

A Distinction between Early Pan-Slavism and Russian Pan-Slavism

Zhengqi Shen *

Shanghai Foreign Language School, Shanghai, China

* Corresponding Author Email: Corresponding author: deqia@ldy.edu.rs

Abstract. It has been 107 years since the collapse of Tsarist Russia. However, the military conflicts between Russia and Ukraine going on currently might be an indicator of the significant carryover of the Pan-Slavism policy during the Tsarist period. Thus, this work draws on historical evidence of Russia, Yugoslavia and Poland, analyse the difference between the origins of consciousness of Slavic nature in Russia and other regions in Europe, and compare the core values of Pan-Slavism with that of Russian Pan-Slavism, in order to investigate the discrepancy and relation between the two forms of ideology. The research shows that Russian Pan-Slavism was actually a radical thinking that combined the alienation of Pan-Slavism proposed by the Slavs under the control of other multinational empires than Russia with the expansion ambitions of the Russian rulers, and that the core of Pan-Slavism was a regional might's oppression over other nations, which depended on the power dynamics following the trend of the ages. This work defines Russian Pan-Slavism detailedly and provides a clarification of a misconception of Pan-Slavism inside and outside Russia.

Keywords: Pan-Slavism, nationalism, Slavic nations, assimilation policy.

1. Introduction

Race and ethnicity have accompanied the whole society throughout the human history. But they are always forgotten by people in a time when they are not emphasized. The military conflicts between Russia and Ukraine have lasted two and a half years since its outbreak in February 2022. The issue of national consciousness has regained some attention in the public as a response to this. National contradiction is believed to play its particular and pivotal role in the conflicts. When making analysis of the reason for the actions of the governments, the term "Pan-Slavism" has been carried out of the history. However, the term Pan-Slavism isn't referred to a certain belief or ideology. Since the born of this idea, its core and expression have changed on a large extent. Beside the Russia-Ukraine-crisis, it has acted as a significant force in numerous historical events including Russo-Turkish Wars, the two world wars, the Russian Civil War, the Kosovo War, etc. Thus, using the same method that commented on an event two centuries ago to comment on events today would be impractical. Study exits that has mentioned the difference between Slavic nationalism in different periods, but there lack further efforts to distinguish the core of Pan-Slavism in different regions and ages [1]. When, where and how did it originate? What is the main area that is affected by it the most? When did it spread to Russia and how had it completed the transformation to the so-called Russian Pan-Slavism? What is the main discrepancy between Pan-Slavism and Russian Pan-Slavism? How to treat the ideas subjectively? Answers to these questions need to and have to be found. Discussion on this topic is meaningful in the dissection of Pan-Slavism, a generic term that consists of different branches. It might be discovered that the force behind the unification of several nations and the one behind the separation of them should actually be the same ideology if the meaning of Pan-Slavism is not clarified. This work concentrates on the relation and discrepancy between early Pan-Slavism and Russian Pan-Slavism in the course of history. Drawing on the analysis of several historical cases, the research detailedly compares the core thinking, development and expression of early Pan-Slavism with that of Russian Pan-Slavism, and explains the extension of the trend of alienation that transformed early Pan-Slavism into Russian Pan-Slavism in Tsarist Russia to other Slavic nations including Poland and Yugoslavia.

2. Background

The rise of nationalism after the later eighteenth century and the continuous collapses of multinational empires in the earlier twentieth century always leave the public with a stiff impression that nationalism plays a pivotal role in the independence and liberation of nations that once were ruled by a larger country [2]. In real history, there seems to be another form of nationalism performing as an inverse force that attempted to unify the nations together instead of separating them. This could confuse in that a terminology expressed itself in two contradictory ways, sometimes even during the very same period. Former studies have made efforts to draw a line between the different beliefs [1]. This work draws on historical source evidence to contend that the so-called opposite form of nationalism that conversely acted against the self-determination of nations is the product of deliberate alienation over the thought of liberation.

3. Case Analysis

One suitable case of this is Pan-Slavism. When Pan-Slavism originated in the early nineteenth century, the European social conditions in post-Napoleon era were unfriendly for Slavs, even for those who lived under the control of the Russian Empire, both culturally and politically. “The czar was civilized, but his subject was not” clearly indicated the bias over Russians during that period, let alone non-Russian Slavs. Over ten million Slavs, including Czechs, Croats, Serbs, some Poles, and other small groups lived under the control of Austria and Ottoman. The Habsburg Empire managed to reinforce its influence on the Balkan Peninsula after defeating Napoleon. The percentage of their population in the whole Habsburg Empire was relatively high, once making up over half of the population of the Habsburg Empire. Under certain social atmospheres, they were somehow considered as barbarians and were severely discriminated against and exploited by the empire government. One indicator of this was the list of generals during the Napoleonic War. Though Austria had been in severe state of war for nearly ten years, hardly any Slavic military officers were promoted as generals, leaving the army with far more generals than the number needed during the war, of whom almost all were German aristocrats [3]. The legitimacy of the Slavic languages was also strictly denied: most official documents were written in German, causing severe inconvenience in life for Slavic citizens. Metternich once encouraged the use of Roman letters instead of Cyrillic letters in Slavic languages by subsidy policy towards printers of Orthodox religious records in order to restrain the national consciousness of the Slavs [4]. During this period the main appeal of Pan-Slavism was the promotion of Slavish culture and language and Slavs being respected and equally treated as other people in Europe. During the Revolution of 1848, the campaign of Slavs in Austria was not so fierce as the Magyars, the Slavic Congress held in Prague mainly asking for the just treatment for Slavic culture and the cooperation of all Slavs inside and outside Austria. Violent revolution was not directly involved in the solutions to Slavic problems at that time. Protest marches and rebellions did occur but merely on a small scale, and they hardly even represented a large enough percentage of Slavs, of whom most, at least until that moment, still supported the rule of Austria.

Though early Pan-Slavism was, compared to Italians and Hungarians, quite temperate in its campaign, the European countries felt severely threatened by the potential unification of Slavs. In the later nineteenth century, the appeal of independence from the multinational empires became increasingly urgent. The ninth Russo-Turkish War, or the Crimean War during 1853 to 1856 was another unsuccessful attempt of Russia to expand its influence in the Balkan Peninsula [5]. During Tzar Nicholas I’s time, the upper class of the Russian Empire didn’t show much interest in the union of Slavs, nor did most of the Russian people. In 1870s, however, the power dynamics in the whole Europe witnessed a significant change. With the unification of Germany and the signature of the League of the Three Emperors, Russia managed to launch another war against the Ottoman Empire. Different from Nichola I’s indifference to Slavic affairs, Alexander II performed like a founder of reform. Russian Pan-Slavists managed to coordinate Pan-Slavism with the expansion ambition of Tsarist Russia. Affected by domestic public opinion and debt disputes, Britain didn’t stand on

Ottoman's side this time. Instead, Britain agreed to fracture Ottoman's territory in Balkan. After Ottoman doubtlessly lost the war, the signature of the Treaty of San Stefano symbolized the official independence of Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria. Alexander II planned to build Russia hegemony in the Balkan Peninsula by raising the power Bulgaria as a puppet of Russia. In this case, Bulgaria became an affiliation to the Russian Empire, and the czar referred to himself as the protector of Bulgaria. In 1885, Russia appointed Prince Alexander Joseph as the monarch of Bulgaria. On the level of action, Russia brought freedom and independence to the Slavic nations in the Balkan Peninsula, completing the Pan-Slavic goal of self-determination, but the aim of Russia was, actually, entrench its manipulation over the smaller Slavic nations. Pan-Slavism appealed to Slavs being equally treated as other European people; in the action of Russian Pan-Slavism, however, Russia was doubtlessly condescending over other Slavic nations. In the dream of Russian Pan-Slavists, Russia should be the ruler of all Slavs in Europe, which was clearly not what the early Pan-Slavists asked for.

The apogee of Russian Pan-Slavism was the two Balkan Wars and World War I. That the Habsburg Empire forcibly took Bosnia was more than what Serbia could bear in Balkan, directly making it turn to Russia for protection. Russia, after breaking up with Bulgaria as allies, was happy to accept another Slavic nation under its flag for its hegemony in Balkan. While analyzing the reason for World War I, researchers tended to focus on the conflicts between Russia and the Habsburg Empire in the Balkan Peninsula. Actually, Russian Pan-Slavism played its consequential role in the burst of World War I in two regions. The first one was undoubtedly the Balkan Peninsula, where both Habsburg and Romanov attempted to take control of. The second was the Habsburg Empire itself. Away from the Balkan Peninsula, the Habsburg Empire was the area with most Slavic dwellers, including Czechs, Croatians, and many other Slavic groups, among whom the Ruthenians were the closest to Russia. Before World War I, Russia had been making efforts to eliminate the use of Rusyn language and suppress the Ruthenian assemblies, but Lemberg and its surrounding area controlled by the Habsburg Empire was a resistance to it [6]. Russian Pan-Slavists aimed to assimilate all the Ruthenians, in which the greatest obstruction was the Habsburg Empire. From today's conflicts between Russia and Ukraine it is known that Russia never managed to do so. Although the Slavs who lived in Central Europe and East Europe under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire showed strong willingness of independence in the early twentieth century, in most time Russia didn't play the role of the liberator of these Slavs. Unlike South Slavs like the Bulgarians and the Serbs, who had maintained a close connection with Russia, Most of the West Slavs were against Austria and Russia at the same time. This was the direct tension between Pan-Slavism and Russian Pan-Slavism, indicating that Pan-Slavism had been utterly alienated in Russia and turned to the tool of Russia's ambition of aggression.

Among Slavic people, similar kind of alienation wasn't limited in Tsarist Russia. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was founded after World War I, consisting of the former Kingdom of Serbia, Montenegro and the South Slavs under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As the Serbian Radical Party occupied the main position in the congress, the policy trends turned unequally against Croats, Slovenes and all the groups other than Serbs. The Radical Party claimed that all Croats, Slovenes and Serbs should be a single nation, and that the Montenegrins and Macedonians were altogether Serbs [7]. Similar to Habsburg Austria, the military officers were practically monopolised by Serbs in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The intense reaction of the people other than Serbians was predictable, of whom the Croats posed the most urgent threaten over the Serbian hegemony in the kingdom. A result of this situation was the murder towards King Alexander I in 1934. The conflicts between Serbs and Croats became extremely violent before the burst of World War II that when Hitler's troops rushed its way into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1941, the Croats got disarmed at the first moment and even provided help for the German army.

Another case with similar properties was inter-war Poland. In the blueprint Pilsudski drew for Poland, it needed to liberate Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, and found a federation of Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians [8]. This federation could win support from Britain and France and accumulate enough power to contend against Germany and Russia. Hence, when Petliura

turned to Pilsudski for aid, he agreed to assist seizing back Kyiv by force. The negotiation after the Polish-Soviet War was led by his political opponent Dmowski, however, fostering the signature of the Riga Treaty. In post-war Poland, the republic was formed by Dmowski to be a nation state of Poles, while the non-Polish people, instead of getting their positions equal as Poles as the Intermarium goal had planned, didn't occupy a percentage high enough in the population of Poland to win the right for their voice to be heard fairly. When Gabriel Narutowicz, who was supported by most of the minorities in the final round of election, was selected as the president of Poland, the Polish nationalists got insane. Just one week after elected as the president of Poland, Narutowicz got assassinated by a radical nationalist Niewiadomski [9]. The Poles felt that the country they bled for was not indeed controlled by them, and the minorities came into a hard time when they were severely discriminated till Pilsudski became the dictator through coup. Apart from the Democratic Party's attempt to suppress and assimilate the minorities in the country, Pilsudski tried to maintain a mild relation between the government and the minorities. However, the relation between Poles and Ukrainians had always been strained, especially after the Great Depression. A carryover of this was the hatred between the two groups, which lasted till the end of World War II.

4. Discussion

Throughout the history of history of nationalism, it was clear that when Pan-Slavism originated in the Austria in the early nineteenth century, its appeal was no more than reserving the common culture of Slavs and longing for Slav's autonomy from multinational empires. However, it became a completely different thought, an extreme form of Chauvinism, after spread to Russia. As is demonstrated by the Foucauldian notion of the relation between how the people perceive certain issues and the operation of power, that Pan-Slavism was eventually alienated as the tool of chauvinists was, to a large extent, the result of the people's perception of ethnic relations being shaped by the power dynamics created by regional might [10]. A powerful enough Slavic nation posed a threat on the Slavs nearby, be it Russia, Serbia, or Poland. A group of people, who just had played the role of the oppressed, might played the role of oppressors in the next moment. The carryover of this is still not completely eliminated until today. Thus, it would be crucial to distinguish between what is proposed and what is actually done. To avoid alienation of thoughts, no extra care is unnecessary.

5. Conclusion

Through analysis of different historical cases, this work shows that the ideology referred to as Russian Pan-Slavism is the result of the Russian ruling class's alienation of early Pan-Slavism that called for a Slavic identity bonded with collective culture instead of the leaders of multinational empires. Apart from the appeal to the Slavs' independence from Ottoman and Austria, this idea originated in the expansion ambitions of the Chauvinists. Based on evidence in the case of Yugoslavia and Poland, it is revealed that a mighty Slavic nation's tendency towards manipulation and assimilation of nearby Slavic nations is actually a general trend rather than a stand-alone case. This could get explanations through the following facts: firstly, the rulers of a mighty Slavic nation needed an excuse to rally its people to accomplish their expansion goals, like post-war Serbia; secondly, the exploitation of Pan-Slavism could provide legitimate pretext for claims on other Slavic nations' territory; finally, the power vacuum caused by the Slavs' independence campaign, guided by the spirit of early Pan-Slavism, in a certain region often constructed a suitable geopolitical environment for early Pan-Slavism to go to extreme, converted into a version that could serve for the expansion wishes. The clarification of the core thinkings of early Pan-Slavism and Russian Pan-Slavism provided by this work might help with the mitigation of the public's misconception of the diverse forms of a generic term. This also poses a warning of the potential conflicts among nations in East Europe, Southeast Europe and Central Europe. Future studies could focus on the combination of the Slavic governments' decisions with the spirit of Pan-Slavism in a current form, which might provide the

ongoing conflicts in East Europe with a detailed analysis, or even a solution based on national relations.

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