political organization. Underlying this is the assumption that human beings hold the characteristic of nationality, with which they identify culturally, economically and politically... Nationalism is thus associated with the attempts by national groupings to secure independence from dominance by other nation-states. It is often associated with the struggle against colonialism.