

Twentieth-Century Rejections of Liberalism

Chapter

5

KEY SKILLS

Discerning historical facts from primary sources

KEY CONCEPTS

Evaluating ideological systems that rejected principles of liberalism

Key Terms

Censorship
Collectivization
Communism
Dissent
Fascism
Reactionary
Totalitarianism



Figure 5-1 ▲

The Bloody Sunday incident was a massacre of Russian workers who peacefully marched to petition the czar for rights similar to those in European liberal democracies. This photo is taken from a 1925 film about the massacre, *Devyatoe Yanvarya (January 9)*. Contrast some of the values held by the people who were responsible for the massacre with the values held by the people who supported the petition.

In January 1905, following massive strikes in St. Petersburg, Russia, unarmed, peaceful demonstrators marched to the Winter Palace to present a petition to Czar Nicholas II, the Russian monarch. Like many industrial workers in Europe, the demonstrators had suffered from the great social inequalities of a laissez-faire capitalist system. Unlike most workers in Europe, however, the Russian workers were a small,

unorganized group and had long suffered abuse and neglect at the hands of the Russian aristocracy and an absolute monarchy. Among other things, their petition asked for recognition of basic human rights such as freedom of speech, the press, religion, and conscience; a state-sponsored education system; improved working conditions; fairer wages; a reduction in the workday to eight hours; and a condemnation of the overtime that the factory owners had forced upon their workers.

The protest did not go well. Hundreds were gunned down by the czar's Imperial Guard in an event that came to be known as Bloody Sunday. The Bloody Sunday incident marked a turning point in Russian history. Outraged by the massacre, Russian citizens grew steadily more dissatisfied with their government until the complete transformation that occurred with the Russian Revolution in 1917.

The Russian Revolution was a reaction to the injustices of the authoritarian czarist system and uncontrolled free-market capitalism, in which a small group of people (the bourgeoisie) benefited from the back-breaking working conditions of the peasants and proletariat (working classes). The Bolsheviks (communists), under Vladimir Lenin, sought to destroy this class-based system, reject classical liberal economic principles, and provide better living and working conditions for all.



Figure 5-2

"I won the Nobel Prize for Literature. What was your crime?" Boris Pasternak was a highly regarded Russian author who supported the communist revolution through much of his career. Nonetheless, his account of the Russian Revolution, the novel *Doctor Zhivago* (1957), was banned in the Soviet Union, but won him the 1958 Nobel Prize for Literature. This cartoon by Bill Mauldin satirizes the Soviet regime for not allowing Pasternak to accept the Nobel Prize.

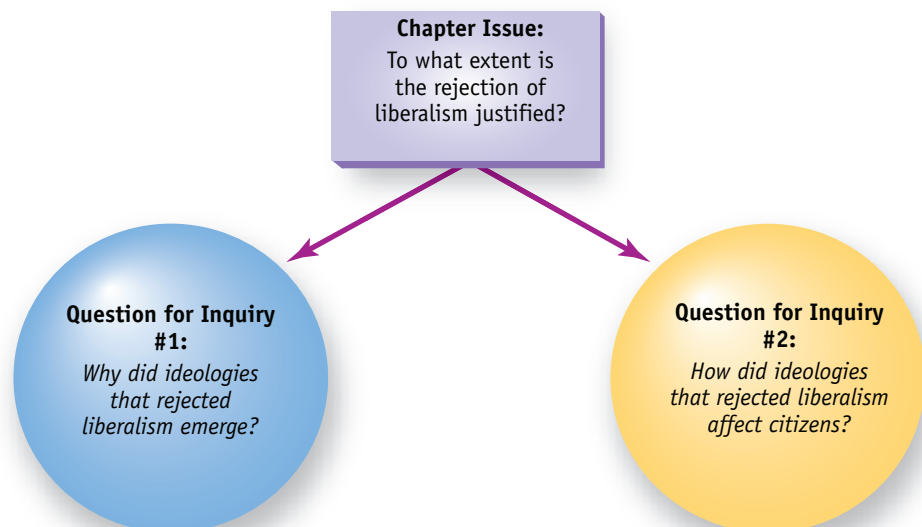
Copyright by Bill Mauldin (1958). Courtesy of the Bill Mauldin Estate LLC

Chapter Issue

In previous chapters, you had an opportunity to analyze ideologies that were developed in response to classical liberalism (classical conservatism, Marxism, utopian and moderate socialism, and welfare capitalism). In this chapter you will explore ideologies that completely rejected liberalism in favour of totalitarian systems of government. You may have already formed opinions about communism and fascism, potentially making it more challenging for you to read about them objectively. However, some countries may have numerous reasons—cultural, historical, and even spiritual—for why they might not want to embrace liberalism. It may be instructive to try to view the world through the eyes of the people involved and not only from your own point of view.

Many nations and nation-states throughout modern history have rejected liberalism, including some Indigenous peoples. Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany are two important historical examples that we will explore at this time because they both had dramatic impacts on the events and the ideologies of the 20th century. Therefore, this chapter will examine the ideologies of communism as implemented in the Soviet Union and fascism as practised in pre-Second World War Germany, as well as the ideologies' respective impacts on the lives of the people living in both countries. You will consider the beliefs and values that make up these ideologies and the circumstances that prompted their rise before you make any judgments or draw ethical conclusions as you address the Chapter Issue, *To what extent is the rejection of liberalism justified?*, and the Related Issue for Part 2, *To what extent is resistance to liberalism justified?*

Figure 5-3 ►



Societal Conditions That Led to the Rise of Totalitarianism in the 20th Century

Question for Inquiry

- Why did ideologies that rejected liberalism emerge?

The two most influential ideologies that rejected liberalism—**communism** and **fascism**—both utilized totalitarian forms of government. **Totalitarianism** varies in its practice, but as a government system it seeks complete control over the public and private lives of its citizens. It attempts such control by creating a hierarchically organized society with a single political party run by a leader or small elite. The totalitarian Italian state was summed up by fascist dictator Benito Mussolini as follows: “Everything within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state.” (Source: Benito Mussolini, quoted in “Politics—That’s Me!” *Time* magazine, June 29, 1931.)

In this section we will examine the circumstances and conditions that led to the rise of totalitarian states in Russia and Germany. What effect did the rejection of liberalism have on the lives and the identity of the people who lived under these regimes?

The Nature of Totalitarian Regimes

Totalitarian regimes are responding to what they see as dangerous and destabilizing changes. They consider the existing society in need of a complete transformation. This transformation may be

- **radical**, as in the Soviet Union, where the change desired is a move toward the far left side of the economic spectrum (a classless society with state [public] ownership of property) and a complete rejection of the political and economic traditions of the past, or
- **reactionary**, as in Nazi Germany, where the change desired is a move toward an idealized past and an acceptance of economic inequality (accepting the belief that some people are naturally better than others)

PAUSE AND REFLECT

As you read the following pages and learn about the reasons that the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany had for rejecting liberalism, keep track of the totalitarian methods used by each regime. Make a table as shown below and fill in examples as you read.

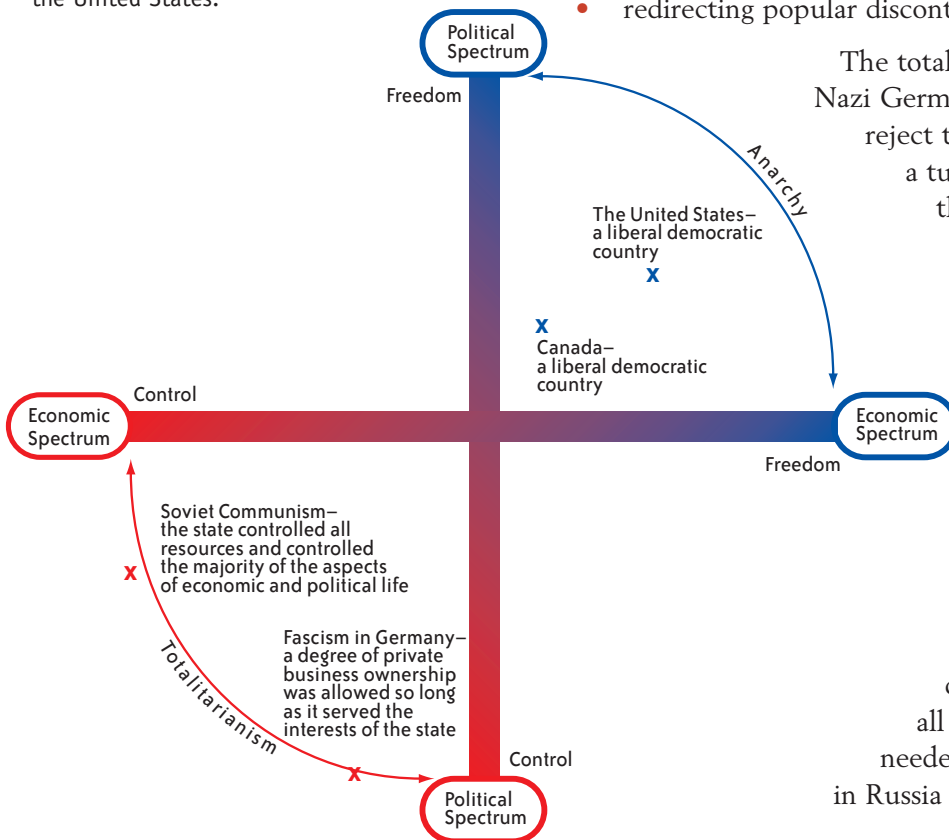
	Soviet Union	Nazi Germany
extensive local, regional, and national organization		
youth, professional, cultural, and athletic groups (often forced participation)		
a secret police using terror		
indoctrination through education		
the censorship of the media		
redirecting popular discontent (use of scapegoats)		

Like most ideologies, totalitarian regimes provide an account of the past, an explanation of the present, and a vision for the future. However, the extensive use of propaganda, coercive power, and communications technologies ensure that totalitarian governments maintain strict control over their citizens. Conformity to the state ideology is demanded, and is achieved through such measures as

- extensive local, regional, and national organization
- youth, professional, cultural, and athletic groups (often forced participation)
- a secret police using terror
- indoctrination through education
- the censorship of the media
- redirecting popular discontent (use of scapegoats)

Figure 5-4 ▼

A freedom-control spectrum showing the degree of economic and political freedom in the communist Soviet Union and fascist Nazi Germany, in relation to present-day Canada and the United States.



The totalitarianism of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany were attempts to hold off and reject the beliefs and values of liberalism: a turning away from the worth of the individual and the principle of limited government in favour of a collective, all-powerful state where individuals served the interests of the state. Various factors encouraged both countries to take this route. A long history of authoritarianism in both Russia and the German states; a tradition of communitarianism in Russia; and the defeat of Germany in the First World War by an alliance dominated by liberal democracies all helped to create the conditions needed for the rejection of liberalism in Russia and Germany.

The Need for Change in Russia

As you read in Chapter 4, the social conditions created by classical liberalism inspired European thinkers such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to come up with ideas for reforming the capitalist system. Ideas such as the worth of every individual, equality, opportunity, and progress were brought into the repressive, feudal empire of Russia in the 19th century, and many groups began movements for change.

Many people in Russia were receptive to the ideas for social reform that sprang up in Europe. At least 80 per cent of Russians were peasants. Some of these peasants were serfs, low-income farmers who worked the land of wealthy landowners, and were legally bound to remain on the lands on which they were born. Czar Alexander II announced the **emancipation**—or freeing—of the serfs in 1861, but the government was slow to implement the new policy. In addition, serfs were obligated to pay for their land for several decades after their emancipation. Thus, Alexander II's reform did little to quell the dissatisfaction in Russian society.

From the 1860s to the beginning of the 20th century, Russian society underwent many dramatic changes. Classical liberal economic policies were adopted, and rapid industrialization occurred that was similar to, but far behind what was already happening in many European countries. In addition, the Russian population doubled from 50 million to 100 million. However, the Russian political structure remained autocratic, as the monarchy did not want to give up control of the country. The limited democratic reforms that were allowed (such as elected local councils in a few Russian provinces) were often implemented many years after they had been announced.

In 1881, the czar was assassinated by a revolutionary group called “Land and Freedom.” His son, Czar Alexander III, reacted by imposing stricter political control, and persecuting and exiling liberals and revolutionary groups with the use of a secret police force. Some Russian political **dissidents** (people who disagree with the government) came into contact with Marxism while in exile in Europe, and they would later bring these ideas back to Russia.

Lenin and the Rise of Communism

The czar's government was inefficient as well as authoritarian. The transportation system was so poorly organized, for example, that food shortages in the cities were commonplace. The czar and the bureaucracy resisted almost any and all suggestions for change, whether from the middle class seeking to introduce liberal concepts such as constitutional monarchy, free speech, and free assembly; from the peasants demanding land of their own; or from the industrial workers demanding unions. The czar's secret police persecuted dissenters of every kind. Discontent and chaos were rife and punishments were severe.

Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov (1870–1924), better known as Lenin, who would later become the leader of the communist Soviet Union, described the conditions in Russia in 1899 as follows:



Figure 5-5 ▲

Viktor Vasnetsov's *Moving House* (1876). How does this painting depict Russian society not meeting its citizens' needs?

File Facts)

The following terms are used to describe the country of Russia, and vary according to historical time period:

- **Russia** or the **Russian Empire**: The name of the empire located in Eastern Europe and North Asia prior to 1922.
- The **Soviet Union (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or USSR)**: The name used between 1922 and 1991 for the communist-led country made up of 15 republics, the largest of which was the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic.
- **Russia** or **Russian Federation**: Since 1992, after the various republics of the USSR had declared their independence, the largest republic, Russia, continues as its own democratic country.

In Russia, not only the workers but all the citizens are deprived of political rights. Russia is an absolute monarchy. The czar alone promulgates laws, nominates officials and controls them. For this reason it seems as though in Russia the czar and the Czarist Government were dependent on no class and cared for all equally. In reality, however, all the officials are chosen exclusively from the possessing class, and all are subject to the influence of the large capitalists who obtain whatever they want—the Ministers dance to the tune the large capitalists play. The Russian worker is bowed under a double yoke; he is robbed and plundered by the capitalists and the landowners, and, lest he should fight against them, he is bound hand and foot by the police, his mouth is gagged and any attempt to defend the rights of the people is followed by persecution.

—V.I. Lenin, **Our Programme**, 1899.

Modern History Sourcebook, Fordham University.

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1899lenin-program.html>

As Lenin stated, Russian workers were subject to difficult social and economic conditions. Many of these workers gave their support to revolutionary groups. At the beginning of the 20th century, several assassinations of high-ranking politicians were carried out by one of these groups, the Socialist Revolutionary Party, leading to a backlash of repression by the government. In addition, Russia was defeated in a war against Japan in 1905, and this defeat contributed to the Russian citizens' dissatisfaction with their government. The result of this unrest was the Russian Revolution of 1905, fuelled by Russian authoritarianism, the slowness of reform, and events such as Bloody Sunday, the incident you read about at the beginning of this chapter.

Ineffectual Reform

Although the 1905 revolution was eventually suppressed, the czar was forced to allow some reforms, including the following:

- basic civil rights such as the freedom of expression and the freedom of assembly
- universal suffrage
- the creation of an elected legislative assembly called the Duma

These reforms did not satisfy the Russian populace, however, especially since the czar limited the powers of the Duma before its first session, using the Fundamental Laws of 1906. The czar's unwillingness to relinquish political control of the country is evident in the text of these laws. Article 4 states that the czar "possesses the supreme autocratic power. Not only fear and conscience, but God himself, commands obedience to his authority." Article 9 states that the czar "approves laws; and without his approval no legislative measure can become law." (Source: *Svod Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*, 3rd series, Volume 1, Part 1.

[St. Petersburg, 1912], pp. 5–26. <http://www.dur.ac.uk/a.k.harrington/fundlaws.html>.) In addition, the czar had the power to dismiss the Duma and call new elections.

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 intensified the problems in the Russian Empire and paved the way for the Russian Revolution of 1917. During the two years following 1914, food shortages and strikes were common in Russia, and the poorly led and poorly fed troops suffered massive losses in the war. Czar Nicholas II, unable to rule the Russian Empire effectively or deal with the ferment among the population pushing for reforms in peace time, was overwhelmed by the pressures of war. In this maelstrom of circumstances, the populace's discontent grew until February 1917, when mass demonstrations and strikes coalesced into an outright revolution. The czar abdicated and a provisional government was declared. Within months, Lenin's communist Bolsheviks took over the machinery of government in a very well-organized attack in October 1917.

Communism Is Established

Lenin and the Bolsheviks believed that violent revolution was the only way to overturn the government and avoid the further development of liberalism in Russia. Lenin capitalized on the plight of the landless peasants, the starvation of the low-income workers in the cities, the dispirited soldiers, and many other groups with his slogan “Land, Peace, Bread.” However, taking power in a time of chaos was easier than keeping power. A bloody civil war raged for the next five years between the Red Army of Lenin's Bolsheviks and the White Army, a loose coalition of forces including supporters of the old regime and reformers opposed to the Bolsheviks. By 1922, the civil war was over and communism was established in Russia. By 1924, Russia was renamed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, or Soviet Union) and quickly transformed from a land of autocratic czarist rule to a land of dictatorial rule by the Communist Party.

The emergence of communism in Russia was not an unreasonable response to the conditions existing for the majority of Russian subjects. Its interpretation and application, however, complicates any evaluation of its merit for the lives of the millions of people who were governed by this ideology. George F. Kennan, a former US ambassador to the Soviet Union and later a professor, wrote the following assessment of the Russian Revolution:

It is, then, according to the relative value one attaches to ends as opposed to means in human affairs that the positive and negative elements of the Russian Revolution will stand out through the prism of historical retrospection. But whichever value predominates—whether one sees this as a hopeful breakthrough or only as the onset of new misunderstanding,



Figure 5-6 ▲

Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized control of the Russian capital, St. Petersburg, in a single day, causing only two deaths. The struggle for control of the rest of the country would be much longer and more violent.



PAUSE AND REFLECT

What conditions existed for the majority of Russians that may have helped the emergence of communism in Russia?

conflict and misery—one is obliged to concede to the Russian Revolution the status of the greatest political event of the present century. It deserves this description by virtue of the profound exemplary effect it had across great portions of the globe, of the alteration it produced in Russia's relations with the great powers of the West, and of the changes it brought to the life of one of the world's great peoples.

—George F. Kennan, “The Russian Revolution—Fifty Years After: Its Nature and Consequences.” *Foreign Affairs*, 46, 1 (October, 1967): p. 10.

The Rise of Totalitarianism in Germany

In August 1919, immediately after the First World War, Germany enacted a new constitution. For the first time in its history, Germany would be a republic with a modern, liberal democratic political structure. The German parliament, the Reichstag, was to be elected by universal suffrage. This period in German history has become known as the Weimar Republic, because the new constitution was drafted in the city of Weimar. The constitution provided for several democratic instruments, such as referendums, to ensure that the electorate had a sufficient voice in legislation. Yet within 15 years, Germany would become a totalitarian regime under the fascist Nazi party. A variety of circumstances made the rejection of liberal democracy possible.

Aftermath of the First World War

Germany, allied with the Austro-Hungarian Empire, had been defeated in the First World War. The principal treaty that ended the war, the Treaty of Versailles, was negotiated by the victors of the conflict without German participation. The terms of the treaty provoked a lasting resentment among many Germans. These terms included the following:

- the “war guilt clause,” which said that Germany accepted sole responsibility for the war and was thus responsible for all the damage caused by the war
- Germany was to make reparation payments in the amount of US\$33 billion
- the Rhineland area of western Germany, which bordered France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, was to be a demilitarized zone
- various European territories that Germany had annexed were given to other countries
- the German Emperor Wilhelm II was to be tried as a war criminal
- the German army was to be limited to no more than 100 000 troops
- the German navy was limited to no more than 15 000 men, with a limited number of vessels

- the manufacture, import, and export of weapons and armaments, including tanks, submarines, aircraft, and artillery, were prohibited

The social democrats and democrats who formed the coalition government of the republic in 1919 had not been involved in the negotiation of the treaty and had little choice but to sign it when Britain, France, the United States, and Italy demanded they do so in November 1919. Nonetheless, much of the German populace blamed the government for the humiliation and economic hardship the treaty would cause for years afterwards. This resentment would undermine many voters' confidence in their liberal democratic government.

Furthermore, many Germans associated liberalism with the victors of the First World War—Britain, France, and the United States: “Fight against liberalism in all its forms, liberalism that had defeated Germany, was the common idea which united socialists and conservatives in one common front.” (Source: Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, [London: George Rutledge & Sons, 1944], p. 185.)

Economic Turmoil

In the years directly following the First World War, the German economy was in ruins. In 1923, Germany declared it could not continue making the reparations payments imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. As a consequence, France and Belgium invaded the Ruhr industrial region of Germany, hoping to claim reparations from the profits of the businesses in the region. The German workers in the region responded with general strikes, and manufacturing came to a halt, causing inflation to skyrocket and further exacerbating the difficult economic situation. The German middle class was quickly becoming beleaguered as it saw its investments and savings become worthless in a matter of months.

From 1923 to 1929, the situation in Germany stabilized to some extent. Economic reforms, including the introduction of a new currency, brought an end to rampant inflation and stabilized the economy. The Dawes Plan, under which American banks lent money to the German government, allowed Germany to continue making reparations payments in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles. However, these measures left Germany with a large debt. The stock market crash of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression plunged the country into economic hardship once again.

Hitler and the Nazi Party took advantage of the widespread unemployment and desperation this caused in the German populace

Figure 5-8

At the height of German inflation, this woman is lighting the morning fire in her stove with money because it is nearly worthless.

Date	Marks for Each American Dollar
December 1918	8.25
December 1919	48
December 1920	73
December 1921	192
December 1922	7 590
June 1923	110 000
September 1923	99 million
October 1923	25 billion
November 1923	2 160 billion
December 1923	4 200 billion

Figure 5-7

The more marks to the dollar, the less the marks are worth. To put this in context, in September 1923, one pint of milk cost 250 000 marks. A pint of milk in the United States at that time cost only US\$0.05. Source: Bernd Widdig, *Culture and Inflation in Weimar Germany* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), p. 42.



Date of Election	Jan. 1919	June 1920	May 1924	Dec. 1924	May 1928	Sept. 1930	July 1932	Nov. 1932	Mar. 1933
Social Democrats	165	102	100	131	153	143	133	121	120
Communists/Socialists	22	88	62	45	54	77	89	100	81
Centre Party	91	64	65	69	62	68	75	70	74
Democrats	75	39	28	32	25	20	4	2	5
Right-wing Parties	63	157	156	173	134	90	66	83	72
Nazis (National Socialists)	—	—	32	14	12	107	230	196	288
Others	7	9	29	29	51	72	11	12	7
Total deputies	423	459	472	493	491	577	608	584	647

Figure 5-9

The number of deputies elected to the Reichstag according to political party, and the rate of unemployment during the same period. What correlation can you see between these statistics?

Source: John D. Clare, *Germany 1919 - 1939*, December 2001, p. 9.

<http://www.johndclare.net/Word%20documents/Weimar%20Germany.doc>

	1928	1930	1932
Number of unemployed (in millions)	2	3	6

by declaring that it was the responsibility of the state to provide every citizen with an opportunity to earn a living. The Nazi platform also stated that the profits of industry should be shared by citizens and that everyone should be obligated to work for a living. However, these policies were not strictly followed once the Nazis gained power.

The Legacy of Authoritarian Rule

Since its creation in 1871, the German Empire (as it was known until the end of the First World War) had become a highly industrialized economic power. It did not, however, develop effective liberal political institutions, relying instead on the traditional ruling families and institutions. While it had a parliament elected by limited suffrage, the government was largely authoritarian, with any real political power remaining in the hands of the *Kaiser* (emperor) and the chancellor (prime minister). In the late 19th century, the German government under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck had minimized the appeal of liberal reformers to German workers by adopting social reforms and creating a welfare state under the direction of Bismarck's authoritarian government. These reforms included the introduction of health, accident, old-age, and disability insurance. Thus, many Germans saw the old authoritarian system as benevolent.

Nationalism, Militarism, and Law and Order

Hitler promoted absolute nationalism, which called for the unification of all German-speaking peoples, the use of private paramilitary organizations to stifle **dissent** and terrorize opposition, and the

PAUSE AND REFLECT

React to this statement:

“Democracy is slow in crisis situations—politicians discuss matters at length in parliament, various groups are consulted, any action taken is slow, and often comes too late or is too weak to make any significant change or improvement.” How might this idea allow for the rise of a totalitarian leader?

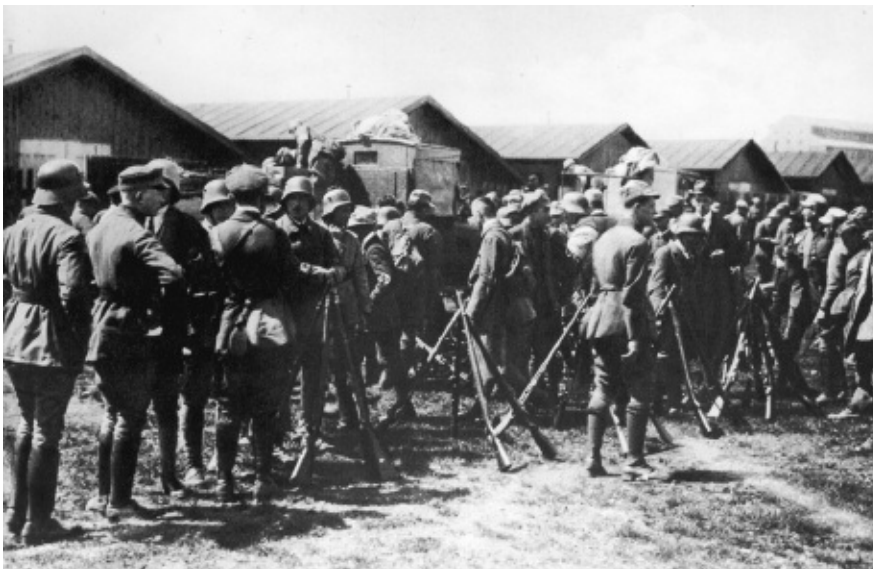
centralization of decision making in a single leader, to whom everyone owed loyalty.

The nationalism of the Nazi Party appealed to many Germans. For much of the 19th century, German territory was a group of states known as the German Confederation, led by Austria. Some areas of Czechoslovakia and Poland had significant German-speaking populations. Thus, many German nationalists saw Austria and other parts of Europe as part of a larger German-speaking nation.

Germany also had a long military tradition. Prior to the creation of Germany, the Kingdom of Prussia had been a strong military power. When Germany became a unified country, Prussia dominated German politics, and the king of Prussia became the kaiser of Germany, and the president of Prussia became the Chancellor of Germany. Thus, militarism remained a dominant force in Germany.

In addition, the Nazis' advocacy of law and order appealed to many Germans who were tired of years of instability. As the First World War ended, the situation in Germany became chaotic. Several violent uprisings occurred, and rival political factions of communists, social democrats, monarchists, and others fought in the streets. Despite the creation of the German Republic and the new constitution, the political violence and occasional armed rebellions would continue for the next few years, sometimes resulting in the deaths of innocent bystanders.

Although much of the violence subsided during the more prosperous years from 1923 to 1929, politically motivated violence became more common with the onset of the Great Depression. Hitler capitalized on the fear this caused Germans by claiming that a stronger government was needed to control the lawlessness. Ironically, much of this political violence was instigated by the Nazi Party's paramilitary organization, the SA, or stormtroopers.



◀ **Figure 5-10**

The SA (*Sturmabteilung*) intimidated political opponents of the Nazis with physical violence and caused the general population to fear political instability.



The Program of the Nazi Party

In 1919, Adolf Hitler joined the German Workers' Party, which changed its name to the National Socialist German Workers' Party (the NSDAP, commonly known as the Nazi Party) in 1920. The name of the Nazi Party itself was deliberately all inclusive.

The party program of the NSDAP was proclaimed on February 24, 1920, by Adolf Hitler at the first large party gathering in Munich. The national socialist philosophy was summarized in 25 points. The following list includes 10 representative points of the program:

1. We demand the unification of all Germans in the Greater Germany on the basis of the right of self-determination of peoples.
 2. We demand equality of rights for the German people in respect to the other nations; abrogation of the peace treaties of Versailles and St. Germain.
 4. Only a member of the race can be a citizen. A member of the race can only be one who is of German blood, without consideration of creed. Consequently no Jew can be a member of the race.
 6. The right to determine matters concerning administration and law belongs only to the citizen. Therefore we demand that every public office, of any sort whatsoever, whether in the Reich, the county or municipality, be filled only by citizens. We combat the corrupting parliamentary economy, office-holding only according to party inclinations without consideration of character or abilities.
 9. All citizens must have equal rights and obligations.
 10. The first obligation of every citizen must be to work both spiritually and physically. The activity of individuals is not to counteract the interests of the universality (the community), but must have its result within the framework of the whole for the benefit of all ...
 12. In consideration of the monstrous sacrifice in property and blood that each war demands of the people personal enrichment through a war must be designated as a crime against the people. Therefore we demand the total confiscation of all war profits.
 20. The state is to be responsible for a fundamental reconstruction of our whole national education program, to enable every capable and industrious German to obtain higher education and subsequently introduction into leading positions. The plans of instruction of all educational institutions are to conform with the experiences of practical life. The comprehension of the concept of the State must be striven for by the school [Staatsbuergerkunde] as early as the beginning of understanding. We demand the education at the expense of the State of outstanding intellectually gifted children of low-income parents without consideration of position or profession.
 21. The State is to care for the elevating national health by protecting the mother and child, by outlawing child-labor, by the encouragement of physical fitness, by means of the legal establishment of a gymnastic and sport obligation, by the utmost support of all organizations concerned with the physical instruction of the young.
 24. We demand freedom of religion for all religious denominations within the state so long as they do not endanger its existence or oppose the moral senses of the Germanic race. The Party as such advocates the standpoint of a positive Christianity without binding itself confessionally to any one denomination. It combats the Jewish-materialistic spirit within and around us, and is convinced that a lasting recovery of our nation can only succeed from within on the framework: common utility precedes individual utility.
-
1. What are the Nazi Party's views on
 - a) who can be a German citizen?
 - b) the role of citizens in the new Germany?
 - c) the role of the state in the new Germany?
 2. What appeal and concerns would the 10 points listed above have had for citizens living in Germany at the time? Which of these points shocks you the most?
 3. How and why was the Nazi Party rejecting liberalism? Give specific examples from the points presented here.

Theories of Racial Superiority and the Use of Jews and Others as Scapegoats

Adolf Hitler and the Nazis drew on philosophical ideas already present in German society. Nazi ideology included a racial theory that claimed that Germans formed a superior, “Aryan race”—a race which they claimed was “pure” because it was descended from ancient Indo-European peoples, rather than Jewish or Semitic (Middle Eastern) peoples.

The Nazi Party also used Jews as a scapegoat on which to focus the frustrations of Germans. The Nazis claimed that Jews were the cause of many of Germany’s problems, including the Treaty of Versailles, and the exploitation of the working classes by banks and industry. Hitler claimed that Germany’s Jewish population—as well as other minorities, such as the Roma (or Gypsies) and people with disabilities—were “diluting the purity” of the “superior” German race. Such claims took advantage of widespread pre-existing anti-Semitism and other prejudices.

Anti-Semitism was not a uniquely German phenomenon. Many people within Christian cultures have blamed Jews for Jesus’ crucifixion (see www.remember.org). Anti-Semitism was rampant and even widely accepted in Europe and North America at the start of the 20th century. The Nazis, tragically, openly, and officially rejected some liberal and Christian values in order to advocate for what they believed to be superior beliefs and values, including a belief in their own racial superiority and the scapegoating and persecution of other, non-Aryan peoples.

Explore the Issues

Concept Review

- 1 a) Identify three reasons for the rise of communism in Russia.
- b) Identify four reasons for the rise of Nazism in Germany.

Concept Application

- 2 a) Explain how political liberalism and economic liberalism were not evolving simultaneously in Russian society.
- b) For Russia and Germany, which single factor in each

country was most responsible for the rejection of liberalism?

- 3 **Respond to It.** Assume the point of view of a member of the Soviet Communist Party or the German Nazi Party and write a series of newspaper headlines depicting the rejection of liberalism. What role has propaganda had in influencing your point of view? Include your response to liberal ideals and how you support or disagree with them. You will be asked to share your responses with your peers and the teacher.

Understanding Propaganda

Propaganda often exaggerates and misrepresents information to rally support for a cause or issue. Political groups use a variety of propaganda techniques to try to convince the masses that their version of truth and their vision for society is the best one.

Your Task:

1. Examine a source of propaganda from those provided (by your teacher and in Figures 5-11 and 5-12) that in your view best represents a rejection of liberalism. Explain why it is the best.
2. Describe the principles of liberalism being rejected in your example.
3. What techniques does the propaganda use to convey its message?



Figure 5-11 ▲

This German poster is from late 1942. The text at the bottom says “The New Europe cannot be defeated.” The rest of the text explains that the plans of the British plutocrats (people of great wealth and influence) and their American allies, as well as the Jews behind them, have failed.

Questions to Guide You

1. Does the example you chose oversimplify the issue? Oversimplification could include omitting information or painting a one-sided picture in which one side of the issue depicted appears all positive and the other side appears all negative.
2. What is the source of the propaganda? Is the information factual or based on opinion? What issues is it responding to?
3. Who is the target audience of the propaganda? Which segments of society would be most convinced by these arguments? Which segments would react most strongly to these arguments?
4. If you had lived during the era of the propaganda you chose, what kinds of responses might you have had to it?
5. Where can you find modern-day examples of propaganda? What issues are they responding to?



Figure 5-12 ▲

Soviet propaganda poster. The text reads “May Day 1920”, “On the ruins of capitalism the fraternity of peasants and workers marches against the peoples of the world.”

Living with Communism and Nazism

Question for Inquiry

- How did ideologies that rejected liberalism affect citizens?



Figure 5-13

Hungarian Jews on the ramp at Birkenau concentration camp. To the left are able-bodied men who are to be sent to the barracks and used for forced labour; to the right are the elderly, women, and children who will be marched in a few moments from the ramp to the nearby gas chamber. Describe the many different ways in which these people were affected by Hitler's reaction to liberalism.

The totalitarian governments of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany brought major changes to their respective countries. The Soviet Union became an industrialized country with an effective government and assumed an international diplomatic role. Germany escaped the humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles, an unstable government, and economic ruin. These developments, however, were not achieved without devastating costs to many of the people living in each country.

While some citizens in each country benefited, many others suffered or died. Is it reasonable to suggest that the rejection of liberalism can be a dangerous situation for citizens? In this section of the chapter, we will look at how totalitarian ideologies and their rejection of liberalism affected the citizens of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.

Communism in the Soviet Union

A follower of Marx and Engels, Lenin nevertheless believed that scientific socialism had to be modified to fit the political, economic, and social context of Russia. Marx and Engels had developed their theories in the context of Western European society, which was very different from that of Russia. As a result, Lenin believed that Marxism must be carried out differently in Russia:

We by no means regard the theory of Marx as perfect and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that this theory has only laid the foundation stones of that science on which the socialists must continue to build in every direction, unless they wish to be left behind by life. We believe that it is particularly necessary for Russian socialists to work out the Marxist theory independently, for this theory only gives general precepts...

—Lenin, **Our Programme, 1899. Modern History Sourcebook**

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1899lenin-program.html>

During the course of the Russian Civil War, Lenin and the Bolsheviks attempted to rapidly transform Russia into a communist society. Beginning in 1918, they introduced a group of policies known as “war communism.”

In one fell swoop the market was declared illegal. Private trade, the hiring of labor, leasing of land, and all private enterprise and ownership were abolished, at least in theory, and subject to punishment by the state. Property was confiscated from the upper classes. Businesses and factories were nationalized. Surplus crops produced by the peasants were taken by the government to support the Bolshevik civil-war forces and workers in the towns. Labor was conscripted and organized militarily. Consumer goods were rationed at artificially low prices and later at no price at all...

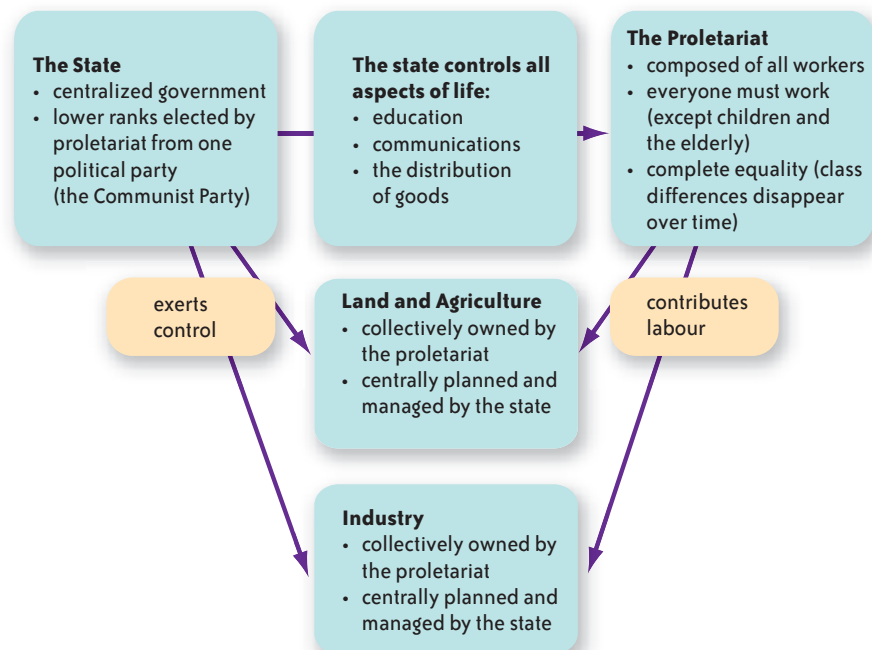
—Sheldon L. Richman,

“War Communism to NEP: The Road from Serfdom.”

The Journal of Libertarian Studies V, 1 (Winter, 1981): p. 96.

Figure 5-14

This chart shows the theoretical organization of a communist society in the first stage of communism, known as the **dictatorship of the proletariat**. As one can see, the economic system would be a centrally planned or command economy. According to Marx and his followers, once this system was fully established and social classes disappeared, there would be no more need for government control and the state apparatus would gradually “wither away.”



By 1921, however, it was clear that the country could not be transformed as quickly as the government had hoped. The economic disruption of the new policies, as well as the destruction caused by the Civil War (and the First World War immediately before it), led to drops in agricultural and industrial production. Thus, Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy in 1921, which brought back some aspects of capitalism on a temporary basis, in the hope of stimulating the economy.

The New Economic Policy allowed peasants to own farmland and decide what they would produce. Small-business people were allowed to buy agricultural products in the country, and sell them in the cities. Small private businesses were allowed to produce and sell consumer goods. The state retained control of banking, large industry, transportation, and foreign trade.

Stalin: The Five-Year Plans and Collectivization

Upon Lenin's death in 1924, and after a four-year struggle for leadership, Joseph Stalin secured power. The small-scale capitalist practices of the New Economic Policy had been tolerated by the Bolsheviks during and after Lenin's leadership while they consolidated political power. However, the Bolsheviks were concerned that even small-scale private production would encourage capitalism and the accompanying liberal values, and they wanted to continue the transformation of Soviet society into a true communist state. To achieve this, Stalin centralized economic planning and implemented the first of many five-year plans in a new command economy. The plan called for industrial production to increase by about 20 per cent per year in a variety of industries.

Furthermore, to finance this expansion and ensure a sufficient grain supply to feed industrial workers, the government implemented **collectivization**—that is, all land was taken away from private owners and combined in large, collectively worked farms called *kolkhozes*. Farms became food-producing factories with production quotas. Along with collectivization came the persecution of the *kulaks*.

Prior to the revolution, kulaks were a class of prosperous land-owning peasants. After the revolution, new kulaks emerged due to land redistribution and the capitalist aspects of the New Economic Plan. The term *kulak* eventually came to mean not only a prosperous landowner but anyone who employed other workers or owned machinery capable of producing goods. The kulaks who had not already given up their property voluntarily were arrested and deported, or in some cases executed. They became the scapegoats towards whom all the blame for hardships was directed. From 1929 to 1930, the number of peasants working on collective farms increased from 5 million to 70 million.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

What aspects of the New Economic Policy reflect classical liberalism? What aspects of the policy reflect collectivism? What issues was the policy meant to address?



Figure 5-15 ▲

This 1930 poster from the Soviet Union reads “We will keep out kulaks from the collective farms”.

Few peasants were satisfied with these changes. Most were not landless, because land had been redistributed following the revolution, so they were losing land they had only recently gained. Because of their resentment, many of them destroyed crops, slaughtered their farm animals, and destroyed equipment, rather than give them up to the state.

All these disruptions to agricultural production led to a major famine in 1932–1933. In Ukraine, the breadbasket of the USSR, Stalin used the famine as a weapon to try to eliminate Ukrainian nationalism and identity. More than 7 million people died in this genocide, which is now known as the Holodomor. One of Stalin's lieutenants in Ukraine noted in 1933 that the famine was a success because the peasants learned "who is the master here. It cost millions of lives, but the collective farm system is here to stay." (Source: "Revelations from the Russian Archives: Ukrainian Famine." United States Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/ukra.html>)

The following excerpt is from a letter sent by the head of a regional board of health, who also quotes the findings of a regional health inspector.

The head of the regional board reports the following: "I have driven around several collective farms [kolkhozes] and consider it necessary to inform you about a few items. I was in various kolkhozes—not productive and relatively unproductive ones, but everywhere there was only one sight—that of a huge shortage of seed, famine, and extreme emaciation of livestock..."

The regional health inspector notes the following: "...From my observation of 20 homes in first and second Karpov, I found only in one home, that of a Red Army veteran, a relative condition of nourishment, some flour and bread, but the rest subsist on food substitutes. Almost in every home either children or mothers were ill, undoubtedly due to starvation, since their faces and entire bodies were swollen..."

—Feigin, letter to Sergo Ordzhonikidze, April 9, 1932.

"Revelations from the Russian Archives: Collectivization and Industrialization." United States Library of Congress.

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/aa2feign.html>



PAUSE AND REFLECT

In what way was Stalin's persecution of the people of Ukraine a rejection of liberalism?

Stalin Eliminates Political Opposition

As a result of the famine of 1932–1933, the drive to industrialization, and the increasingly strict control over the populace, many people within the Soviet Union, although ardent supporters of the socialist cause, became disillusioned with Stalin's leadership. While Stalin felt it was necessary to arrest and execute the dissenters, most of the members of the politburo (political bureau, the ruling elite of the Communist Party) argued against these measures. When Stalin realized that even members of the politburo dared to oppose him, he initiated a period of political repression now known as the Great Purge.



Figure 5-16

Conditions in the camps were harsh, and the mortality rate was much higher in the camps than in the general population. This photo was taken in the Archangelsk region of Russia, sometime between 1921 and 1941.

The Great Purge lasted from 1936 to 1938. The most widely publicized aspects of the purge were three group trials of senior party members and high-ranking members of the armed forces. Most of the surviving “Old Bolsheviks”—members who had joined the Communist Party before the revolution in 1917—were convicted and executed or sent into exile. Most of the highest-ranking officers of the Red Army were also convicted and executed. From the general populace, 1.5–2 million people were arrested for “counterrevolutionary activities” or political reasons. Roughly half of them were executed, and most people in the remainder were sentenced to forced labour camps, collectively known as the Gulag. There were thousands of camps in the Gulag system. They were located in isolated areas such as eastern Siberia. By 1939, there were at least 1.3 million people in the camps.

The following excerpts are from a memoir written by one dissenter, Nadezhda Joffe (1906–1999), who was arrested twice. After her second arrest, she spent 20 years in a labour camp in Siberia.

We wanted nothing for ourselves, we all wanted just one thing: the world revolution and happiness for all. And if it were necessary to give up our lives to achieve this, then we would have done so without hesitating.

I was personally acquainted with many participants in the October Revolution. Among them were people who renounced a calm, comfortable or prosperous life because they fervently believed in a radiant future for all mankind.

Many of those whom Stalin considered to be the Opposition paid with years of exile, prison and camps for fighting him, and for understanding that the socialism which had been built in the Soviet Union was not the same socialism about which the best minds of mankind had dreamed.

—Nadezhda Joffe, *Back in Time: My Life, My Fate, My Epoch*
trans. Frederick S. Choate (Oak Park, MI: Labor Publications, 1995), p. 237.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Consider the following statement:
“The socialism which had been built in the Soviet Union was not the same socialism about which the best minds of mankind had dreamed.” Do you think that this ideal socialism to which the writer refers currently exists or can exist anywhere in the world? Why or why not?

Stalin Explains Communism

Something to Think About: How did communist leaders defend their ideology to outsiders or those sympathetic to it who wished to learn more?

An Example: Stalin sought to explain communist ideology to a visiting American labour delegation in 1927. Part of the dialogue between Stalin and the Americans was printed in the Soviet newspaper *Pravda*. The following excerpts are from this interview.

Stalin's Interview with the First American Trade Union Delegation to Soviet Russia

QUESTION 3: *Since there is legality for one political party only in Russia how do you know that the masses favour Communism?*

STALIN: *Take the last Soviet elections. In the USSR the whole of the adult population from the age of 18, irrespective of sex and nationality,—except the bourgeois elements who exploit the labour of others and those who have been deprived of their rights by the courts—enjoys the right to vote. The people enjoying the right to vote number 60 millions. The overwhelming majority of these, of course, are peasants. Of these 60 million voters, about 51 per cent, i.e., over 30 millions, exercise their right. Now examine the composition of the leading organs of our Soviets both in the center and locally. Is it an accident that the overwhelming majority of the elected leading elements are Communists? Clearly, it is not an accident. Does not this fact prove that the Communist Party enjoys the confidence of millions of the masses of the peasantry? I think it does. This is another test of the strength and stability of the Communist Party.*

QUESTION 12: *Can you outline briefly the characteristics of the Society of the future which Communism is trying to create?*

STALIN: *The general characteristics of Communist society are given in the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Briefly, the anatomy of Communist society may be described as follows: It is a society in which (a) there will be no private ownership of the means of production but social, collective ownership; (b) there will be no classes or State, but workers in industry and agriculture managing their economic affairs as a free association of toilers; (c) national economy will be organized according to plan, will be based on the highest technique in both industry and agriculture; (d) there will be no antagonism between town and country, between industry and agriculture; (e) the products will be distributed according to the principle of the old French Communists: "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs"; (f) science and art will enjoy conditions conducive to their highest development; (g) the individual, freed from bread and butter cares, and of necessity of cringing to the "powerful of the earth," will become really free, etc., etc. Clearly, we are still remote from such a society.*

With regard to the international conditions necessary for the complete triumph of Communist society, these will develop and grow in proportion as revolutionary crises and revolutionary outbreaks of the working class in capitalist countries grow.

—Source: Interview between Stalin and the First American Trade Union Delegation to Soviet Russia, *Pravda* September 15, 1927. Marxists Internet Archive

<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1927/09/15.htm>

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1 How do Stalin's responses provide an understanding of his view of the fundamental beliefs and values of communism?
- 2 Why would American trade unionists be interested in communism?
- 3 How is communism a rejection of liberal principles? To what extent does Stalin's approach to communism appear to have been successful?

Controlling the Population through Propaganda

One of the goals of totalitarian government is total control over the lives of its citizens. How did the government of the Soviet Union attempt to exert this control? One example can be drawn from the field of art. The government used postcards to promote its emerging ideals. Under the slogan “Bring the Art into the Masses,” the Association of the Artists of the Revolution produced titles for some 800 postcards proclaiming such things as the benefits of industrialization and the mechanization of agriculture. Attention was focused on the images of the “new Soviet man” and the “new Soviet woman.” Children were depicted playing at their future occupations.

As part of the goal of achieving conformity to the state ideology, fairy tales were abolished or reinterpreted in accordance with the new communist ideology. It was the task of the *Proletkult* (proletarian culture—art without bourgeois influence) to instill the ideals of communism in the young. Children’s literature was created so that the new generation would learn the beliefs and values of communism.

For example, in his poem “A Tale about Petia, A Fat Child, and Sima, who is Thin,” Russian poet Vladimir Maiakovskii uses a children’s fable to critique what he perceives as the excesses of liberalism.

*It’s clear
even to a hedgehog
this Petia was a bourgeois.*

*Birds flew by with a song,
they sang
“Sima is a proletarian!”*

Maiakovskii goes on to recount that Petia will not share his candy with the other children, and eventually explodes from eating too much. The poem ends with the lines:

*Children, learn to love work
as is written here.*

*Defend
all who are weak
from the clutches of the bourgeoisie.*

*Then you’ll grow up to be
true
strong communists.*

—Vladimir Maiakovskii, “A Tale about Petia,
A Fat Child, and Sima, Who Is Thin,” quoted in
“What Shall We Tell the Children?,” *The Voice of the Turtle*.
http://www.voiceoftheturtle.org/show_article.php?aid=18



Figure 5-17 ▲

Builders-to-Be, 1930, postcard by
Filsova



Figure 5-18 ▲

A Woman-Engineer, 1930, postcard by
N.I. Shestopalov. Use the Skill Path to
assess how these postcards served as
propaganda.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Do you believe it is appropriate for a government to directly promote its beliefs and values of the state ideology to young children? What differentiates indoctrination from positive affirmation of social values? Do you remember any specific messages that you received during your own childhood about your society, government, how you should behave, and so on? To what extent do you believe this happens in all societies?

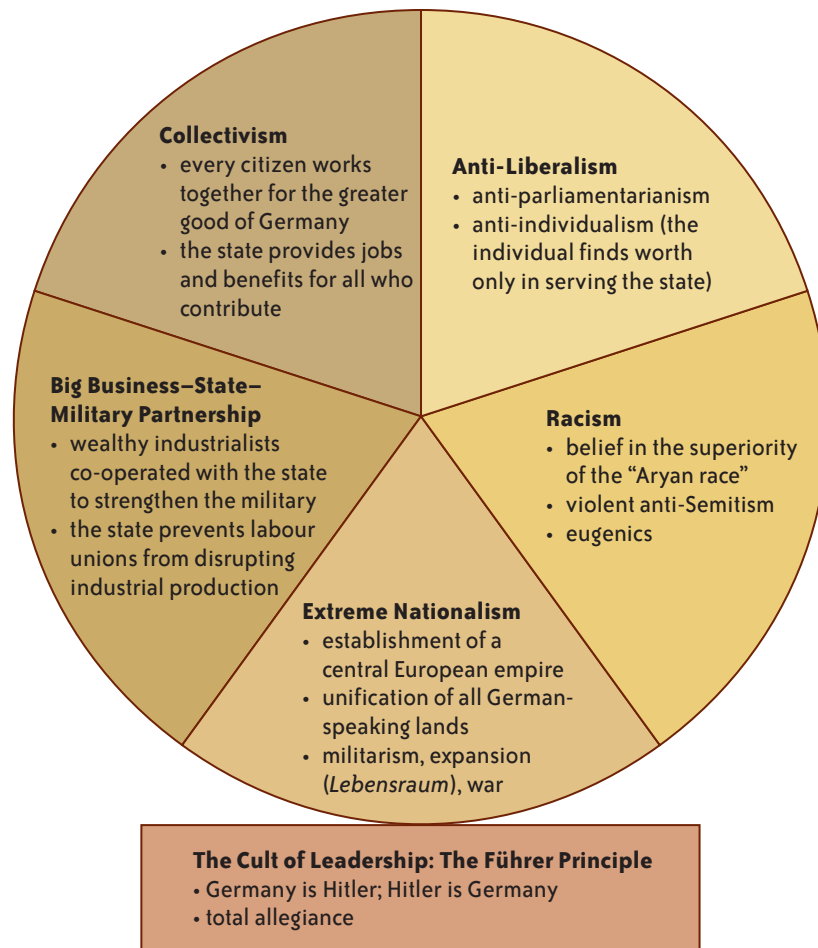
Why would it have been so important to the Proletkult to eradicate bourgeois liberal ideas from children's literature? How effective do you think Vladimir Maiakovskii's poem is in promoting the Soviet communist ideology? Does his poem reflect the beliefs of most citizens of the USSR at that time? Do you think children would understand the overt references to communist ideology and the criticisms of liberalism?

Fascism in Nazi Germany

The ideology of fascism in Nazi Germany was in part an expression of Adolf Hitler's deep-seated hatred of liberalism, Jews, and communists. His desire was to rebuild Germany into an empire that would reclaim and increase its international power and influence. He pledged to restore the economic strength and national pride that he and others believed had been lost as a result of signing the Treaty of Versailles, and the machinations of liberals, Jews, and Marxists—in his and his supporters' view—who had undermined the German nation during and after the First World War. For those who chose to wholeheartedly follow the Nazi Party, he promised a much improved but different life.

Figure 5-19

Features of fascism in Nazi Germany



Consolidating Power

In the November 1932 elections, the Nazi party received 33 per cent of the popular vote and about one-third of the seats in the Reichstag. By January 1933, Hitler had been named chancellor. Capitalizing on the situation, Hitler quickly transformed Germany into a totalitarian state.

One month after Hitler became chancellor, a fire destroyed the Reichstag building. A young Dutch communist was soon arrested, and it was claimed by the Nazis that the fire was part of a larger communist plot to take over Germany. Hitler used this communist threat and the ensuing panic it caused in the population to call new elections and pass the Reichstag Fire Decree (1933) and the Enabling Act (1933). These made it possible for the government to

- restrict personal freedom, freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, and freedom of organization and assembly
- eliminate the privacy of mail, telegrams, and telephone conversations
- eliminate the need for warrants to conduct searches
- pass legislation through the office of the chancellor without the approval of the Reichstag
- ban all political parties except the Nazi Party

Through these means, Germany had become a dictatorship by 1933.

On June 30, 1934, Hitler further strengthened his position by ordering the assassination of the leadership of the SA (stormtroopers). As the paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party, the SA had helped Hitler come to power. The SA had become too popular, however, and thus they were seen as a threat to the traditional army's power and Hitler's leadership. The elimination of the SA's leaders removed any remaining challenges to Hitler's leadership within the Nazi Party itself. This purge was known as the "Night of the Long Knives." When President Paul von Hindenburg died on August 19, 1934, Hitler declared himself *Führer*, or leader.

Nazism and the German Economy

While individual rights and numerous social groups suffered under the Nazi regime, the German economy benefited. Six million Germans were unemployed in 1932, due to the Great Depression and the continuing after-effects of the First World War. By 1936, this number fell to fewer than 1 million. The German industrialists, some of whom had helped fund the Nazi Party during its rise to power, benefited from policies such as the ban on trade unions and strikes. The National Labour Service created massive public projects such as the construction of the *Autobahnen* (highways), which provided employment. The

re-arming of the German military (prohibited by the Treaty of Versailles) also stimulated industry. Farming and industries were given government subsidies. Moreover, the purchase of farmers' produce was guaranteed, and foreign imports were restricted to encourage consumption of German-made goods. Many of these measures were designed to achieve **autarky** (self-sufficiency or independence from other nations) in the German economy.

But the economic effects of Nazi policies were not entirely positive. Workers had few rights and no legal means to protest to acquire them. Industries were strictly regulated, and access to raw materials and output was controlled. Günter Reimann, a member of the Communist Party of Germany who fled the country prior to the Second World War, wrote about the control the Nazi government exercised over industry:

While state representatives are busily engaged in investigating and interfering, our agents and salesmen are handicapped because they never know whether or not a sale at a higher price will mean denunciation as a "profiteer" or "saboteur," followed by a prison sentence. You cannot imagine how taxation has increased. Yet everyone is afraid to complain. Everywhere there is a growing undercurrent of bitterness. Everyone has his doubts about the system, unless he is very young, very stupid, or is bound to it by the privileges he enjoys.

—Günter Reimann, *The Vampire Economy: Doing Business Under Fascism* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1939), p. 7.

Persecution of the Jews and Others

The Nazis used the Jewish people and some minority groups in Germany, including those referenced on pages 177 and 189 of this chapter, as scapegoats for many of the problems in Germany prior to Hitler's ascendancy. The Nazis especially blamed Jewish people for being a part of the government that accepted the Treaty of Versailles, and suggested that Germany's economic problems were due to Jewish control of industry and banking. As a result of these ideas and ideas of their own racial superiority, once the Nazis were in power, they began working toward the systematic elimination of Jews and members of some minority groups from Germany, and eventually all of Europe.

Beginning in 1933, the German government passed a series of laws that sought to exclude people of Jewish ancestry from German society. The following laws are a few examples of this:

- 1933: Jews are barred from working for the government, becoming lawyers, and working as editors. The number of Jewish students in public schools is strictly limited.

- 1935: Jewish officers are expelled from the army. The Nuremberg Laws are passed (see Get to the Source on page 190).
- 1936: Jews are banned from working as tax consultants, veterinarians, or teachers in public schools.
- 1938: Jews are not allowed to change their names or the names of their businesses. Jews must report all property in excess of 5000 *Reichsmarks* (approximately \$30 000 in today's dollars). Some Jewish property is confiscated and transferred to non-Jewish Germans. All Jewish businesses are closed. All Jewish students are expelled from public schools.

In a speech before the Reichstag in 1939, Hitler alluded to the coming Holocaust:

If the international Finance-Jewry inside and outside of Europe should succeed in plunging the peoples of the earth once again into a world war, the result will be not the Bolshevization of earth, and thus a Jewish victory, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.

—“Combating Holocaust Denial: Evidence of the Holocaust presented at Nuremberg.” Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/media_fi.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10007271&MediaId=5700

Eventually, all German Jews and Jewish people in countries that Germany invaded during the Second World War would be detained in concentration camps and ghettos, and often used as slave labour, before being transported to extermination camps. An estimated 6 million Jews died during the Holocaust.

Nazi Eugenics

Under Hitler, Germany became a police state overseen by the Gestapo (secret police) and the SS (*Schutzstaffel*, or elite paramilitary force) who ensured that Germans followed the decrees of the Nazi Party. An important tenet of Nazi ideology was the superiority of the pure Aryan race, and **eugenics**—controlling human reproduction so that desirable genetic traits are encouraged and undesirable traits are eliminated—was practised as a consequence of that belief.

In Nazi ideology, *Untermenschen* (sub-humans) were groups of people deemed racially or socially inferior. Laws ostracizing such groups were enacted, eventually resulting in the murder of Jews (as described earlier), Roma peoples (Gypsies), blacks, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, people who were mentally ill or physically disabled, Polish peoples and Soviet prisoners of war, and any other group considered *Untermenschen*. In total, an estimated 9 to 11 million people, including 6 million Jews were killed for these reasons.



Figure 5-20



Hitler addresses German troops and Nazi Party supporters at the Nuremberg Rally in 1935. The Nazi Party held mass rallies every year at Nuremberg.

Hitler passed the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 with the intent of defining who the Jewish people were and how to ensure the preservation of the Aryan race.

Section 1

1. Marriages between Jews and citizens of German or kindred blood are forbidden. Marriages concluded in defiance of this law are void, even if, for the purpose of evading this law, they are concluded abroad.

2. Proceedings for annulment may be initiated only by the Public Prosecutor.

Section 2

1. Extramarital intercourse between Jews and citizens of German or kindred blood is forbidden.

[Supplementary decrees set Nazi definitions of racial Germans, Jews, and “half-breeds.” Jews could not vote or hold public office.]

Section 3

1. Jews may not employ female citizens of German or kindred blood under the age of 45 in their households.

Section 4

1. Jews are forbidden to hoist the Reich and national flag and to display the colours of the Reich.

2. On the other hand, the display of the Jewish colours is permitted. The practice of this authorization is protected by the state.

—Source: Roderick Stackelberg and Sally Anne Winkle, *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook: An Anthology of Texts* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 190.

Liselotte Katscher, a Nazi party member and nurse, recounted the following:

Henny was examined by a doctor who diagnosed a slight feeble-mindedness—in my opinion it was only a slight feeble-mindedness, and they decided that she should be sterilized. I thought about it a great deal at the time, and I felt sorry for the girl, but it was the law, and the doctors had decided. I personally took her to the maternity ward in the hospital where it took place. But I never got rid of the doubt in my mind that the decision was too harsh. I formed the impression when dealing with this young girl that she was perfectly capable of leading a normal life. The tragedy was that she was released very soon after this, then got a job and met a nice young man, and was now not allowed to marry him because of her sterilization.

—Liselotte Katscher, from *Women in Nazi Germany* (Seminar Studies in History) by Jill Stephenson, publisher: Longman

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Limburg wrote to the Reich Minister of Justice on August 13, 1941, describing what he witnessed and the sentiment of some of the local Germans.

Several times a week buses arrive in Hadamar with a considerable number of such victims. School children of the vicinity know this vehicle

and say: "There comes the murder-box again." After the arrival of the vehicle, the citizens of Hadamar watch the smoke rise out of the chimney and are tortured with the ever-present thought of the miserable victims...

The effect of the principles at work here are: Children call each other names and say, "You're crazy; you'll be sent to the baking oven in Hadamar"... You hear old folks say, "Do not send me to a State hospital! After the feeble-minded have been finished off, the next useless eaters whose turn will come are the old people."

—Roman Catholic Bishop of Limburg, letter to the Reich Minister of Justice, August 13, 1941, quoted in "The Trial of German Major War Criminals: Sitting at Nuremberg, Germany, 7th January to 19th January, 1946." The Nizkor Project.
<http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/imt/tgmwc/tgmwc-04/tgmwc-04-35-11.shtml>

While those deemed undesirable by the Nazis were incarcerated or killed, reproduction among "desirable" people of Aryan background was encouraged through programs such as *Lebensborn*.

The programme was attached to the SS and designed to encourage women of "pure blood" to bear blond, blue-eyed children. Lebensborn, set up in late 1935, was aimed at halting the high rate of abortions of illegitimate children in Germany caused by a shortage of men to marry after the First World War. It enabled women who had become pregnant out of wedlock to give birth anonymously away from their homes. Lebensborn also ran children's homes and an adoption service if the mother did not want to keep the child...

The entry requirements for the clinics were as strict as for the SS itself. The women had to prove that they and the father were of Aryan stock back to their grandparents.

—David Crossland, "Himmler was my godfather'."
The Times Online November 6, 2006.
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article626101.ece>

Lives of Aryan Germans

Though others suffered considerably, the lives of Aryan Germans improved in some respects during the Nazi regime, due not only to the economic conditions but also to various government programs intended to bolster citizens' loyalty to the state. The Strength through Joy (KDF) program provided people with leisure and holidays. The strict enforcement of law and order gave people a sense of security. The autobahns provided improved transportation. The frequent ceremonies, rallies, and propaganda brought hope and confidence.

A German woman told Nora Wall, an American reporter, that Hitler "is my mother and my father. He keeps me safe from all harm." A German farmer, Luise Essig, remembered life in Nazi Germany this

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Consider the status of women in Nazi Germany. Then consider women's rights in liberal democratic countries at the time (for example, in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States). Why might German women have gone along with Hitler's plans? How was Nazism also a reaction to feminism? Explain.

way: "We all felt the same, the same happiness and joy. Things were looking up. I believe no statesman has ever been as loved as Adolf Hitler was then. It's all come flooding back to me. Those were happy times." (Source: Quoted in "How did Nazis rule affect Germans?" Greenfield History Site, http://www.johndclare.net/Nazi_Germany3.htm.)

Patriarchy dominated the Nazi ideology. Women were primarily to be in the home, bearing and raising children. The Law for the Encouragement of Marriage, for example, loaned newlywed couples 1000 marks (approximately \$6000 in today's dollars), and allowed them to keep 250 marks (\$1500) for each child they had. In addition, a woman would receive a gold medal for bearing more than eight children. Professional working women, such as doctors, teachers, and civil servants, lost their employment. Women were forbidden to serve in the armed forces.

Recruiting Youth

Young people were courted by the Nazi government to ensure the future of the thousand-year Reich. Both girls and boys were encouraged to belong to special organizations that, while providing enjoyable activities for children and adolescents, inculcated loyalty to the Nazi regime. Children were encouraged to report any inappropriate—meaning anti-Nazi—behaviour by others, including their parents.

Boys were enrolled in a Cubs program from the ages of 6 to 10 and in the Young German Boys organization from the ages of 10 to 14. At 14, boys became members of the Hitler Youth, and at 18 they went into either the Labour Service or the armed forces. Girls were enrolled in the Young Maidens program at the age of 10 and became members of the League of German Maidens at the age of 14. The programs for boys were focused on future military roles, while those for girls involved domesticity. Resistance to Nazi policies by some of the youth grew as the war advanced, but these youth risked being executed if they were caught.

Figure 5-21 

Some Germans refused to submit to Hitler's will and Nazi Party policies. One of the most famous is Sophie Scholl. Sophie Scholl was a member of a youth resistance group in Germany called the White Rose. Her brother, Hans (left); Christoph Probst (right); Alexander Schmorell; Willi Graf; and Professor Kurt Huber were the core members of the White Rose. This group painted anti-Nazi graffiti on walls and distributed pamphlets telling the German people to resist Hitler and the National Socialist government.





Nazism Reacting to Feminism

Hitler vehemently disagreed with feminist ideas and believed that the German woman's world consisted of "her husband, her family, her children, and her home." In

1933, he appointed Gertrud Scholtz-Klink as Reich Women's Leader of the Nazi Women's League. In one of her many speeches she declared that "the mission of woman is to minister in the home and in her profession to the needs of life from the first to last moment of man's existence." Later in 1938 she stated that "the German woman must work and work, physically and mentally she must renounce luxury and pleasure." (Source: Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, quoted on Spartacus Educational, <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/GERwomen.htm>.) Due to Hitler's anti-feminist policies, many women joined left-wing political groups.

In 1933, the first concentration camp for women was opened at Moringen. Later in 1938, due to the increasing numbers of women prisoners, a second camp at Lichtenburg in Saxony was built and in 1939, Ravensbrück was opened. What do the following quotations illustrate about the thinking of the role of women in the Nazi state and consequently the implications for women's lives in Germany?

I spent an hour with the principal, a very friendly, neat lady of fifty. She explained that every class in school was built around a course called Frauenschaffen, activities of women. This general subject was divided into: Handarbeit (handwork), Hauswirtschaft (domestic science, cooking, house and garden work), and most important, the Pflege course (eugenics [encouraging reproduction by persons presumed to have inheritable desirable traits] and hygiene, devoted to a study of the reproductive organs, both male and female, conception, birth, racial purity, infant care, family welfare).

—G. Zienef, *Education for Death*, 1942, quoted on Spartacus Educational.

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/GERwomen.htm>

Young girls from the age of ten onward were taken into organizations where they were taught only two things: to take care of their bodies so they could bear as many children as the state needed and to be loyal to National Socialism. Though the Nazis have been forced to recognize, through the lack of men, that not all women can get married. Huge marriage loans are floated every year whereby the contracting parties can borrow substantial sums from the government to be repaid slowly or to be cancelled entirely upon the birth of enough children. Birth control information is frowned on and practically forbidden.

Despite the fact that Hitler and the other Nazis are always ranting about "Volk ohne Raum" (a people without space) they command their men and women to have more children. Women have been deprived for all rights except that of childbirth and hard labour. They are not permitted to participate in political life—in fact Hitler's plans eventually include the deprivation of the vote; they

are refused opportunities of education and self-expression; careers and professions are closed to them.

—Martha Dodd, *My Years in Germany*, 1939,
quoted on Spartacus Educational.

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/GERwomen.htm>

I detest women who dabble in politics. And if their dabbling extends to military matters it becomes utterly unendurable. In no section of the Party has a woman ever had the right to hold even the smallest post.

In 1924 we had a sudden upsurge of women who were interested in politics. They wanted to join the Reichstag, in order to raise the moral level of that body, so they said. I told them that 90 per cent of the matters dealt with by parliament were masculine affairs, on which they could not have opinions of any value. Gallantry forbids one to give women an opportunity of putting themselves in situations that do not suit them.

—Adolf Hitler, speech given on January 26, 1942.

- 1 To what extent do the opinions cited in these sources reflect a rejection of liberalism?
- 2 How do the points of view expressed compare and contrast with liberal ideas today about the roles of women?
- 3 What might have been some of the consequences for German society after the Nazi regime ended in 1945 as a result of focusing girls' education solely on their roles as housewives and mothers?

Explore the Issues

Concept Review

- 1 a) Identify four characteristics of the communist regime in the Soviet Union that were rejections of liberal principles.
b) Identify four characteristics of the Nazi regime that were rejections of liberal principles.

Concept Application

- 2 a) Knowing what you know about Hitler and his dictatorship, how do you think that it was possible that German people should have had such positive things to say about him?
b) Under what circumstances would people have found the ideologies of communism or fascism appealing?

- 3 Look at the results of both Stalin's and Hitler's reaction to liberalism. One might qualify each of them as having been the biggest nightmare of the 20th century. From the perspective of the citizens of these regimes, how was the rejection of liberalism a failure?
- 4 Distinguish between fascist and communist economic policies. Are there elements of either that could be considered liberal?
- 5 Is authoritarianism a necessary condition for the rejection of liberalism?



Reflect and Analyze

Why did ideologies that rejected liberalism emerge in the Soviet Union and Germany? These totalitarian ideologies sought to exclude liberalism from their societies and enforce all-powerful states, that would supersede notions of individualism. Under what circumstances might ideologies that reject the principles of liberalism, such as totalitarian ideologies, be appealing to a person, a group, or a nation-state?

In Russia, there was a movement from autocracy under Czar Nicholas II to a communist state, first under Lenin and then under Stalin. Germany moved from the German monarchy before the First World War to the Weimar Republic to the Nazi Third Reich under Hitler. The examination of communism and fascism gave you a chance to explore the Chapter Issue: *To what extent is the rejection of liberalism justified?*

- 1 Working as a class, complete the following activities based on the readings in this chapter.
 - a) Construct a list of reasons why a country might reject liberalism. Try to keep these reasons general enough to apply to modern countries.
 - b) Working with the list of reasons created by the class, break into groups of four or five students and develop a theory that attempts to explain anti-liberalism. The theory must accurately describe both historical examples from this chapter, and contemporary examples (such as Islamic fundamentalism or a military dictatorship).
 - c) Present your theory to the class. Some form of visual medium (such as a poster, PowerPoint presentation, or video) should accompany your presentation.

Respond to Ideas

- 2 Review the list of the techniques of totalitarianism on page 167 and identify the examples of these techniques as practiced in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.
- 3 The impact of ideologies that reject liberalism is quite diverse. How has your understanding of the reasons why an ideology might reject liberalism been clarified? What impacts can ideologies such as communism and fascism have on their citizens?

Respond to Issues

- 4 To what extent do you think that the rejection of liberalism by the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany was justified?