

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did Benito Mussolini consider pacifism to be the enemy of fascism?
2. Why did Mussolini attack Marxism?
3. How did Mussolini view majority rule and equality?
4. What relationship did Mussolini see between the individual and the state?

2 ❖ Conservative Attack on the Weimar Republic

In November 1918 a revolution forced the German emperor, Kaiser William II, to flee, and a republic was proclaimed in Germany. Immediately afterward, the new government (soon to be called the Weimar Republic) signed an armistice agreement ending the war. The Weimar Republic, headed by democratic socialists, faced attacks from both the left and the right. In early 1919, radical Marxists, seeking to establish a proletarian state, took up arms against the republic. Although the communists were easily subdued, the middle and upper classes were deeply scarred by the uprising. Fear of communism led many of these people to support the right-wing parties that sought to bring down the republic.

The rightist attack on the republic was multifaceted. Traditional conservatives—aristocrats, army leaders, and industrialists—were contemptuous of democracy and sought a strong government that would protect the nation from communism and check the power of the working class. In a peculiar twist of logic, radical right-wing nationalists blamed Germany's defeat in World War I and the humiliation of the Versailles Treaty on the republic.

Friedrich Jünger THE CULT OF BLOOD, SOIL, AND ACTION

The constitution of the Weimar Republic, premised intellectually and emotionally on the liberal-rational tradition, had strong opposition from German conservatives who valued the authoritarian state promoted by Bismarck and the kaisers. In expressing their hostility to the Weimar Republic, conservatives attacked liberal democracy and reason and embraced an ultranationalist philosophy of blood, soil, and action. In the brittle disunity and disorientation of German society, conservative nationalists searched for community and certainty in the special qualities of the German soul. Their antirationalism, hostility to democracy, and ultranationalism undermined the Weimar Republic and contributed to the triumph of Nazism.

The selection below is freely adapted from a small book, *The Rise of the New Nationalism* (1926), written by Friedrich Georg Jünger, the brother of Ernst Jünger, who is well known for his literary glorification of the war experience.

The new nationalism envisages a state elevated by popular enthusiasm and gathering in itself the fullness of power as the sole guarantor of Germany's collective future. It is both armor and sword, preserving indigenous culture and destroying the alien elements that arrogantly push against it.

The new nationalism in its formative state throbs with revolutionary excitement. It lives unrestrained in our gut feeling, seething in our blood, although still full of confusion.

The November revolution was the result of a moral collapse promoted by external pressures. It happened at a time when the frightful struggle of the war should have demanded the concentration of all energies. Rightly it was called a stab in the back, because it was led by Germans against Germans, provocatively and from the rear. The revolution proved the shallowness of its promoters. They could not radiate youth, warmth, energy, or greatness. There were deputies, but no leaders. There was no man among them who stood out by his exceptional qualities. We saw the feeble liberals and heard for the hundredth time the promulgation of human rights. One might say, a dusty storeroom was thrown open from which emerged human rights, freedom, toleration, parliament, suffrage, and popular representation. Finally they wrote a liberalist novel: the Weimar constitution.

But the Weimar regime was a body in which there flowed no blood. You could talk about it only in empty phrases. What an overabundance of phrases and phrasemakers! They had plastered the last available fence, the last walls, with their babble.

The new nationalism wants to awaken a sense of the greatness of the German past. Life must be evaluated according to the will to power, which reveals the warlike character of

all life. The value of the individual is assessed according to his military value for the state, and the state is recognized as the most creative and toughest source of power. . . .

It is necessary to look at the conditions that have preceded and created the new nationalism. The recent past has destroyed our inherited collective sense of tender intimacy by trying to subvert and weaken all close bonds of community. It has denied all values that create cohesion in the community. Everything conspired to speed the disintegration of human ties in state, church, marriage, family, and many other institutions. A mad urge for throwing off all restraints, for dissolution, for unbridled liberty, dissolved society into driftwood. This urge shaped the flighty masses, depriving them of all convictions of meaningfulness. These excesses finally aroused disgust and a counter movement arose. A new consolidation of purpose began. From it arises the future success of the new nationalism, its resistance to the atomistic liberty and to the freedom of soulless decadence. Social life is never free. A mighty mysterious bond of blood links the lives of individuals and subsumes them in a fateful wholeness. Blood, as it were, sings the song of destiny.

Life is deeply bonded. And only as it remains true to these bonds and is rooted in them, can it fulfill itself. Life withers if these roots are cut or if it seeks nourishment from alien roots. It is tied to the blood; at its core it is part of a community of blood. The intellect enjoys freedom only to the degree to which it is loyal to the blood. The new nationalism is born of the new awareness of blood-bonded community; it wants to make the promptings of the blood prevail. Escaping from the boundlessness of contemporary life, it is driven forward by the yearning for the bonds of blood.

The new nationalism wants to strengthen the blood bonds and form them into a new state. Those who are part of an alien blood community, or those internationalists who feel joined to a transcendent community, are excluded. They have to be driven out, because they weaken the rich and fertile body of the nation that nourishes everything of significance.

The awareness of these blood bonds demands the fight against all movements weakening the spiritual bonds that affirm the community of blood. It judges all values according to that principle. It wants life to be whole, lived in a new intoxicating abundance, responsibly restricted, and not dissipated or fatigued by the intellect. In every nationalism there is something intoxicating, a wild and lusty pride, a mighty heroic vitality. It has no critical or analytic inclinations, which weaken life. It wants no tolerance, because life does not know tolerance. It is fanatical, because the promptings of the blood are fanatical and unjust. It does not care for scientific justification.

Nationalism must apply its force to the masses and try to set them afire by means peculiar to itself. These means are neither parliaments nor parties, but rather military units mobilized by a fierce loyalty to a leader. These units alone are called to carry out the will of the new nationalism. They will be the more powerful and successful the more they act in an organized and disciplined manner, the more unconditionally they subject themselves to the ideal of the nationalist state. The intensity of their discipline is the decisive factor. Next comes the urgent task to create a mighty organization covering all of Germany and to seize the reins of government. The community of blood is given the highest priority. It is defined race-like by the nationalist sentiment. It recognizes no European community, no common humanity. For us, mingling races and wiping out the difference between masters and slaves among the peoples of the world are an abomination. We want the sharpest separation of races.

The new state, obviously, will be authoritarian. The new nationalism is determined to

make that authoritarianism absolute, all-surpassing, consolidating the state as the new steel-like instrument of power. It values the state as the highest historic fact and the most important vehicle for attaining the nationalist aims. That state shall be the mold for the nation's blood-bound will to power. For that reason the nationalist movement urges the annihilation of all political forms of liberalism. No more parties, parliaments, elections! No more hailshowers of prattle or the bustle of the senile parliamentary intrigues that burden the country! No more packs of petty politicians and literati poking fun at the state! Tremendous energies are wasted in the labyrinth of parliamentary procedure.

The madhouse of parliamentary activity in which every event is dragged out unconscionably without providing a sense of a great future, without consideration for the nation's dignity, reveals the foul sickness of liberalism. Masculine earnestness is dirtied by empty phrases; everything is befogged by the dense steam of corruption. There are no men of distinction in parliament. Universal suffrage is an ingenious sieve working in favor of bustling agitators and zealous blockheads. The assurance and righteousness with which it repels men of talent betray the hatred at the root of liberalistic thinking. These are the people who, after the November revolution, succeeded in driving wedges between people, inciting them against each other. They have paralyzed the nation's role in international relations and are responsible for the country's boundless misery.

While these people debate, vote, and slander each other in the battle of slogans, the new nationalism prepares for the crucial blow. The nationalist revolution proceeds on course; its thunderstorms loom over the horizon. And we can only wish that the explosion will be terrifying. May the elementary liberation of blood sweep away all the debris that burdens the times. The new nationalism is not given to compromise. Every institution needs to be examined whether it responsibly serves the nation or whether it is ripe to be smashed.

The nationalist state makes no claim to be the freest and most just state—that smacks of liberalism and negates its authoritarian character. The nationalist state aims at creating the most disciplined government devoid of any feeling of justice for its enemies. It wants a state permeated by a leader's personality. The personal element, inherent in all contemporary nationalist striving, belongs among the foundations of the new nationalism and of the state it wants to create. The will of the dictator is essential for the future. The craving for the blood-bond concentration of power raises the hope for an absolute leader even higher.

The adoption of the leader principle signifies the basic activation of the state—a state adapted to the tempo of the times; it shapes the nation's volcanic dynamism. The principle of the leader built into the structure of the state, almost resembling the military command structure, makes the will to resist external pressure more fanatical. The concentration of power in one man gives the state incredible strength and vitality. Decisions gain in strength and correctness; the choice of means becomes more effective; the frictions lessen; and the thrust of policy becomes more unified. The state must be prepared for something extraordinary, ready to jump. That this condition be achieved as soon as possible is the anxious yearning rising from our blood.

The great war has not ended. It has been the prelude to a brutal age of armed conflict. According to the deepest insight of the new nationalism, it is the beginning of a terrible, all-demanding struggle. Everything points to the fact that a new age of great violence is in the offing. Our blood is not deceived by the exhausted masses and the intellectual trends that passionately proclaim the dawn of freedom, human brotherhood, and sweet peace for all mankind. Nobody can prevent the war that

arises from fateful depths and perhaps tomorrow will blanket the earth with corpses.

The savagery and corruption in the present world prepare mighty upheavals for the future. Then everything incapable and exhausted will be eliminated, and only he who carries within himself an unbounded fighting spirit and is armed to the teeth will be found worthy for the final decision. Under the surface of contemporary humanitarianism there looms a different attitude, vital, cruel, and merciless like steel. In the age of the machine, all means are legitimate. People and methods have been brutalized. Every restraint is like an opiate that diminishes the nation's will to power. At stake is the question: which people will finish the fight and administer the world and its resources in their own name? The convictions of the new nationalism are by necessity imperialist. The rule is: either domination or submission. Domination means being imperialist, having the will to exercise power and achieve superiority. Top priority, therefore, goes to mobilizing human wills. That is best done by the nationalist state. It guarantees total mobilization down to the last detail. The development of technology parallels the trends of political imperialism. It conveys a sense of the coming conflicts. The state, the economy, science—all are slowly geared to imperialist expansion, proving the fatefulness of the trend. Should we avoid it because it demands great sacrifices and the submission of the individual, or because the awesome aims make life cheap? "Never!" cries the nationalist, because he aims at domination and not submission. He does not want to reject fate. He will not retreat even before the prospect of getting wiped out. He looks forward to the great and mighty Germany of the future, the irresistible strength of a hundred million Germans at the core of Europe!

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of the leader principle, military discipline, imperial conquest, war, peace, and the blood-bonded community for Friedrich Jünger?

2. Why did Jünger attack liberalism?
3. What political implications do you see in Jünger's statement that there is in nationalism "something intoxicating, a wild and lusty pride, a mighty heroic vitality"?
4. Why does Jünger value fanaticism? Do you agree or disagree with his opinion? Explain.

3 The World-View of Nazism

Many extreme racist-nationalist and paramilitary organizations sprang up in postwar Germany. Adolf Hitler (1889–1945), a veteran of World War I, joined one of these organizations, which became known as the National Socialist German Worker's party (commonly called the Nazi party). Hitler had uncanny insight into the state of mind of postwar Germans and at mass meetings employed his power as an orator to play on their dissatisfactions with the Weimar Republic.

Adolf Hitler *MEIN KAMPF*

In November 1923, Hitler attempted to overthrow the state government in Bavaria as the first step in bringing down the Weimar Republic. But the Nazis quickly scattered when the Bavarian police opened fire. Hitler was arrested and sentenced to five years' imprisonment—he served only nine months. While in prison, Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*) in which he presented his views. The book came to be regarded as an authoritative expression of the Nazi world-view and served as a kind of sacred writing for the Nazi movement.

Hitler's thought—a patchwork of nineteenth-century anti-Semitic, Volkish, Social Darwinist, and anti-Marxist ideas—contrasted sharply with the core values of both the Judeo-Christian and the Enlightenment traditions. Central to Hitler's world-view was racial mythology: a heroic Germanic race that was descended from the ancient Aryans who once swept across Europe, and was battling for survival against racial inferiors. In the following passages excerpted from *Mein Kampf*, Hitler presents his views of race, of propaganda, and of the National Socialist territorial goals.

[THE PRIMACY OF RACE]

Nature does not want a pairing of weaker individuals with stronger ones; it wants even less a mating of a higher race with a weaker one. Otherwise its routine labors of promoting a higher breed lasting perhaps over hundreds of thousands of years would be wiped out.

History offers much evidence for this process. It proves with terrifying clarity that any genetic mixture of Aryan blood with people of a lower quality undermines the culturally superior people. The population of North America consists to a large extent of Germanic elements, which have mixed very little with inferior people of color. Central and South Amer-