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The Role of Ideology in Nation Building

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Abstract: The society we live in is a complex one, and is called in the specialized literature the "postmodern society", based on knowledge, technological development and other such traits, a society that emerges from Modernity. Modernity is based on a series of "founding myths" or "legitimizing structures", such as: "the myth of reason", "the myth of progress" or "the myth of the superhuman". In the modern era, an important place is occupied by the "myth of nations", because this legitimating structure was the reason why the biggest revolutions and wars fought throughout history took place.

Keywords: *ideology; politology; political science; political systems; political doctrines.*

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1. Introduction

A term that still stirs up a lot of controversy today is that of ideology (Colang, 2018, pp. 43-58), which, over time, has acquired positive or negative connotations, depending on the historical context in which it appeared. Several hypotheses have been elaborated on this term; Marxists referred to ideology as a "false consciousness", with Nietzsche developing the idea that people need "falsehoods" in order to live. Carrying out an analysis of this concept, Adrian Paul Iliescu brings to the forefront the following ideas:

- "ideology (politics) would therefore be, first of all, an instrument of practical action, not of knowledge" (Iliescu, 2002, p. 20);
- "ideology starts from preconceived ideas and analyzes the facts in their light", i.e. "it goes from ideas to things, not from things to ideas" (Durkheim, 1974, p. 69);
- "ideology has, as a starting point, an assessment of social reality" (Iliescu, 2002, p. 20);
- "ideology maintains the systematic indistinction between facts and values; mixes (predominantly) objective facts with (axiological) evaluations, which are inevitably (predominantly) subjective and, in any case, relative" (Iliescu, 2002);
- "ideology encounters insurmountable difficulties in achieving objective representations of real facts" (Iliescu, 2002, p. 21);
- "ideological conclusions reflect the psychology of people rather than the state of affairs in society, while psychology influenced by the social position of man" (Iliescu, 2002, p. 21);

The term was coined by Destutt de Tracy (1977) who attempted to "ground" a study of the "origin of ideas". According to Destutt de Tracy, ideology signifies the "science of ideas", understood as the "genesis" of ideas starting from sensations. Tracy's aim was to form a "system of thought" opposed to metaphysics.

2. Ideas and trends

The term ideology is ambiguous, with a great symbolic load, which is intended to mobilize and orient directions of action. Considered to be a progressive one, the concept of ideology (Florea, 1979, p. 7) was given a pejorative connotation, thanks to Napoleon, who considered that harmless ideologies actually represent a "threat" to the social order. Talcott Parsons states: "the essential criterion of ideology is its deviation from scientific

objectivity. The problem of ideology arises when there is a contradiction between what we believe and what can be scientifically established as correct" (Parsons, 1959).

According to Ball and Dagger, ideology fulfills four functions: tthe explanatory one: ideology offers explanations on the causes of social, political and economic conditions; the evaluative one: provides standards for evaluating social conditions; the orientative one: it provides orientation and understanding to the identity of its followers; the prescriptive one: tells followers what to do and how to proceed (Ball & Dagger, 2000).

Any ideology tries to offer a "vision of the future" in terms of social and political evolution (Apostu & Petrescu, 2017). If we refer to ideology from a religious perspective, then the term can only mean a "belief system"; however, there are differences between political ideologies and religions, in the sense that religions are centered on the idea of divinity (and at the same time of the afterlife or life after the physical "death" of the body), and ideologies offer perspectives on life on earth.

Closely related to the subject of ideologies is the concept of progress. In Gray's opinion, the theme of "progress" acquired a quasi-mythological dimension, being correlated with the teleological historicist perspective (Gray, 2004). However, in order to understand how nations were formed, it is necessary to understand the "social and historical context" of the Modernity period. As an era of great discoveries, secularization and human affirmation, Modernity meant, first of all, the "liberation" from the beliefs and authority of the Middle Ages. The modern individual was "seized" by ideals, progress and his own values (Barbu, 2016; Barbu et al., 2019). Secondly, the Age of Modernity is an age of the reinvention of man, of secularization, an age of anthropocentrism. Man "builds" a series of myths (the superhuman or the myth of nations) and fights for his secular ideals and values. In Gray's (2004) work, the terms "myth" and "legitimating structure" are used synonymously.

3. Ideology and the making of nations

The nation is "a reality of the modern world", an imagined, subjective structure. Nations were formed as a result of a "process" of societal evolution, with a common ideology, territory and ethnicity, cultural values, myths and traditions. At the same time, the concept of nation involves several approaches: historical, philosophical, social etc., and its "definition" is difficult due to the fact that it involves a deep analysis from a cultural, economic, political perspective, but also because the clarification of

some terms such as identity, autonomy, difference, ethnicity is hard to make, because they assume conceptual variety, which stem "specific delimitations" and divergent positions by researchers.

The construction of nations and the national state is based on common culture, language, race, general will etc. The "spirit" of the people, the "spirit" of belonging and the nationalist ideas take shape within the period of revolutions in the modern era. It is important to state that in terms of the construction of nations, we are talking about an accumulation of factors that come along several lines: symbolic, ideological, traditional, philosophical, etc. According to Gellner (1983), the roots of nationalism can be found in the "structural needs of the industrial society". The development of technology (Huidu, 2019), progress and industrialism have led to the strengthening of the feeling of belonging and the "separation" of borders.

Within political philosophy and history, terms such as nation, nationalism and nation-state building refer to a multitude of aspects: race, ethnicity, belonging, etc. National states as political-administrative structures were based on national ideas, the "common origins" of individuals, elements of cohesion, common ideals.

As for the construction of national states, they "took shape" due to common feelings that "crystallized" over time and entered the "collective mind". During the French Revolution, freedom and equality outlined a new vision of values, which quickly spread to other areas of Europe. The success of the ideas of the French revolutionaries are "crowned" by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of August 26, 1789, in which the sovereignty of the nation and not of the king is mentioned (Ministère de la Justice, 2001). The events echoed in Europe, and in 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte was proclaimed emperor. Napoleon proposes to unify all the states into one, with the capital in Paris, and to build a single political entity. After 10 years, Napoleon is defeated and exiled to Elba.

After the defeat of Napoleon, major changes appeared: the Civil Code was introduced, administrative institutions were built, etc. The individuals thus wanted to return to the values promoted during the French Revolution. However, after the era of Napoleon, the following period was destabilizing for the whole of Europe: the ideas of freedom and equality once again "captured" the "spirit of the peoples", and the 19th century became the century of nations. Taking over the ideas of the French Revolution, the nations tried to "bring to the forefront" the concept that peoples must decide their own fate. In addition to this aspect, legends, myths, history, language and religion united the nationalist ideas.

Nationalism has taken different forms, for each people. After the Revolution of 1848, the entire map of Europe was reconfigured. Philosophical, legal and political ideas and values played an important role in the unification of Germany. Ideas about belonging will turn (on this occasion) into a nationalism with its "own values", specific interests and aspirations. The "conflict of ideas" within modern Europe from the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century was manifested between the intellectual elites, on the one hand the conservatives, and on the other hand the liberals, whereas the "supporters" of liberalism, socialism and of nationalism "embraced" a series of beliefs that brought them into conflict with the defenders of the old order.

The period following 1815 is one of return to peace and freedom. However, the "national momentum" and liberalism manifested itself throughout Europe: rural and Catholic Ireland would fight against the union imposed by Great Britain in 1801, Serbia would obtain its autonomy from the Ottoman Empire (Bataković, 2005), etc. The most numerous manifestations take place in Italy and Germany: in Italy, the Risorgimento is the natural consequence of the Enlightenment. The first movements in Italy were representative, but in the second stage, through Giuseppe Mazzini, the foundations of the revolutionary organization "Young Italy" were placed, which he wanted to expand into a movement called "Young Europe", i.e. a Europe without monarchs.

Ideas about Europe are highlighted by the act of fraternity: „We the undersigned, men of progress and of freedom, believing: in equality, and in the brotherhood of man; in equality, and in the brotherhood of peoples; believing: that humanity is called to proceed, by a *continuous progress*, and under the rule of universal moral law, towards the *free and harmonious* development of its faculties, and towards the fulfilment of its mission in the universe; that it cannot do so without the *active participation of all* its members, *freely* associated; (…) Convinced: that every man, and every people has a *particular* mission, which, while it constitutes the *individuality* of that man, or that people, necessarily contributes to the fulfilment of the *general* mission of humanity; convinced, finally: that the association of men, and of peoples must both protect the free exercise of the *individual* mission, and ensure certainty of direction towards the development of that *general* mission; (...) Met together for general advantage, on the fifteenth day of the month of April of the year 1834, with our hands on our hearts and standing surety for the future, we have signed the following: *Young Germany, Young Poland* and *Young Italy*, republican associations tending to one identical goal which embraces all of humanity

under the rule of a single faith in Freedom, Equality and Progress, swear brotherhood, now and for always, for all that concerns the general goal" (Carpentier & Lebrun, 1997, P. 290).

Even more, in Germany, the liberal ideas merge into a more pronounced specifically German aspiration: the freedom of the nation - as a "collective entity" is highlighted by a strong state. "Ideas" related to patriotism, the nation, freedom, equality, etc. and which were promoted during the revolutions and wars mentioned above, outlined a vision of the social and political at that time. Ideology and the "sense of belonging" developed with the creation of "capitalist relations" which were considered an ideological link between the bourgeoisie and the working class. The revolutions that took place in the modern period were determined by the awakening of the national spirit.

As we stated before, ideology wore a "political garment", since the time of Napoleon, and later this burden was emphasized by Marx and Engels in a double posture: epistemological - a "capsule" of false ideas, - and political - "distortion" of class relations. In contrast to ideology, Marx and Engels propose a new science - dialectical and historical materialism, "which they credit not only with the possession of absolute truth, but also with the possibility of solving social, political and economic problems to which a class-based society could not find an answer. The result, even admitted post factum, was otherwise predictable: Marxism turned into an ideology" (Şandru, 2014). Ideology thus became a set of ideas with a negative charge (Şandru, 2014).

Interpreted from a positive or negative point of view, nationalism, in all its forms and manifestation, has been the leit-motif of the most controversial situations that history has "seen" throughout time. Not only the concept of belonging to a nation, but also that of nation or patriotism (with which it is often confused) has experienced changes, modifications or interpretations depending on the political, ideological or economic "context" and, why not, the philosophical one. Nationalism remains a historical reality, and its "interpretation" involves the process of the "construction" of national states, of regionalist and independence theories, ethno-national and ethno-linguistic claims, of doctrines based on the "idea of the exaltation of the homeland" and the "emotional" mobilization of the masses.

Nationalism can also be viewed from a philosophical perspective, since political ideas and doctrines arose as a result of the interpretation of certain philosophical ideas and texts. In the last decade of the 19th century and in the first twenty years of the 20th century, nationalism will "experience" fundamental transformations, with multiple consequences

including: the "proliferation" of nationalist movements throughout Europe and the "crystallization" of nationalism as a "destabilizing factor" of European politics. Nationalism has taken the most extreme forms, in an attempt to "outline" ideas such as the "defense of the territory", the "status" of the citizen or the "superiority" of the race. Before the start of the Second World War, the ideas related to nationalism were "distorted", promoting racism, anti-Semitism, eugenics, etc., the "desire" for domination and "subjugation" of the whole world; these manifested in the "context" of Nazi Germany.

In this paper, we proposed to carry out an analysis of nationalisms from a theoretical point of view. The "emergence" and "evolution" of nationalism were reflected, depending on the social, political and historical contexts, while the general theorization of the concept was made from the point of view of "propagation" and "favoring factors", depending on the cultural dimension, be it ethnical, historical and linguistic. Considering the fact that the interpretation and understanding of nationalism has also led to extremist forms, the involvement of theoretical factors, which try to explain the emergence of extremist forms, is the most important point.

The general characterization of the "forms" that nationalism has taken on in the European space, the attributes and the appropriation of the common identity in a delimited space were analyzed both from the perspective of the elites and from the perspective of the masses. In order to make a clear "distinction", we considered it necessary to clarify some theoretical delimitations in relation to the way the masses interpreted this concept.

We also gave special importance to the "factors" that favored the emergence of totalitarian doctrines, implicitly extremist nationalism. The "leaders" who promoted this ideology, the "actions" of an aggressive nature directed against certain races, the extremist population and citizens, all had a negative impact on the political, economic and social sphere and, last but not least, on the whole world. Political thinkers have attached particular importance to them, as Hannah Arendt analized in her work, "The Origins of Totalitarianism" (Arendt, 2014).

4. Conclusions

Starting from the theory of nationalism, interpreted as territorial, linguistic, civic and moral unity, we can appreciate how the ideology promoted by a series of "leaders" distorted and transformed the understanding of this concept, later reaching the promotion of extremist

forms and extermination of the human race. The rise of Nazism was achieved due to the failure of democracy and the impossibility of the state to "stabilize" the devastated economic sector after the First World War and, at the same time, after the economic crisis of 1929.

In the course of this paper, we brought back into discussion different historical contexts that determined the great conflagrations in the name of the homeland, the country and nationalism (this being interpreted from the point of view of totalitarianisms and the "religion" of the superior race).

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