

## Nationalism and School Spirit

Nationalism can perhaps be better understood by comparing it to school spirit. Citizens who are proud of their country are no different than students who are proud of their school. Armies on the battlefield win territory and prestige for their country in much of the same way as boys' and girls' sports teams win victories and fame and respect for their school. Armies have generals and teams have coaches. Both use uniforms to distinguish themselves from the opposition. Both have heroes and give awards for outstanding achievement. A country has its national anthem and a school its alma mater. While a strong believer in nationalism thinks his country is the best, a student with school spirit believes their school is better than any other.

Modern nationalism began with the French Revolution. When kings of European countries sent armies to end the revolution and return a monarch to the French throne, citizens of France united in a spirit of nationalism to defend their homeland. Years later, after Napoleon had risen to power and threatened the security of Europe, feelings of nationalism aroused Great Britain, Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Spain to defeat Napoleon and protect their territory and the rest of Europe.

Nationalism remained a strong force through the rest of the nineteenth century and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nationalism showed itself in different ways. In some countries, citizens united in an effort to gain a voice in their government, human rights, and even independence. On other occasions, nationalism led countries to compete for colonies and control of world trade routes. At its best, nationalism was a healthy form of patriotism but at its worst, it led to warfare and to the persecution of certain national groups by foreign countries that governed them.

## Nationalism in the 1800's

Pretend that you are living in the mid to late 1800's/early 1900's and that you have just become the leader of a country in Europe. Your nation has suffered through years of poor government, hard economic times, and disastrous wars. You have decided to use nationalism to rally your discouraged people and raise the country to a level of respect, power, and leadership in world affairs.

This goal can only be reached by getting people to be proud of their country, and by convincing them that they should put their country ahead of their own self-interests. You have a number of ideas in mind to achieve your objective. There are also many important decisions that you must make regarding your nations' government, armed forces, foreign trade, system of taxation, etc.

1. To create the impression of a "new beginning" for your country, you have decided to change the country's name. What will the new name be?
2. Design a flag for your new nation.
3. What would be a good national slogan that people could identify with and rally behind? (example: "My country right or wrong!")
4. Do you believe warfare should be used to gain more territory and achieve your national interests? (explain your answer)

5. How important is it to have a powerful army and navy?
  
6. How will you raise money to equip an army and build a navy? (mention specific ideas)
  
7. Design two medals that will be awarded to national heroes—one for bravery on the battlefield and the other for important contributions by citizens.
  
8. Will there be freedom of the press, or will newspapers be controlled by the government? (Give a reason for your decision,)
  
9. Will military service be required, or will there be a volunteer army? (Explain your decision.) Will both men and women serve? What ages are eligible for military service?
  
10. How can you achieve a "favorable balance of trade" - that is export more than you import?

11. Your country's people are of different races and religions. Some even speak different languages. How are you going to overcome these differences and create a strong, unified nation?
  
12. Will liberals be satisfied with the type of government you establish? Liberals want a constitution which protects freedom of speech, press, and religion. And they want a law-making parliament and the right to elect its members. (Briefly explain your answer.)
  
13. What will you do with "reactionaries" who demand that your country have a strong King and a privileged nobility and clergy - as it did before the period of the French Revolution?