

America as a Nation of Ideas

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2023-05-05

1 Problem Statement

I was thinking about 20th century politics and the historically-large disasters associated. It was a strangely impactful time, with many ideas that are still relevant and discussed today. I listened a few times to Ryan Chapman's [video on Facism \(and facism\)](#), which I found a very helpful and insightful discussion. A lot of discussion on facism and nationalism is largely negative, and this video was helpful in understanding the connection between the two. Facism places the focus, sources the greatest good from the benefit of the nation. It is (was, in the 20th century, at least) based on genetics or heritage. It focuses on the genetic inheritance and definition of the nation.

2 Ideas

There are a few trends or phenomena that I think are relevant in a discussion of facism today. First, the increased ease and volume of international travel, both temporary and permanent, in addition to increased population mixing via immigration and refugees, has increased the genetic / cultural diversity of all nations. The increased ability to communicate with and see other parts of the world and the people in them is relevant in breaing down the barriers between nations, too.

Since these trends tend to decrease national identity as it was often understood in the 20th century, especially in facist literature and philosophy. The trends above make this less tenable as a basis for a national strategy or philosophy.

The United States was created as a nation of of other nations (primarily England but ofthers, especially later) that was created on the basis of ideology or philosophy. In some sense, I think this is a stronger basis for a nation than national / genetic heritage, expecially in this modern world. It seems to me a better and more inspiring thing to rally around, but that's obviously not true for everyone. I view the nationalistic focus of facism as somewhat pragmatic. It almost seems as though it's an artificial lightningrod to focus on, that it is either postited by someone who stands to gain from the control, or that it is a deliberate if somewhat downgraded and / or arbitrary locus of attention. Pardon the tangent.

3 The Main Point

My main point is that the U.S., being centered on ideas and philosophy, is nearly impossible to be born into the membership of the nation. I think one of the real long-term threats to the U.S. as it was conceived is that many of the U.S. citizens now (and even at the foundation) do not necessarily explicitly buy in to the ideals of the nation. Since these are (were) the basis of the U.S., it's difficult to propagate the nation. People can be born into the U.S. without ascent to the central ideas. In brief, I think the best address to this issue is emphatic education about the priciples and ideals of the U.S. In a more classical liberal response (I don't necessarily

back this yet, just an idea), maybe all people would have to go through a citizenship process. It seems the only relatively simple response to the problem. Any nation based primarily on history or genetics can easily be joined, and can be governed and can evolve quite simply in terms of democratic (or any other, especially consensual) governance, but a nation that claims its existance on the basis of ideas or philosophy can only really be joined by a consious, well-informed, and purposeful choice. I think Abraham Lincoln's proclamation of success might be a bit premature, and may be in the wrong vein: of, by, and for the people can be done by any nation, the U.S. is unique (not necessarily completely, I need to read on this, but is distinct from many / most / the traditional paradigm of nationhood) in being formed on ideological grounds. Any traditional method of growth or propagation risks the pollution of the purpose of the nation. Perhaps inevitable, perhaps good / fine / reasonable / the best outcome, but it ceases to be what it once claimed to be.