

Name: _____ Period: _____

Nationalism and School Spirit Activity

I. Nationalism Reading

Nationalism can perhaps be better understood by comparing it to school spirit. Citizens who are proud of their country are no different than students who are proud of their school. Armies on the battlefield win territory and prestige for their country in much of the same way as boys' and girls' sports teams win victories and fame and respect for their school. Armies have generals and teams have coaches. Both have heroes and give awards for outstanding achievement. A country has its national anthem and a school its alma mater. While a strong believer in nationalism thinks his country is the best, a student with school spirit believes their school is better than any other.

Modern nationalism began with the French Revolution. When kings of European countries sent armies to end the revolution and return a monarch to the French throne, citizens of France united in a spirit of nationalism to defend their homeland. Years later, after Napoleon had risen to power and threatened the security of Europe, feelings of nationalism aroused Great Britain, Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Spain to defeat Napoleon and protect their territory and the rest of Europe.

Nationalism remained a strong force through the rest of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. Nationalism showed itself in different ways. In some countries, citizens united in an effort to gain a voice in their government, human rights, and even independence. On other occasions, nationalism led countries to compete for colonies and control of world trade routes. At its best, nationalism was a healthy form of patriotism but at its worst, it led to warfare and to the persecution of certain national groups by foreign countries that governed them.
