

EN 101 Effective Writing

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Should patriotism always be encouraged?

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Patriotism is love of or devotion to one's country, consisting of notions concerning language, religious traditions, ethics, laws and devotion to the national good. It is a social good, benefitting a nation as a whole and making a community in which people prefer national interests to their personal interests, and are ready to serve their nation at all times. It binds the people of a nation together and they work effectively in national progress.

According to European sociologist, prof. Ratko dozovic, "Patriotism means positive attitude to ones fatherland, and pride in its achievement and culture" (Internet 5).

Tshering wangchuk, defines patriotism in a broader sense, as;

Patriotism means love for one's native land, and sympathy for the welfare of one's countrymen. The land in which we are born has a special charm and sanctity for us. Its very sight is cheering; its very soil is sacred. Bound up intimately with the soil of our native land, are its institution traditions, the age old traditions, social, political. Religious are sacred, we love and value them above anything. We have the feeling that they are made from blood.

Man is no doubt, a part and partial of the past, but lives in the present. Those who make the present charming and worth living are objects of love and reverence. In this way, patriotism is manifested in love of our country and spirit of fellowship. A true patriot dedicates his life to uplift his people, to improve their character and economic condition., remove their ignorance and corruption, break the barriers between classes and make folks live purer, better and happier life. He asks nothing in return n expects no reward. (Internet 4)

Patriotism is the love of one's own country and people, and it becomes the hatred of other countries and peoples. The extreme unreasoning partisanship on behalf of a group to which one belongs, especially when the partisanship includes malice and hatred towards a rival group, give rise to a negative side of patriotism. In fact, when patriotism refers to the ad vocation of the use of threats or actual force against other countries in order to safeguard what they perceive as their country's national interests, and colloquially to excessive bias in judging one's own country as superior to others, this is known as false patriotism. Thus, patriotism degenerates, on the one hand into national pride, and on the other into national envy.

The question arises is to what extent patriotism is justified? Patriotism remains a virtue unless it turns into hatred for other nations and other people This is the false patriotism that results in hatred for other nations and immoral acts and unethical activities done in other countries, traitors and detective agencies and wars that are the consequence of the typical thought that my country is best. False patriotism is influencing sports and international relations too. Human beings should be considered more important than national and ideological boundaries.

Patriotism is obviously not an everyday emotion. But we are sedulously encouraged to be patriotic through school-books, through newspapers and other channels of propaganda, which stimulate racial egotism by praising national heroes and telling us that our own country and way of life are better than others. This patriotic spirit feeds our vanity from childhood to old age.

Nationalism, the patriotic spirit, class and race consciousness, are all ways of the self, and therefore separative. After all, what is a nation but a group of individuals living together for economic and self-protective reasons? Out of fear and acquisitive self-defense arises the idea of "my country," with its boundaries and tariff walls, rendering brotherhood and the unity of man impossible. This leads to the concept of false patriotism.

Patriotism has always been defined as love of one's country or zeal in the defense of the interests of one's country. Patriotism as such does not necessitate a programme of action; it stimulates and informs nationalism, but is not always nationalistic. Boswell (1859, v 4) comments on patriotism as follows;

Dr Johnson defined a patriot as 'a factious disturber of the government'. He also said that 'Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel', referring particularly to the demagogue John Wilkes. Such ironic reservations about the virtue of patriotism are a frequent theme of much modern commentary, often prompting the bitter reflection by self-ascribed patriots that, 'Patriotism has become a dirty word'.

The constantly repeated assertion that we belong to a certain political or religious group, that we are of this nation or of that, flatter our little egos, puffs them out like sails, until we are ready to kill or be killed for our country, race or ideology. It is all so stupid and unnatural. According to Samuel Johnson, patriotism is an evil thing and in his words; “It is the quality of patriotism to be jealous and watchful, to observe all secret machinations, and to see public dangers at a distance.

So, the quality of patriotism becomes an evil thing, when concerned to other nations. Patriots are often found indulged in immoral acts in other nations like spying, detecting agencies and they are always in search of opportunities to harm innocent people having other nationalities by doing crimes like bomb blasts and they think that they are showing real patriotism by harming the property of other people. This leads to terrorism, anarchy and violence and patriotism goes against humanism in most cases.

False patriotism has always been a powerful tool for the rulers in a society based on classes. Profusion of such belligerent nationalist feelings in the masses helps keep in hiding the most basic problems of the country itself. In the fanaticism of anti-Pakistan, the problems of the Indian society get shriveled in the consciousness of Indians. The country outside border becomes the priority and the sufferings inside are faded. This ultimately helps the rulers to prolong their unjust rule, unjust system based on exploitation and deprivation, in the country.

Cricket, starting with the unexpected 1983 World Cup has been used to inoculate such jingoism in the masses. Had it not been cricket then it would have been something else because the rulers need certain cultural means to condition the minds of public to safeguard their thrones.

Once on a sports-news channel the anchor was commented on Pakistan-India cricket match in following words:

“It’s a day that made history and September 26, 2007 (the day of the match) reminds us the Day, August 15, 1947”! It was day that marked 'independence from loss', the anchor exclaimed.

The exaggerated comparisons apart, what was even more disturbing were the attempt of one of the anchors to suggest that the victory was sweeter because India had beaten its 'arch-rival' Pakistan. Despite the co-anchor's attempts to divert this particular anchor from pursuing this angle, she persisted. She kept asking reporters on the spot to ask people whether they felt even happier that this victory was over Pakistan. Fortunately, technical hitches, deliberate or otherwise, stopped her from getting responses and finally the subject was dropped.

Of course, India and Pakistan are rivals on the cricket field. Of course, an India Pakistan match is always the most exciting. But what stood out at both the earlier match between the two sides and the final was the absence of hostility. There was no sledging of the kind one witnessed in the matches between India and England or India and Australia.

*Both sides played well and played in a positive frame of mind. Why then should a mainstream media channel insist on harping on the rivalry between two countries that are making tentative attempts at peace?
(Internet 3)*

No doubt, patriotism does well to a nation. The people joined together by this spirit work together in uplifting their nation.

But usually patriotism goes far beyond mere national interest and it becomes a false thing when preference of national benefits results in negative approach for others. Patriotism does not remain only the expression of the love of home, the love of the native country as the wider home, the love of the family but of the people who dwell in these homes and the consciousness of the difference and distinctiveness of all those who come from such a home or are associated with it, and the claims to distinction

Leading to pride, which are based upon the mere fact of belonging to it, which underlies such a conception of patriotism. It is not so much duty and love, as privilege and hatred or contempt of others, which fill the heart and mind of such “patriots.” They establish a claim to their own superiority on the ground of their sharing a collective attribute with others.

They are proud to be Englishmen, or Germans, or Frenchmen, Americans, or Italians, and have no doubt that, as such, they possess a superior claim to distinction to that of members of another State, people, or race, class or occupation. And this pride seems justified in their eyes irrespective of the absolute claim which any of these countries or nations have to superiority in all that makes for the higher social being, and even whether the State itself as a body acts rightly or wrongly, nobly, or ignobly. It need hardly be insisted upon that this is the wrong conception of patriotism 'my country right or wrong' point of view, we nevertheless find ourselves forced back again to the final tests of the aims and ideals of that great corporate body called the State which, as we have already seen, together with all other corporate bodies, should continuously be tested with regard to its right of existence by its conformity to the original aims and the ultimate ideals of its corporate existence.

Our approval and admiration, our love, our loyalty and our patriotism, must be modified by this final test. It is well to remember that virtue and vice are here in close proximity to one another. The sense of honor may easily degenerate into ambition, vanity and arrogance. The love of honor may imperceptibly merge into the craving for honors.

The desire to gain and to hold, the longing to be identified with something greater than ourselves, creates the spirit of nationalism; and nationalism breeds war. In every country the government, encouraged by organized religion, is upholding nationalism and the separative spirit. Nationalism is a disease, and it can never bring about world unity.

We cannot attain health through disease; we must first free ourselves from the disease. It is because we are nationalists, ready to defend our sovereign States, our beliefs and acquisitions, that we must be perpetually armed. Property and ideas have become more important to us than human life, so there is constant antagonism and violence between ourselves and others.

By maintaining the sovereignty of our country, we are destroying our sons; by worshipping the State, which is but a projection of ourselves, we are sacrificing our children to our own gratification. Nationalism and sovereign governments are the causes and the instruments of war.

False patriotism usually results in destruction as a whole. Adolf Hitler was a patriot. He gave strength to Germany by trying to overcome other nations using force and violence.

In words of Barnett (2003),

Without Hitler, there would have been no victories, no defeats, no bomb plots, no trials of 'people courts' or international military tribunals, no hangings, no war at all. But Hitler's false patriotism and cunning manifestation, continuing with acceptance of such acts of outright, gangsterism as mass murders of public and his criminal directives, put world to stake.

The element in the national psychology of the Germans, their national arrogance and pride and their fixed determination to assert their domination and to enforce its recognition upon others, is perhaps among all others the truly effective ultimate cause which has led to this war.

The attitude of mind by which one harms others for his nation's benefit is produced by pure un-adulterated selfishness and the dominance of social instincts by the more or less conscious personal interests and the material ends to be gained. It has thus often been pointed out that the material interests of the great munition industry directly and immediately led to war, or at least to the encouragement and direct cultivation of the war-like passions and the cultivation of all activities which make for war.

The Americans patriotism is nowadays, a threat to the whole world. Americans accuse every other person anti-American. The war in Iraq which was somehow for oil and other resources and for having American dominancy over other nations caused massive scale destruction and affected world's peace badly. The statistical data of the harm and devastation caused by this war was elaborated by Karen Kwiatkowski, as

We are nearly five years past the moment where George W. Bush declared "Mission Accomplished." 400,000 to 1.2 million Iraqis are dead by our decisions and actions. Over two million are internally displaced, and over two million Iraqis have fled the country. 5,000 Americans are dead (soldiers and contractors) as a result, 30–50,000 physically injured, and over 100,000 mentally disturbed, receiving or awaiting treatment.

Army and Marines are morally and physically bankrupt – and burdened by executive pressure for more forces in Afghanistan, Pakistan and trouble in Iran. A trillion dollars has been spent, another trillion to be spent before we are finished and if McCain has his way, we will never be finished, and we will bleed ourselves for the duration of the 21st century. Beyond Iraq, we have Secretary of Defense Bob Gates alternately screaming in an empty room and crying in despair because NATO won't pick up the slack of propping up our preferred government in Kabul. (Internet 1)

While on the other hand, Al.Qaida and Iraqi Muslims, in their patriotism, are fighting against Americans to safeguard their national interest. So, it is the patriotism that is prolonging the war between the two nations.

The following is the text of a speech given by Ramabriga at Virginia Tech on February 12, 2008,

Just before American and British troops entered Iraq to remove the regime of Saddam Hussein, a videotape of Osama bin Laden was aired on Al-Jazeera TV. The tape was aired on February 12, 2003, and in it bin Laden said:

"The interests of Muslims and the interests of the socialists coincide in the war against the crusaders."

Bin Laden was referring to the fact that four weeks earlier, millions of leftists had poured into the streets of European capitals and of Washington, San Francisco and New York to protest the removal of Saddam Hussein. Their goal was to prevent the United States and Britain from toppling Saddam and ending one of the cruelest and most repressive regimes in modern times. The protesters chanted "no blood for oil;" they called the United States "the world's greatest terrorist state;" they called America's democratic government an "Axis of Evil;" and they compared America's president to Adolph Hitler. (internet 2)

We seem to have in the country a warfare state mentality among the citizenry – characterized by extreme and unreflective patriotism, xenophobia, national chauvinism, intolerance and conformity all cloaked as Americanism. This warfare

state mentality has an unstated cohort – and that is the fostering of a widespread fear of dissent.

While encouraging and intensifying in ourselves our patriotic devotion to our country and our nation, and while loyally conforming to our duties to the narrower and more proximate corporate bodies and institutions with which we are associated by natural ties or by common endeavors and a feeling entirely at one with them especially as concerns our duties and not our privileges we must ardently and passionately strive for the development in all civilized nations of that wider patriotism which makes for internationalism

A stubborn insistence that one country is always right is a false patriotism and it does more harm than good to the individual country. Such a person would be incapable of realizing the weakness of his land; he should adopt a tolerant attitude towards others and be broad enough to embrace what is good to them. Patriotism in its narrow sense curbs and confines the spirit of men. Each restricts his loyalties and limits his visions. If we want to improve things we will have to discourage aggressive and militant types of patriotism.

True patriotism consists of love for mankind, and it should be manifested in true humanism.

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Samuel Johnson; *The Patriot: Addressed to the Electors of Great Britain*, Published by T. Cadell, 1774

Correlli Barnett; *Hitler's Generals*, Published by Grove Press, 2003 ISBN 0802139949, 978080213

Electronic Resources

Internet 1

http://groups.google.com.pk/group/alt.politics.republicans/browse_thread/thread/13a189db9c16182e?hl=en&ie=UTF-8&q=causes+of+false+patriotism

Internet 2

<http://www.frontpagemag.com/ARticles/Read.aspx?GUID=964CC896-00AE-4C73-BCB9-EB9B4AA09E83>

Internet 3

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2007/oct/ksh-teamindia.htm>

Internet 4

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/patriotism>

Internet 5

<http://www.ips.org/institutional/patriotism>