Distinguish between nations and races and explain why the two terms have been confused

  A nation is a cultural entity, a collection of people who share the same language, religion, traditions and so on. The term race, on the other hand, reflects a belief in biological or genetic differences amongst human beings. While it is possible to change a national identity by a process of "naturalisation" (becoming a citizen of a different nation), it is impossible to change one's race, determined, as it is a birth and even before birth by the racial identity of one's parents. The symbols of nationality, passport, language and perhaps religion, can all be accepted by choice, however, the symbols of race, skin tone, hair colour, physiognomy and blood, are fixed and unchangeable.

  While all nationalists agree that nations are a blend of pf cultural and psycho-political factors, they disagree strongly about where the balance between the two lies. Exclusive concepts of the nation stress the importance of ethnic unity and shared history. By viewing national identity as "given", unchanging and indeed unchangeable, this implies that nations are characterised b common decent and so leads to confusion about the distinction between the nation and race.   To different degrees, Conservatives and fascists adopt such a view of the nation.

However, inclusive concepts of the nation highlight the importance of civic consciousness and patriotic loyalty, suggesting that nations may be multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious. This in turn, demonstrates the clear distinction between nation and race. Liberals and socialists tend to an inclusive view of the nation.

"Nationalism is inherently expansionist and destructive." Discuss

In many countries the dominant image of nationalism is one of aggression and militarism, quite the opposite of a principle belief in national self-determination. The destructive face of nationalism became apparent in the late nineteenth century.

The imperialism of the late nineteenth century differed from earlier periods of colonial expansion in that it was supported by a climate of popular nationalism. National prestige was increasingly linked to the possession of an empire and each colonial victory was greeted by demonstrations of public approval. In the UK a new word, jingoism, was invented to capture the idea of extreme nationalism and patriotism.

Destructive and expansionist nationalism reached its high point in the inter-war period when the authoritarian or fascist regimes of Japan, Italy and Germany embarked upon polices of imperial expansion and world domination, eventually leading to war in 1939.

What distinguished this form of nationalism from earlier liberal nationalism was its chauvinism, a belief in superiority or dominance. Nations are not thought to be equal in their right to self-determination. Rather some nations are believed to posses

characterises or qualities that make them superior to others. Such ideas were clearly evident in European imperialism, which was justified by an ideology of racial and cultural superiority. In nineteenth century Europe it was widely believed that the white peoples of Europe and America were intellectually and morally superior to the black, brown and yellow peoples of Africa and Asia. Indeed Europeans portrayed imperialism as a moral duty; colonial peoples were the white man's burden. Imperialism supposedly brought the benefits of civilisation and in particular Christianity to the less fortunate and less sophisticated peoples of the world.

Traditional German nationalism also exhibited a marked chauvinism, which was born out of a defeat in the Napoleonic wars. Writers such as Fichte and Jahn reacted strongly against France and the ideas of its revolution, emphasising instead the uniqueness of German culture and its language, and the racial purity of its people. After unification in 1871, German nationalism developed a clear chauvinistic character with the emergence of pressure groups such as the Pan- German League and the Navy League. Pan-Germanism was an expansionist and destructive form of nationalism that envisaged the creation of a German- dominated Europe. German chauvinism found its highest expression in the racialist and anti-Semitic doctrines developed by the Nazis.

National chauvinism has a particularly strong appeal for the isolated and powerless, for whom nationalism offers the prospect of security, self-respect and pride. In this sense it could not said to be constructive rather than destructive because it brings about a sense of unity. Not all nationalism is essentially expansionist and destructive as demonstrated by liberal nationalism. Liberals have raely rejected nationalism in principle. They have usually been prepared to accept both that nations are natural entities, in that cultural similarities tend to build a sense of identity and common belonging, and that nations provide the most appropriate units of political rule. What they have not been prepared to accept, however, is that the nation constitutes the highest source of political authority. Unchecked national power has very much the same drawbacks as unrestrained individual liberty. However, socialists reject nationalism in principle, believing both that it breeds resentment and conflict and that it has an implicitly right-winged character.

In conclusion, whether or not nationalism is inherently expansionist and destructive depends on the strand of nationalism referred to, for fascist nationalism this certainly rings true but for liberal nationalism it does not. Essentially nationalism is based upon self-determination which is at best a mixed blessing, while it preserves self-government and forbids foreign control, it also creates a world of sovereign nation-states in which each nation has the freedom to pursue its own interests, possibly at the expense of other nations.