

Nationalism and Disintegration in the Birth of Modern Countries:

A Comparative Study on the Issue of Modern Japanese Nationalism with the Case Illustration of Czechoslovak Disintegration

Ren Haohong^{1, *, †}, Zhang Yixing^{2, †}

¹Beijing Royal School, Beijing, China

²Hangzhou Foreign Language School, Hangzhou, China

*Corresponding author. Email: renhaohong@st.brs.edu.cn

†These authors contributed equally.

ABSTRACT

The appearance of nationalism in Japan can ascend to the Taisho period, after the sharp rise in the past decade of years, it finally shows a dramatically downcast in modern times. Nationalism has caused a great change in both Japan's economic and political aspects, as time passes by, nationalism has developed because of the assault which came from the thought trend of the western country. It has both the specific characteristic which cannot be replaced by western countries and a negative colour that has strongly affected the Japanese citizens.

Keywords: Nationalism, Czechoslovak disintegration, Taisho period, Tenno

1. INTRODUCTION

After the Meiji restoration, western ideology quickly diffused in Japanese society. Because of World War I, the European countries have transported many businessmen and critical thinkers to Japan, which have spread many of the political and social ideas that have only arisen and developed in western culture. At this time, the trend of imitating and advocating the culture and thoughts of western countries has suddenly appeared in the whole Japanese society, but at the same time, there is another trend in which radical resistance to the west has also wandered in social culture and ideas. These two trends show an opposing point of view which also results in a fierce clash of ideas, both of them can be generalized into two different attitudes to the transmission of western culture: the positive modernization and the negative traditionalism trend. Under the background of the battle of ideology, two main kinds of nationalism have started to appear [1].

The first one is nationalism which supports the tradition of original Japanese society. It resolutely safeguards the native Japanese culture, combining cultural traditions of Japan as the particular characteristic to advocate that Japan could represent the whole of Asia,

some of the scholars in Japan at that time have led to a trend that supports the theory of Japanese Superiority. This trend has emphasized diffusing traditional culture and the spiritual core of the society itself. But at the same time, they also accommodate and absorb western thought and ideas, to change the Japanese political complexion to a certain extent [1]. It also wins the support of the Japanese hierarchy.

The second one is the nationalism which developed from the western society structure, which supports the concept and ideas which developed from western society, they show a strong anti-feudalism in political attitude. This trend has intensely shown the desire which can move Japanese society into modernization and introduce it to the world. In the process of pursuing the modern consciousness, they indispensably ignore the importance of maintaining local culture and political structure [2]. They show a powerful opposing output of the thought with the other trend of nationalism at the same time, The over intense awareness of pursuit of western culture and ideas urgently forces them to despise the Japanese culture itself. In the Taisho period, most of the scholars support the theory of Japan's superiority, the whole society's political trends are partial to the tradition category, which also has the support of most politicians. The trend of pursuing the west also appears, and start to rise after the

war, but in the Taisho period, they still have less influence than the opposite trend.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT AND REVIVAL AFTER THE WAR OF JAPANESE NATIONALISM

After the defeat of the aggression war, Japan's economic and political issues have been back to the state before the Meiji restoration, the whole country was devoted to reconstructing the condition of various aspects of the country and paying attention to how to restart the modernization. The status of Japan has fallen to a great extent, which caused the decline of its international standing. Nations and political structures have almost collapsed. At that time Japan seems to aim at reconstructing but ignored the development of nationalism, but the truth is that there is no attenuation, but a rise of a brand new hierarchy of nationalism and growth of consciousness in the population.

In the period which is after the war, the nationalism state has divided into two main different genres, and it can represent the main development of Japanese nationalism in that decade of years. The first one is the schools which focus on revitalizing the society and criticize part of the political department, but it resolutely preserves the old system of organization, and they highly enthrone the position and existence of Tenno. It seems to oppose the domination of fascism. They have completely no intention to reflect on and improve the conduct of aggression, and this genre still esteems the theory of superiority, which praises highly that Japan can represent the whole of Asia and have the special characteristic which can not be duplicated by any civilization. This thought is easy to spread among the masses, so it has extensively affected the society's alignment at that time.

The other genre has less effect. They strongly criticize the traditional political structure and enthrone the brand new political ideas from western countries. The interesting thing is that these two genre shows an opposite idea of the existence of Tenno. In this trend of thought, they immovably consider that Tenno is the barrier that hurts the process of Japan's modernization. They believed Japan need a new political structure and repentance of the aggression war. But this genre of nationalism has the least famous extent, compared to the other genre, This democratic thought are not so easily be accepted by people at that time, but, when we try to use the modern sight to examine this point of view, it has more humanitarianism and humanistic concern in comparison to the other one, but because of the concept are not accord with the characteristic of government and aim of the dominant power, it is hardly recommended to the people.

In the process of reconstructing the country, the battle between these two genres still takes a high position in

society. Most people choose the ascription of the first genre which emphasize the importance of tradition and the old political structure, but the voice of start a dramatic growth in the whole society, which attracts a lot of scholars and politician. The battle between these two genres lasts for a long time until the full reconstruction of Japan's society.

3. MODERN DEVELOPMENT AND CLASSIFICATION OF CATEGORY

Talking about the classification of nationalism in the history of modern Japan, it can be simply classified as the democracy and the national quintessence. The democracy has undergone the process of Japan being affected by western countries and started to emerge in the embryonic form, to arise in the form of democracy. This genre persists in the core idea of having an opening attitude to western thought and insists the innovation should be organized implementation of both traditional political structure and the existence of Tenno. They believe that there should be a thorough renovation of the Japanese society, to carry out the modernization, but on the other side, which is the genre of national quintessence, they implement the idea of maintaining Japanese tradition and political structure, but it has also derived a theory of the superiority of Japan and the irreplaceable nature of Japanese culture. In this theory, Japan appeared as a country that has special characteristics which can represent the whole of Asia, That is also a reason why the tradition of Japan could not be innovated or changed. One of the important reasons why this genre has been fully developed is because, in the period after the aggression war, a lot of famous scholars and politicians who have a strong influence on society have affirmed it as an essential aspect in that period of society, it caused many supporters began to emerge from the group of people.

As the personal critics, Japanese nationalism has developed in the past decade years, both the nationalism genre has the positive and negative feature. The democracy emphasizes the importance to follow the ideological trends of western society, and organize the innovation of the old traditional social structure, one of the distinct features is the opposition of the Tenno system. It has a positive effect on people which can spread the advantage of western countries, and encourage the society to form modernization. The introspection of the ethnic group also shows the desirability of humanitarian spirit, to establish the worldview of the entire nation. On the other hand, the national quintessence underlined the advantage of national tradition and old political structure and its focus on reconstructing the Japanese society system and refreshing the glory history of Japan. This part of the thought and ideas can encourage people from both a sense of pride and confidence, it helps Japanese people

rebuild their confidence in their own country, and pay more positive passion to reconstruct society. But the theory of Japan's superiority was too one-sided, it forced people to lose their humanity and their horizons on the world. It brings radical color to the sight of sustaining the politics, and the respect of the war.

The revival of Japanese nationalism starts from the controversy over the International status of Japan, there are many disputes which focus on arguing Japan's superiority. But with the development of information transportation, a growing number of people are starting to pay attention to it, attributed to the interference of consensus, the contentious opinion has been maintained in a controllable range. Recently, the young generation of Japan start to lose awareness of nationalism, in this background, a new kind of nationalism started to grow, it may also symbolize the passes of the wartime.

4. THE CASE OF CZECHOSLOVAK

The inner conflicts of Czechoslovak finally led to the break-up of the country on 31 December 1992. On 17 July 1992, the Slovak National Council declared the resolution of the Independence of the Slovak Nation [3]. In the content of the declaration, factors of nationalism are connected to the final breakup of Czech and Slovak. Hence, this essay will use the declaration as the main primary source to discuss the issue of nationalism. It will further analyze the processes of Czechoslovakia's disintegration from a nationalistic view and discuss the impact of nationalism in Czechoslovak. To be more specific, this essay tends to mainly elaborate on the topic of nationalism in the case of Czechoslovak disintegration in three sections. First, the passage will analyze the content of the Slovak National Council's Declaration of Independence of the Slovak Nation with the whole process of the election. In this section, archives of elections between parties will be introduced to form an overview of the political and social changes in the 1990s. In the second part, the usage of nationalism in the event of disintegration will be presented through three aspects: wording, historical background before 1918, and specific events before 1992. This part is aimed to examine the context of Czech and Slovak before their breakup, as well as to clarify the conflicts between the two nations. For the final part, different stands on the breakup held by people from Czechs and Slovaks will be analyzed and criticized to gain a conclusion on the protecting effects of nationalism on Czech and Slovak. The conclusion will sum up the overall utilization of nationalism in a specific time in Czechoslovak before, during, and after its breakup.

The first section of this chapter tends to analyze the primary resource, the official declaration from the Slovak government, which came out on 17 July 1992 after a series of negotiations and consultations. The document managed to officially separate Slovak from Czech. In the

declaration to the Slovak public, the Slovak government declared the natural right of the Slovak nation for self-determination and ensured the rights of all citizens, nations, national minorities, and ethnic groups. Before the resolution was finally brought to the public, there had been nearly two years of chaos in elections among different Czech and Slovak. According to archives from Parliamentary Chamber [1986-1992], it was the country's second general election since the political upheaval in November 1989, with 41 parties fighting fiercely for 300 seats in the Federal Assembly of People's and National Assembly and 350 seats in the National Assembly of the two republics. The result of the election is that in the Czech Republic, the Citizens' Democratic Party, headed by Federal Minister of Finance Klaus, won the most votes, and won 1/3 of the votes in both the Federal House of Representatives and the national parliament, becoming the largest party in the parliament. In the Slovak Republic, the Movement for Democracy Slovakia, headed by former Prime Minister Mečar, also dominated the Slovakian movement, winning 1/3 of the votes in the federal parliament and becoming the second-largest party. The Slovak government then discussed the matter of decentralization with the federal government in August 1990. In January 1991, the federal government implemented an economic restructuring initiative. Because of the disparities in economic growth between the Czech and Slovak republics, the negative aspects of this approach are particularly obvious in Slovakia. After the publication of the declaration, Slovaks felt or were simply educated by their government that their thousand years' struggle finally came to a bright end. The government tended to build collective identities in the fight for self-governing to win people's support.

Nationalism has a different interpretation and features asserted by historians across time [4]. By now, the national theories can be roughly divided into two types. The traditional theory believes that a nation is a group with the same objective characteristics, such as the same language, culture, and constitution. However, after the 1970s, subjective identity theory became the mainstream of nationalism. According to late 20th century scholars, the ultimate aim of a nation is to self-govern and properly use nationalism to form people's cultural and political identities [5]. As it's discussed at the beginning of the part, the usage of nationalism is protecting cultural and political identity. To explain, the second theory includes both objective factors in the first theory and subjective theory, as Anderson believes, national identities form an imaging community. Notably, the second theory about identity will be used throughout the whole essay, since it leaves no blur area for close nations that have similar features. This is the evidence in the case of Czech and Slovak. They are two nations with similar characteristics and their own cultural and political identities. Many cases of alliance and breakup throughout Czech and Slovak history can be referred to as the catalyzing of nationalism.

This explained that nationalism specifically refers to the ideology of national protecting movements. These two nations formed their nationalism throughout time.

The second part is to illustrate the effects of nationalism in Czechoslovak with four aspects, namely wording, historical background of conflicts and specific events, and critical thinking about nationalism in the 20th century. In terms of the first aspect of wording, the language used in the declaration tends to emphasize nationalism by nation independence and citizen rights. In the declaration, "sebaurčenie" (self-determination) and "rešpektovať práva všetkých" (respecting the rights of everybody) were mainly stressed. Osterland (1993) believes that both the successful acts of self-governing and citizens' rights need to be allied with nationalism [2]. Only with the support and confirmation from the public, the Slovak government could maintain its operation in its new birth. The basic knowledge that the Slovak government indoctrinated the people as human rights and nation are linked. With the promise of ensuring rights, Slovaks were willing to persist in their nationalism.

Two factors in historical background that caused deep national conflicts between Czechs and Slovaks are constant separation and rule under different suzerain states [6]. In a long term, Czechs and Slovaks are two close but different nations. Mahoney argues that the national identities of Czechs and Slovaks are individualized since the middle age. Different historical experiences and backgrounds cause the consequence of widening crack. The early formation of two different nations and the origin of a national conflict between Czechs and Slovaks emerged in the middle age of the 15th century. Czechs and Slovaks belong to the West Slavs with very similar language and customs. Nevertheless, Czechs and Slovaks became two different countries, gradually forming different affected characteristics and tendentious identities [7]. In the 5th and 6th centuries, they moved into today's Czechs and Slovaks in succession and jointly established the Principality of Samo. Over 100 years after the dissolution of Samo, the Czech region gradually established the Empire of Greater Moravia, while the Slovak region established the principality of Nitra. After coexisting for about 30 years, Moravia finally annexed the Nitra, reuniting the two countries. Then at the beginning of the 10th century, Hungary occupied Slovakia, while the Czech region became a part of Bohemia as a part of the Holy Roman Empire. Across the long Holy Roman Empire era, the Czechs were under the control of the Germans, while the Slovaks were under the rule of the Hungarians. In 1526, the Holy Roman Empire annexed the kingdom of Bohemia and Hungary, leaving the Czechs and Slovaks under one state again. However, by then the culture and religion of Czechs were more Roman-Christianized and Germanized, while Slovaks were a Hungarian vassal state. The crack on national

issues took place since Czechs and Slovaks were once again ruled by the same ruler after their long separation. These were the differences in political and cultural identities formed between Czechs and Slovaks.

In addition, the third issue related to nationalism is closely related to the two specific events, which reflected that modern political and economic conflicts in the 20th century are two obvious factors that cause the breakup of Czech and Slovak. These two specific events that happened between 1918 and 1992 directly verified the choice of the breakup is related to nationalism. One is the Prague Spring, the other is the Velvet Revolution. Firstly, the case of the Prague Spring reveals the political conflict in the way of democratization in Czechoslovakia. This movement began on January 5 and ended until August 20 of that year, when the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact members invaded Czechoslovakia. In the process of domestic political reform, Alexander Dubcek, the First Secretary of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) at that time, proposed the slogan "socialism with a human face" [7]. This plan had tremendous support from the Czechoslovak people with the Dubcek government's allowance of greater freedom to express political ideas and the existence of political and social groups not under Communist control. Although the old socialist tradition was not truly violated in the whole event, the Soviet Union still regarded it as a challenge to its leadership and a threat to political stability in Eastern Europe. This democratization process in Czechoslovakia failed after the invasion of 200,000 Warsaw Pact members and 5,000 tanks that began late at night on August 20 [7]. The failure of a national democratic revolution directly led to the totalitarian rule under the Soviet Union. In that case, a growing discontent towards the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) began to have an effect on the final Velvet Revolution after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992.

Secondly, the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovak was mainly a movement for national independence as a result of the failure of the new democratic regime after the collapse of communism [7]. It was described as velvet since the revolution never involved any act of violence. In the middle and late 20th century, the Soviet Union forced Eastern European socialist countries to unilaterally develop heavy industry [8]. This resulted in low living standards and social contradictions. The deepening of the contradictions of the Cold War eventually led to the 1989 Revolution in Eastern Europe, which began in Poland and spread to Eastern Europe countries including the Czech Republic. At that time, Havel, the leader of the Czech anti-establishment movement, led marches to vie for democracy in November 1989 [9]. People were there to claim their national rights in Czech and Slovak since they believe they would have a better way out after the breakup [10].

The former paragraphs have explained in wording, historical background and specific events, this critical thinking in terms of the nationalism result will mainly discuss two main stands towards Czechoslovakia's decision of breakup. Some hold a negative opinion of this event. They regard the breakup as extreme damage to the European economy [11]. However, many Slovaks now believe the breakup was necessary since it makes people find a voice they believed to be overshadowed by a centralized government in Prague. On the contrary, nationalist sentiments are now part of the official policy." In addition to that, according to the report by Darmstadt on European Stars and Stripes 1994, some young Slovaks simply realized that they should change their call from Czechoslovakian to Slovakian. There perhaps are not many obvious changes in people in the two nations. This "undetectable" change in Czechs and Slovaks' life is perhaps the most successful part of all breaking-up movements with the smallest harm to people. The nationalism of the Czechs and Slovaks contribute to the peaceful breakup before irreversible damage between the two nations. It is not to say that all national movements are in moderate ways and end up rationally. A truly beneficial national movement always puts the future of its people in front of everything. Long-formed historical conflicts mixed with modern problems caused damage to Czechoslovak during the 20th century. The break up of Czechoslovak overall can be regarded as a good action for both Czechs and Slovaks since it was done most gently. "Even with the disintegration of the common state, Czech and Slovak's nationalism did not disappear," says Fedor Gal, a Slovak former dissident, and public figure [12]. In the future development of Czech and Slovak, nationalism will still play an important role in protecting their nations.

5. CONCLUSION

Japanese nationalism only has a short history. It appeared in the term of the Meiji restoration, reach a summit during the period after the aggression war, and gradually disappear in the past decades of years. In the process of development, it has split into many different genres, the two main parts are democracy and the national quintessence. The common point of their positive side is they both gave impetus to Japanese history progress, and also contributed to the expansion of both economic and cultural aspects. But they have an extreme difference on their negative side, one of them excessively esteems the western culture and political method, ignoring the social condition and the cultural advantage. The other one praises highly of the national culture and brings a sense of pride and confidence to the people. But on the other hand, they are stubborn to insist on the old political structure and system and deny the spirit of introspection, too tangled in the status of the country, leaving a negative influence. In modern times, nationalism start to disappear, but the progress still has a

lot of value for scholars to study, especially the reason and factors behind integration and disintegrations.

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