

Primary Source Reading 13-1 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Mein Kampf

▣ About the Selection

Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*—his combination manifesto and autobiography—while in prison in 1924. In English the title means “My Struggle” or “My Battle.” Typical of Hitler, the title and book paint him as a suffering hero of history. After World War II, many people said that Germany’s course under Hitler surprised them. Reading *Mein Kampf* would have alerted them—in it the essential irrationality, racism, anti-Semitism, and hatred in the Nazi ideology are there for all to see.

Reader’s Dictionary



Marxist philosophy: theory whose ultimate goal was a society without classes

edifice: massive structure of an organization

GUIDED READING

As you read, note Hitler’s basic ideas of the Nazi (folkish) state. Then answer the questions that follow.

The result of all racial crossing is therefore in brief always the following:

- (a) Lowering of the level of the higher race;
- (b) Physical and intellectual regression. . . .

To bring about such a development is, then, nothing else but to sin against the will of the eternal creator. . . .

The folkish state . . . must set race in the center of all life. It must take care to keep it pure. *There is only one holiest human right, and this right is at the same time the holiest obligation, to wit: to see to it that the blood is preserved pure and, by preserving the best humanity, to create the possibility of a nobler development of these beings.*

. . . the Jew of all times has lived in the states of other peoples. . . .

He regards commerce as well as all financial transactions as his own special privilege which he ruthlessly exploits. Finance and commerce have become his complete monopoly. . . . People begin to look at the foreigner more and more closely and discover more and more repulsive traits and characteristics in him until the cleft becomes unbridgeable.

. . . Finally the Jewish influence on economic affairs grows with terrifying speed through the stock exchange. . . .

Thus, Freemasonry is joined by a second weapon in the service of the Jews: the *press*. With all his perseverance and dexterity he seizes possession of it. With it he slowly begins to grip and ensnare, to guide and to push all public life. . . . He uses all the knowledge he acquires in the schools of other peoples, exclusively for the benefit of his race. . . . He poisons the blood of others, but preserves his own. The Jew almost never marries a Christian woman; it is the Christian who marries a Jewess. The [children] take after the Jewish side.

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Primary Source Reading 13-1 (continued) ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The folkish philosophy is basically distinguished from the Marxist [and democratic] philosophy by the fact that it not only recognizes the value of race, but with it the importance of the personality [individual leaders], which it therefore makes one of the pillars of its entire edifice. Marxism also had a goal, and it too has a constructive activity (even if it is only to erect a despotism of international Jewish world finance). . . .

The principle which made the Prussian army in its time into the most wonderful instrument of the German people must some day, in a transferred sense, become the principle of the construction of our whole state conception: *authority of every leader downward and responsibility upward.*

From *Mein Kampf*, by Adolph Hitler. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin.

READER RESPONSE

Directions: Answer the following questions on the lines below.

1. According to Hitler, what does the Nazi state place at the center of all life?

2. What is the basic Nazi principle for building the state?

3. What does Hitler believe is the highest human right and obligation?

4. **Critical Thinking** Write a one-paragraph rebuttal of Hitler's blatant racism.
