

**NATIONALISM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH, by Miljenko Aničić**

*Summary*

*Many people viewed the fall of the totalitarian communist ideology in the late eighties and early nineties of the past century, as the abolishment of the last barrier to realise liberal and democratic values. The actual process was caused and followed by an explosion of national emotion which was thought to have been left to the past. We come across similar developments in other European countries and in the world leading to more or less, tragic consequences. In this article we want to critically review the phenomena of the nation and nationalism as well as the reason why they emerged and what their function is in modern society. The article continues to present the views of the social teachings of the Catholic Church with regard to this problem, particularly the stance of John Paul II. Nationalism is shown not as an inevitable destiny but rather a notion whose roots lie in the justified yearning of individuals and nations to realize their own identity, freedom and justice. Human life develops between two poles: between particularity, as a member of a certain group or nation; and universal, as a member of the great family of mankind. It is absolutely vital to create a good balance between these two poles.*

***Key words: nation, nationalism, patriotism, freedom, justice, the right of a nation, social teachings of the Church, John Paul II.***