XENOPHOBIA, IDENTITY
AND NEW FORMS OF NATIONALISM

edited volumes

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Editors' Foreword

It has been almost two years since we first decided to embark on a project of organizing an international philosophical conference which would be devoted to a familiar but highly disturbing subject: the extraordinary upsurge of nationalism in its novel and unprecedented forms, with extreme xenophobia as one of its central features. The conference, organized by the Center for Philosophy of the Institute of Social Sciences, under the title "Xenophobia, Identity and New Forms of Nationalism", was held on October 4–5 of 2018 in Belgrade. It was attended by 17 lecturers from eight countries, most of them philosophers, but also sociologists, political scientists, jurists, journalists or fiction writers. This collective volume is its result.

As is well known, at the time of the inception of our idea, the issue of new nationalism and xenophobia had already become burning not only in Europe (in the political as well as historical and cultural meaning of the term) but in many other parts of the world too. Sadly, in the meantime, it has gained even more in impetus and significance in social, political and institutional life, above all in developed Western countries. Obviously, one of the main reasons for this state of affairs is the (so inappropriately named) "migration problem", which is in fact the problem of inequality in the world society. If the words "migration" or "immigration" did not figure in the title of the conference, it is only because their connection to xenophobia, to the new forms of nationalism and to the politics of identity is so manifest, that those terms, as it seemed to us, could be omitted with no harm for the discussion of our

subject, and because we hoped that the imposing realities to which they refer would not be overlooked by the participants anyway. This has proven to be true.

However, the sheer topicality of the theme was not the only reason for our decision to devote a special attention to it. Dealing with what we have termed "new nationalism", strongly colored by xenophobia and framed in identitarian slogans – most of them newly forged, but highly reminiscent of the past – is above all intellectually challenging, particularly from, dare we say, a philosophical point of view. It involves a distinctly philosophical task of identifying the conceptual borders of a historically changing, Protean phenomenon. What is at stake here is the relationship between old and new forms of nationalism, which forms the center of the first part of the volume ("Xenophobia Inherited, Xenophobia Transformed"). Is new nationalism merely a sequel to the historical one, or something radically different and novel? No doubt this question allows for different answers. At the very least, the new nationalism seems to have taken the place in the political spectrum which was up to now occupied by extremist far-right parties, and deserves for that reason to be treated as their successor. In particular cases, historical continuity is warranted by sticking to the old party name, regardless of significant and outspoken changes in the party program. However, one may even go so far as to deny altogether that the new xenophobic identitarianism represents a form of nationalism as we have known it, as is the case in the opening article of the first section (by Rastko Močnik).

Another point calling for reflection is the relationship between nationalist and xenophobic practices or feelings and the world of ideas or systems of thought in the broadest sense of the term (treated by Goran Bašić, János Boros, Slobodan Divjak). This relationship is at least twofold, as it can signify either the embeddedness of nationalism in ideological and philosophical matrices which serve to justify it, or the capacity of the latter to deal with nationalism and its detrimental societal effects. Here again, the most striking feature of new nationalism is perhaps its extraordinary capacity to change and adapt to different ideological and philosophical standpoints – postmodernism, communitarianism, multiculturalism or even liberalism. By appropriating the arguments of their opponents – by appealing to justice, equality or right to difference – new nationalist narratives blur the distinctions between

different theoretical positions and their usual political implications (most notably, the one between "progressive" and "reactionary" political orientations) and provoke confusions in our ideological maps – or testify to their inadequacy for understanding the issues of contemporary world. For example, new nationalism has developed an elaborate strategy of victimization of the very hegemonic social groups (as shown by Lewis R. Gordon), which works very well, even if it is based on completely false premises. In contrast to earlier forms of missionary or "civilizing" nationalism or imperialism, characteristic of the historical Western metropoleis, it has also achieved important successes in presenting itself under the modest guise of a merely protective nativist movement, having a defensive posture and no other ambitions than to defend its "own" home or territory from aggressive newcomers (as argued by Aleksandar Prnjat and Vladimir Milisavljević).

The stress laid on xenophobia by the conference title presented the risk of suggesting that the new forms of nationalism should be viewed solely in terms of a subjective experience, which would result in moralizing or even demonizing criticism of it. This type of criticism is all too frequent in political and ideological disputes. However, taken by itself, it is of a rather limited scope. This danger has been averted by the approach adopted by most of the contributors, particularly by those who have highlighted economic and political causes which have given rise to new nationalism and defined its special character – above all, those which pertain to the transformation of capitalism in a globalized world economy of our days (Rastko Močnik, Natalija Mićunović, Paget Henry). Their contributions suggest that, rather than a wanton sentiment, xenophobia should be considered as an essential piece functioning in the complex machine of worldwide domination.

Several chapters of the volume – as a rule, but not exclusively, they have been grouped in the second section ("Global vs. Local and Topical Differences") – have given special attention to local histories and developments of nationalism and xenophobia in Western and Eastern Europe, the USA, Serbia, the countries of former Yugoslavia and the Arab World (by William Leon McBride, Paget Henry, Ugo Vlaisavljević, Dean Komel, Muharem Bazdulj and Dušan Janjić). Some of them have adopted a more specific perspective of gender (Michał Kozłowski) or legal studies (Ana Dimishkovska and Igor Milinković), focusing, in particular, on the questions of discrimination and identitarianism. However

diverse, those topical analyses have let come to the fore essential, if unfortunate similarities between different states, regions or continents, epitomized by the growing importance of walls and barbed wire fences as a major political symbol of our imperfectly globalized world. In such a segregated world – to briefly comment on the title of the third and last section – "open questions", and even disagreements, may count much more than attempts at finding final "solutions". Editing of this volume was a pleasure, but it also gave rise to more questions and will, hopefully, lead to new adventures in researching intriguing phenomena of nationalism and identity.

Vladimir Milisavljević and Natalija Mićunović

Introductory Remarks
Nationalism: What Do Intellectuals Think?

▬▬ Many warn that the spirit of nationalism once again fuels passions that not only provoke uncomfortable anxiety, but also cause fear, suffering, misfortune, crises and misunderstanding. A substantial number of people indicate that apart from "bad" destructive nationalism, "good" nationalism also exists, based on love of one's own nation and country (patriotism), or on national homogenization aimed at liberation from external dominance. It is a common opinion that a patriot is loyal to a way of life and the customs that he/she cherishes and observes in community with like-minded people with whom he/she shares common ethnic origin, as well as linguistic and cultural heritage. A patriot is defensive in nature (see Orwell 1945, 12), he/she perceives nationalism, just like religion, as a private matter which is publicly displayed only rarely, usually on special, festive occasions, and always with the utmost decorum. Conversely, xenophobia implies fear and suspicion of foreigners, their values and customs, leading to prejudice and disdain for ethnic differences at best, with its radical forms being racism and chauvinism. Xenophobia is fear enveloped in hate. In conclusion, you can make a rough divide indicating that "good" nationalists love their nation *per se*, not trying to force their patriotic feelings onto others in any way, while "bad" nationalists love their nation at the expense of other nations, while their love often amounts to obsession and monomania.

In case we accept the existence of good nationalism, we still face the problem that, with a grain of populism, the boundaries between good and bad nationalism are erased at the expense of the former. Populism, which became a characteristic of contemporary political culture, has contributed, despite global and regional integration processes, to both homogenization of national programs and strengthening of nationalism (Bašić 2017). The influences of contemporary nationalisms are evident in social relations, economic measures on global and regional levels, political action and strengthening of people's movements. Thus revitalized,

nationalism has awakened in people national pride and homogeni-
zation, both of which have been believed, following "the end of his-
tory", to belong to premodernity, while on the other hand it has in-
cited fear and uncertainty. The two faces of Janus are nowhere so
clearly visible as with the phenomenon of nationalism, and should
we place on one plate of Iustitia's scales what "good" nationalism
has produced in modern history, while placing the legacy of the
"bad" xenophobic nationalism on the other, it would not be hard to
guess which of them would prevail.

Providing that nationalism produces fear and has caused
dire suffering and catastrophic collapses of the civilization in the
past, how come that nationalists are so popular and enjoy people's
support? Attempting to explain the unexplainable, Mario Vargas
Llosa indicates that all "left" and "right" nationalist movements in
South America ended up in dictatorship: "Nationalism is a widely
spread out ideological perversion, as it influences the instincts that
are deeply rooted in human beings, such as fear of the different
and new, fear of and hate against the other, a person who worships
different gods, speaks a different language and observes different
customs, and it actually – needless to say – has instincts that are en-
tirely contrary to civilization. Therefore, the nationalism of our
times is but a reactionary, anti-historical, racist ideology, and an en-
emy of progress, democracy and freedom" (Vargas Llosa 2017; see
also Vargas Llosa 2018).

It would be unfair, of course, to neglect the strength of na-
tionalism, which created the nation state and nations. Moreover,
many a statesman, philosopher, or writer has secured his place in
anthologies and textbooks by believing that nations and the states
based on them are results of the cosmopolitism founded on frater-
nity, freedom, and equality, with the purpose of securing everlast-
ing peace and liberation of humanity from the pest that is racism,
chauvinism, and xenophobia. They believed in freedom, democra-
cy, and individualism as creative forces behind liberal state, which
should have brought forth a humane society, incompatible with pri-
mordial nationalism and populism. John Stuart Mill believed that it
was essential for the Scotsmen, Irishmen, and Welshmen, as well as
for the Bretons, Occitans, and Gauls to become integrated into the
British and French nations. He believed liberal civil nations to be

important for political and economic stability, while he saw a chance for their strengthening in autochthonous peoples' renunciation of identity, and their integration into wider national concepts.

However, during the 20th century only, things spiraled out of control on a number of occasions. First, a nation state based on the principle of ethnicity destroyed the dynastic principle of legitimacy, claiming an enormous number of victims along the way, only for National Socialism (Nazism), founded on racism and the interests of financial capital, to bring the civilization to the brink of extinction. During the "Cold War", Marxists believed that nation state and nationalism would lose their importance within the global perspective of the labor movement, while liberals on their part thought that the strength of ethnicity, as the most powerful primordial stimulus for nationalism, would ebb away in civil state. Despite the belief that nationalism would lose its destructive force after "the end of history", ethnic and religious conflicts and secession demands occurred yet again, thus distancing the modern world even more from the ideas of humanistic and cosmopolitan development. Multiculturalists, who usually perceive the notion of tolerance as the basis for overcoming individual and collective prejudice and animosities, have overlooked the fact that the humanistic ideas contained in the doctrines of the "great" religions such as Christianity and Islam, which had been founded on the ideal of people's unity in faith, peace, and love, indeed failed to eliminate local nationalisms, and rather conversely ignited the sparks of fervor which resulted in fires that would devour both ideas and people.

It is commonly known that concentration of one's attention on a phenomenon may produce "blindness" in the researcher when it comes to seemingly ephemeral, but actually essential facts. It is thus possible that interculturalists, overcome by the vision of development based on respect and intertwining of differences, fail to see the progressive side of modern nationalism, they perhaps may be "unjustifiably" apprehensive of the revitalization of Nazism and Anti-Semitism, or their memories of ethnic conflicts are so vivid that they do not see the progress in national homogenization and ethnic mobilization. Scottish, Kosovar, or Catalan nationalists feel

otherwise, they draw from nationalism the strength necessary for political and economic independence and liberation from the political or any other influence of their composite states. Scottish Prime Minister Nicola Sturgeon, the leader of the Scottish National Party, advocates separation of Scotland from Great Britain and, in addition to historical reasons, believes that the political decisions made by the British Government concerning leaving the EU have largely contributed to the strengthening of Scottish nationalism (Euronews 2019). On the other hand, laborite Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London of Pakistani origin, equates Scottish nationalism with racism (Guardian 2017). It is also interesting to note that more than 40% of Pakistani immigrants in Scotland support the country's secession from Great Britain (Bašić 2018, 114). The British policy of multiculturalism, developed in the second half of the 20th century, has not only obviously failed to pacify traditional nationalisms, but also been lenient when it comes to their recent incarnations. Nationalism is like a subterranean river; it always finds a crack to spring out of and create itself a new course.

It cannot be avoided, when talking about nationalism, to also discuss the issue of the role and responsibility of intellectuals for the consequences of nationalism. In a newspaper article, Žarko Puhovski wrote sharply about nationalism: "There is a defective, 'perverse' attitude present in our public that intellectuals are those writing beautiful poems, novels, or philosophical treatises. These are great writers, philosophers, painters, yet they are not great intellectuals. In his lectures, Sartre says that an intellectual is he/she who deals with things that do not concern him/her, i.e., public things. I am not an intellectual if I say that my salary is low – this makes me a unionist. I am an intellectual when I speak of things that do not directly threaten me. If you take my example, in case I support Serbs in Croatia, as an ethnic Croat I am an intellectual, since I am not threatened as Serbs are". Worth thinking over when it comes to the relationship of intellectuals with nationalism is the response by Gajo Petrović to the invitation to participate in the debate by Serbian and Croatian intellectuals entitled "Mind before the Avalanche of Political Barbarism", in which he said that he had not established himself as either Serbian or Croatian intellectual, so he was not qualified to participate in the debate (see Jakšić 2011,

77–78). By refusing any national distinction, Gajo Petrović stood against the national constraints that delimit humanity.

Attitudes like those quoted above are not rare. On the contrary, there are numerous examples of critical positions of intellectuals towards nationalism. However, more frequent and publicly visible are anti-intellectual opinions, falling within constricted primordial limits of nation, grounded in the feeling of the ever-present danger of others and failure to accept the fact that everything, including national identity and the nation based on it, is prone to changes. These opinions lack the maturity, fortitude, and talent which make intellectual criticism creative, proactive, pressure resistant and, finally, freed from any passion and interest. Dragoljub Mićunović, reflecting on the oeuvre and practical humanism of Andrija Krešić, one of the enlighteners of the Balkan intellectual casbah, writes that Krešić was among the rare educated people endowed with *plebeian moral tact* (Mićunović 2018) – a trait in one's character that intellectualism may sprout from. For an intellectual, in the full meaning of the word, this humanistic substrate is more important than education, or encyclopedic accumulation of scientific and other facts.

An intellectual is a creator, the one who inspires and incites others to action and reflection, expands horizons, and when criticizing, he/she does not do so for the sake of glory, or personal interest, but for the common good. When the intellectual speaks of nationalism, he/she is mostly alone and risks that the logic, ethics, and verisimilitude (facts) that his/her ideas are based on would cause the anger of the "orthodox" intellectuals, imbued with the romanticism of the "original" nationalism and the deceptive and often biased memories of the glorious national past and the injustices inflicted on "us" by "others". Unlike intellectual criticism, that of an intellectual freed from intellectualism is ideological one, which in its essence has the tendency to represent the interest of the ruling group as the general interest and public good. Responsibility for the consequences of such "blindness" and the tension brought about by the conflict between authentic ideas and "plagiarism" and quasi-interpretations, is placed by Machiavelli on the intellectual: "when the evils that arise have been predicted (which only wise men can do), they can be quickly dealt with. But when,

though not having been predicted, they have been permitted to grow in a way that everyone can see them, there is no longer a remedy" (Machiavelli 2006). The intellectual is the one who should, for the benefit of everyone else, timely recognize and explain the problem, and confront it with truth. However, the intellectual is not the world's conscience and cannot accept responsibility for the consequences caused by the nationalist politics and rhetoric. The responsibility of an intellectual can only be that of the failure to don Socrates' chiton in a timely manner, or at all, while the political and historical responsibility belongs with those who advocated, agitated for, and implemented nationalist policies.

Criticism of nationalism does not garner praise and rewards, but usually provides pseudointellectuals with an opportunity to strike back. A good example is the "Declaration on the Common Language", with which a group of thinking men, most of them sociolinguists and linguists, has pointed to the schism between linguistic reality and linguistic policy in a part of the post-Yugoslav political space, that is, to the well-known truth that Bosnian, Montenegrin, Croatian, and Serbian are standard forms of a single, polycentric language (Bugarski 2018a and 2018b). Despite the fact that the Declaration does not contest political reality and the right of nation states to freely chose the name for "their own" language, its authors and signees have been unfoundedly criticized and accused of being national traitors, advocates of the restoration of Yugoslavia, which must be the gravest sin for the orthodox nationalists in the region, and whatnot. The most vocal critics were linguistic purists and nationalists who have, for decades, ever since the establishment of the nation states, vehemently perpetrated violence against the languages and identities of the peoples, trying to find, and often even construct linguistic differences.

Asking in the early 1970s whether nationalism was our destiny, academician Ljubomir Tadić clearly predicted the rise of nationalist right in Yugoslavia, but he could not foresee that near the end of his life he would be "praised" and arrogated by Serbian nationalists, i.e., the very "practitioners of *ketman*" who had looked down at their feet when faced with his uncompromising fight for justice, freedom, and truth. The opinions of his colleagues, mainly former members of the Praxis group, that by adopting nationalism Tadić

had sunk into his own oeuvre, did less damage to his reputation than the odes sung to him by those who had once been building their conformist careers in academia based on the very idea of Yugoslavhood.

Contemporary political conditions favor nationalists and the right. The lately held elections for the European Parliament have indicated the strengthening of the populist right in Italy, France, Hungary, Poland, and Great Britain, while the corruption affair of the far-right Austrian Freedom Party, revealed immediately before the elections, failed to significantly weaken this party's position, or that of the Alternative for Germany, their German allies. Nationalist ideology has a traditionally strong foothold in the Balkans. Authoritarian political culture and populism suit well the parties of conservative right, whose programs are based on nationalism. Moreover, even today's liberals resort to nationalist rhetoric, so it seems true that nationalism is our destiny. In the constitutions of the majority of the Balkan states, nation state and nation-based government are fundaments of statehood. Exceptions are multinational states of North Macedonia and Montenegro, which adopted citizenship as their main state-building substrate, yet their daily functioning indicates that their political systems have mechanisms in their core, whose main aim is to pacify different, often contradictory ethnic (national) interests. National homogenization is also contributed to by Eurocentric distrust of migrants, as well as of Islam, believers of which make for ideal dangerous others in the context of populist nationalism.

Contributing factors to the flourishing of nationalism also include the fact that multicultural European states do not nurture policies of multiculturalism based on trust and cultural interweaving. On the contrary, policies have been adopted to protect national, ethnic and linguistic minorities, based on mutual tolerance of a myriad of monocultural groups. Such policies stimulate and nurture nationalisms which could, as history has taught us, make Janus' evil face turn to "us", should this prove to be in the interest of political, economic, and financial centers of power. The notions that only "good" nationalism will prevail and that nationalism would disappear in the historical perspective are but an illusion. Political, educational, and cultural systems, as well as language policies of European states are

nationally denoted, and multicultural practices represent just (un)desirable exceptions. Serbia and Croatia make for a striking example as, though they have a civilizational responsibility and unquestionable national interest to overcome their misunderstandings and the consequences of their prior conflicts, they have nevertheless adopted the systems to protect the rights of national minorities, which reflect the ethnic distance between their respective majority peoples and national minorities, thus nurturing each other's nationalisms. These are the systems of national minorities' protection better suited for early 20th century, when it was believed that the identity of a people is best preserved in their elite.

The superiority of nationalists over multiculturalists should not discourage the latter. There may be no reason for excessive optimism, but neither for quitting critical thinking of the social relations and consequences of the policies based and fed on nationalism. British scientists believe that Brexit is an effect of nationalism (among numerous articles, see Salter 2016, and Martill and Staiger 2018) and that the consequences of the decisions made on the wave of populism would prove to be a long-term source of local and global crises. Serbian experts see in Brexit, among other things, the energy which should lend additional strength to nation state (Antonić 2016; Ljušić 2016). The paradigms in the context of which we perceive nationalism have a decisive role in the manner in which we explain different aspects of this complex social phenomenon. Critical, open thought and responsibility for the word spoken are the most effective safeguards against the capricious nature of nationalism, which, as a rule, serves as a confirmation of the perception of human nature as authoritarian.

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