



Western Civilization from 1650 to the Present

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TOPIC 12.3. PRIMARY SOURCES: WHAT IS FASCISM?

FASCISM	<p>Technically, the word NAZI was the acronym for the National Socialist German Worker's Party. It was a fascist movement that had its roots in the European nationalist and socialist movements, and that developed a biologically-determinist view of "Aryan" supremacy.</p> <p>The seeds of fascism, however, were planted in Italy. "Fascism is reaction," said Mussolini. But reaction to what? The reactionary movement following World War I was based on a rejection of the social theories that formed the basis of the 1789 French Revolution, and whose early formulations in the United States had a major influence on our Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights.</p> <p>Rousseau is best known for crystallizing these modern social theories. Their offspring is sometimes called Modernism or Modernity because they challenged social theories generally accepted since the days of Machiavelli. The response to the French Revolution and Rousseau, by Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and others, poured into an intellectual stew which served up Marxism, socialism, national socialism, fascism, modern liberalism, modern conservatism, communism, and a variety of forms of capitalist participatory democracy.</p> <p>Fascists particularly loathed the social theories of the French Revolution and its slogan: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Liberty from oppressive government intervention in the daily lives of its citizens, from illicit searches and seizures, from enforced religious values, from intimidation and arrest for dissenters; and liberty to cast a vote in a system in which the majority ruled but the minority retained certain inalienable rights.■ Equality in the sense of civic equality, egalitarianism, the notion that while people differ, they all should stand equal in the eyes of the law.■ Fraternity in the sense of the brotherhood of mankind. That all women and men, the old and the young, the infirm and the healthy, the rich and the poor, share a spark of humanity that must be cherished on a level above that of the law, and that binds us all together in a manner that continuously re-affirms and celebrates life. <p>After reading Mussolini's essay on Fascism, answer one or more of the following questions.</p> <p>What is the relationship between the state and the individual? Compare this to the democratic concept of the state and the individual.</p> <p>What are the benefits of war and struggle?</p> <p>What is the justification presented for severity and discipline?</p> <p>How is imperialism a sign of health?</p> <p>Adapted from Third World Traveler</p>
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