## **Julius Evola**

Baron **Giulio Cesare Andrea Evola** (/ε'νοὐ[ə/; Italian: ['ε:vola]; <sup>[1]</sup> 19 May 1898 – 11 June 1974), better known as **Julius Evola**, was an Italian <u>philosopher</u>, painter, and <u>esotericist</u>. He has been described as a "fascist intellectual, <sup>[2]</sup> a "radical traditionalist, <sup>[3]</sup> "antiegalitarian, antiliberal, antidemocratic, and antipopular, <sup>[4]</sup> and as having been "the leading philosopher of Europe's neofascist movement. <sup>[4]</sup>

Evola is popular in fringe circles, largely because of his extreme metaphysical, magical, and supernatural beliefs (including belief in ghosts, telepathy, and alchemy),<sup>[5]</sup> and his extreme <u>traditionalism</u> and <u>misogyny</u>. He himself termed his philosophy "magical idealism." Many of Evola's theories and writings were centered on his idiosyncratic <u>mysticism</u>, <u>occultism</u>, and esoteric religious studies,<sup>[6][7][8]</sup> and this aspect of his work has influenced <u>occultists</u> and esotericists. Evola also justified rape (among other forms of male domination of women) because he saw it "as a natural expression of male desire". This misogynistic outlook stemmed from his extreme right views on <u>gender roles</u>, which demanded absolute submission from women.<sup>[6][7][8][9][10]</sup>

According to the scholar Franco Ferraresi, "Evola's thought can be considered one of the most radical and consistent anti-egalitarian, anti-liberal, anti-democratic, and anti-popular systems in the twentieth centuryIt is a singular (though not necessarily original) blend of several schools and traditions, including German idealism, Eastern doctrines, traditionalism, and the all-embracing Weltanschauung of the interwar conservative revolutionary movement with which Evola had a deep personal involvement". Historian Aaron Gillette described Evola as "one of the most influential fascist racists in Italian history". Personal involvement whom he once met. Evola spent World War II working for the Sicherheitsdienst. During his trial in 1951, Evola denied being a fascist and instead referred to himself as a "superfascist". Concerning this statement, historian Elisabetta Cassina Wolff wrote that "It is unclear whether this meant that Evola was placing himself above or beyond Fascism'.

Evola was the "chief ideologue" of Italy's radical right after World War II.<sup>[14]</sup> He continues to influence contemporary traditionalist and <u>neo-fascist movements.</u><sup>[14]</sup>[15][16][17]

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#### Julius Evola



Baron Julius Evola, early 1940s

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Born	Giulio Cesare Andrea Evola 19 May 1898 Rome, Kingdom of Italy
Died	11 June 1974 (aged 76) Rome, Italy
Cause of death	Respiratory-hepatic problems
Nationality	Italian
Notable work	Revolt Against the Modern World (1934)
Era	20th-century philosophy
Region	Western philosophy
School	Traditionalism
Institutions	School of Fascist Mysticism
Main interests	History, religion, Western esotericism
Notable ideas	Fascist mysticism, spiritual racism, transcendental

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#### Life

Giulio Cesare Andrea Evola was born in Rome to a minor aristocratic family of Sicilian origins. He was a <u>baron</u>. Little is known about his early upbringing except that he considered it irrelevant. Evola studied engineering in Rome, but did not complete his studie because he "did not want to be associated in any way with <u>bourgeois</u> academic recognition and titles such as doctor and engineer."[6]:3[18]

In his teenage years, Evola immersed himself in painting—which he considered one of his natural talents—and literature, including Oscar Wilde and Gabriele d'Annunzio. He was introduced to philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Otto Weininger. Other early philosophical influences included Carlo Michelstaedterand Max Stirner. [19]

Evola served in World War I as an artillery officer on the Asiago plateau. He was attracted to the avant-garde and after the war, Evola briefly associated with Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's Futurist movement. He became a prominent representative of Dadaism in Italy through his painting, poetry, and collaboration on the briefly published journal, *Revue Bleue*. In 1922, after concluding that avant-garde art was becoming commercialized and stiffened by academic conventions, he reduced his focus on artistic expression such as painting and poetry. [20]

Evola died on 11 June 1974 in Rome<sup>[21]</sup>

## Works

## Christianity

In 1928, Evola wrote an attack on Christianity titled *Pagan Imperialism*, which proposed transforming fascism into a system consistent with ancient Roman values and the ancient mystery traditions. Evola proposed that fascism should be a vehicle for reinstating the caste system and aristocracy of antiquity. Although Evola invoked the term "fascism" in this text, his diatribe against the Catholic Church was criticized by both the fascist regime and the Vatican itself. A. James Gregor argued that the text was an attack on fascism as it stood at the time of writing, but noted that Benito Mussolini made use of it in order to threaten the Vatican with the possibility of an "anti-clerical fascism". [6][22]:89–91 On account of Evola's sentiment, the Vatican-backed right wing Catholic journal *Revue Internationale des Sociétés Secrètes* published an article in April 1928 entitled "Un Sataniste Italien: Julius Evola." [8]

The Mystery of the Graildiscarded Christian interpretations of the Holy Grail. Evola wrote that the Grail "symbolizes the principle of an immortalizing and transcendent force connected to the primordial state ... The mystery of the Grail is a mystery of a warrior initiation." He held that the Ghibellines, who fought the Guelph for control of Northern and Central Italy in the thirteenth century within them the residual influences of pre-Christian Celtic and Nordic traditions that represented his conception of the Grail myth. H also held that the Guelph victory against the Ghibellines represented a regression of the castes, since the merchant caste took over from the warrior caste. In the epilogue to this text, Evola argued that the fictitious The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, regardless of whether it was authentic or not, was a cogent representation of modernity. The historian Richard Barber said, "Evola mixes rhetoric, prejudice, scholarship, and politics into a strange version of the present and future, but in the process he brings together for the first time interest in the esoteric and in conspiracy theory which characterize much of the later Grail literature.

#### **Buddhism**

In *The Doctrine of Awakening*, Evola argued that the Pāli Canon could be held to represent true Buddhism. [25] His interpretation of Buddhism is that it was intended to be anti-democratic. He believed that Buddhism revealed the essence of an "Aryan" tradition that had become corrupted and lost in the West. He believed it could be interpreted to reveal the superiority of a warrior caste. [25] Harry Oldmeadow described Evola's work on Buddhism as exhibiting Nietzschean influence, [26] but Evola criticized Nietzsche's anti-ascetic prejudice. [25] The book "received the official approbation of the Pāli [text] society", and was published by a reputable Orientalist publisher. Evola's interpretation of Buddhism, as put forth in his article "Spiritual Virility in Buddhism", is in conflict with the post-WWII scholarship of the Orientalist Giuseppe Tucci, which argues that the viewpoint that Buddhism advocates universal benevolence is legitimate. Arthur Versluis stated that Evola's writing on Buddhism was a vehicle for his own theories, but was a far from accurate rendition of the subject, and he held that much the same could be said of Evola's writing on Hermeticism. Nāṇavīra Thera was inspired to become a bhikkhu from reading Evola's text *The Doctrine of Awakening* in 1945 while hospitalized in Sorrento.

## Modernity

Evola's *Revolt Against the Modern World* is a text that promotes the mythology of an ancient Golden Age. In this work, Evola described the features of his idealized traditional society. Evola argued that modernity represented a serious decline from an ideal society. He argued that in the postulated Golden age, religious and temporal power were united. He wrote that society had not been founded on priestly rule, but by warriors expressing spiritual power. In mythology, he saw evidence of the West's superiority over the East. Moreover, he claimed that the traditional elite had the ability to access power and knowledge through a hierarchical version of magic which differed from the lower "superstitious and fraudulent" forms of magic. [6] Evola insists on "nonmodern forms, institutions, and knowledge" as being necessary to produce a "real renewal ... in those who are still capable of receiving it." The text was "immediately recognized by Mircea Eliade and other intellectuals who allegedly advanced ideas associated with Tradition." Eliade, one of Evola's closest friends, was a fascist sympathizer associated with the Romanian fascist Iron Guard. Elevala was aware of the importance of myth from his readings of Georges Sorel, one of the key intellectual influences on fascism. Hermann Hesse described *Revolt Against the Modern World* as "really dangerous."

E. C. Wolff noted that in *Ride the Tiger* "Evola argued that the fight against modernity was lost. The only thing a 'real man' could just do was to ride the tiger of modernity patiently". Evola wrote that the events of the period would have to run their course but he "did not exclude the possibility of action in the future." He argued that one should be ready to intervene when the tiger "is tired of running." Goodrick-Clarke notes that, "Evola sets up the ideal of the 'active nihilist' who is prepared to act with violence against modern decadence." According to European Studies professor Paul Furlong, this text presents Evola's view that the potential "elite" should immunize itself from modernity and use "right wing anarchism" to rebel against [6].

## Other writings

In the posthumously published collection of writings, *Metaphysics of War*, Evola, in line with the conservative revolutionary <u>Ernst Jünger</u>, explored the viewpoint that war could be a spiritually fulfilling experience. He proposed the necessity of a transcendental orientation in a warrior<sup>[29]</sup>

Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke has written that Evola's 1945 essay "American 'Civilization'" described the United States as "the final stage of European decline into the 'interior formlessness' of vacuous individualism, conformity and vulgarity under the universal aegis of money-making." According to Goodrick-Clarke, Evola argued that U.S. "mechanistic and rational philosophy of progress combined with a mundane horizon of prosperity to transform the world into an enormous suburban shopping malf.<sup>[5]</sup>

## **Occultism and esotericism**

Around 1920, Evola's interests led him into <u>spiritual</u>, <u>transcendental</u>, and "supra-rational" studies. He began reading various esoteric texts and gradually delved deeper into the occult, <u>alchemy</u>, <u>magic</u>, and <u>Oriental studies</u>, particularly <u>Tibetan Tantric</u> <u>yoga</u>. A keen mountaineer, Evola described the experience as a source of revelatory spiritual experiences. After his return from the war, Evola experimented withhallucinogens and magic.

When he was about 23 years old, Evola considered suicide. He claimed that he avoided suicide thanks to a revelation he had while reading an early Buddhist text that dealt with shedding all forms of identity other than absolute transcendence. [6] Evola would later publish the text *The Doctrine of Awakening*, which he regarded as a repayment of his debt to <u>Buddhism</u> for saving him from suicide. [25]

Evola wrote prodigiously on Eastern mysticism, Tantra, hermeticism, the myth of the Holy Grail and Western esotericism. [6] German Egyptologist and esoteric scholar Florian Ebeling has noted that Evola'The Hermetic Tradition is viewed as an "extremely important work on Hermeticism" in the eyes of esotericists [30] Evola gave particular focus to Cesare della Riviera's text Il Mondo Magico degli Heroi, which he later republished in modern Italian. He held that Riviera's text was consonant with the goals of "high magic" – the reshaping of the earthly human into a transcendental 'god man'. According to Evola, the alleged "timeless" Traditional science was able to come to lucid expression through this text, in spite of the "coverings" added to it to prevent accusations from the church. [31] Though Evola rejected Carl Jung's interpretation of alchemy, Jung described Evola's The Hermetic Tradition as a "magisterial account of Hermetic philosophy". [31] In Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition, the philosopher Glenn Alexander Magee favored Evola's interpretation over that of Jung's. [32] In 1988, a journal devoted to Hermetic thought published a section of Evola's book and described it as "Luciferian. [8]

Evola later confessed that he was not a Buddhist, and that his text on Buddhism was meant to balance his earlier work on the Hindu *tantras.*<sup>[25]</sup> Evola's interest in <u>tantra</u> was spurred on by correspondence with <u>John Woodroffe</u>.<sup>[33]</sup> Evola was attracted to the active aspect of tantra, and its claim to provide a practical means to spiritual experience, over the more "passive" approaches in other forms of Eastern spirituality.<sup>[34]</sup> In *Tantric Buddhism in East Asia*, Richard K. Payne, Dean of the Institute of Buddhist Studies, argued that Evola manipulated Tantra in the service of right wing violence, and that the emphasis on "power" in *The Yoga of Power* gave insight into his mentality.<sup>[35]</sup>

Evola advocated that "differentiated individuals" following the <u>Left-Hand Path</u> use dark violent sexual powers against the modern world. For Evola, these "virile heroes" are both generous and cruel, possess the ability to rule, and commit "Dionysian" acts that might be seen as conventionally immoral. For Evola, the Left Hand path embraces violence as a means of transgression: <sup>217</sup>

According to <u>A. James Gregor</u> Evola's definition of spirituality can be found in *Meditations on the Peaks*: "what has been successfully actualized and translated into a sense of superiority which is experienced inside by the soul, and a noble demeanor, which is expressed in the body." Goodrick-Clarke wrote that Evola's "rigorous <u>New Age</u> spirituality speaks directly to those who reject absolutely the leveling world of democracy, capitalism, multi-racialism and technology at the outset of the twenty-first century. Their acute sense of cultural chaos can find powerful relief in his ideal of total renewal." Thomas Sheehan wrote that to "read Evola is to take a trip through a weird and fascinating jungle of ancient mythologies, pseudo-ethnology, and transcendental mysticism that is enough to make any southern California consciousness-tripper feel quite at home.

#### Magical idealism

Thomas Sheehan wrote that "Evola's first philosophical works from the 'twenties were dedicated to reshaping neo-idealism from a philosophy of Absolute Spirit and Mind into a philosophy of the "absolute individual" and action." Accordingly, Evola developed the doctrine of 'magical idealism', which held that "the Ego must understand that everything that seems to have a reality independent of it is nothing but an illusion, caused by its own deficiency." For Evola, this ever-increasing unity with the "absolute individual" was consistent with unconstrained liberty, and therefore unconditional power. In his 1925 work *Essays on Magical Idealism*, Evola declared that "God does not exist. The Ego must create him by making itself divine.

According to Sheehan, Evola discovered the power of metaphysical mythology while developing his theories. This led to his advocacy of supra-rational intellectual intuition over discursive knowledge. In Evola's view, discursive knowledge separates man from Being. [37] Sheehan stated that this position is a theme in certain interpretations of Western philosophers such as Plato, Thomas Aquinas, and Martin Heideggerthat was exaggerated by Evola. [37] Evola would later write:

The truths that allow us to understand the world of Tradition are not those that can be "learned" or "discussed." They either are or are not. We can only *remember* them, and that happens when we are freed from the obstacles represented by various human constructions (chief among these are the results and methods of the authorized "researchers") and have awakened the capacity to *see* from the nonhuman viewpoint, which is the same as the Traditional viewpoint ... Traditional truths have always been held to be essentially*non-human*.<sup>[37]</sup>

Evola developed a doctrine of the "two natures": the natural world and the primordial "world of 'Being'". He believed that these "two natures" impose form and quality on lower matter and create a hierarchical "great chain of Being."<sup>[37]</sup> He understood "spiritual virility" as signifying orientation towards this postulated transcendent principle.<sup>[37]</sup> He held that the State should reflect this "ordering from above" and the consequent hierarchical differentiation of individuals according to their "organic preformation". By "organic preformation" he meant that which "gathers, preserves, and refines one's talents and qualifications for determinate functions.'<sup>[37]</sup>

#### **Ur Group**

Evola was introduced to esotericism by <u>Arturo Reghini</u>, who was an early supporter of fascism. Reghini sought to promote a "cultured magic" opposed to Christianity and introduced Evola to the traditionalist <u>René Guénon</u>. In 1927, Reghini and Evola, along with other Italian esotericists, founded the *Gruppo di Ur* ("<u>Ur</u> Group"). The purpose of this group was to attempt to bring the members' individual identities into such a superhuman state of power and awareness that they would be able to exert a magical influence on the world. The group employed techniques from Buddhist, Tantric, and rare Hermetic texts. They aimed to provide a "soul" to the burgeoning Fascist movement of the time through the revival of <u>ancient Roman religion</u>, and to influence the fascist regime through esotericism.

Articles on occultism from the Ur Group were later published in *Introduction to Magic*.<sup>[22]:89[33]</sup> Reghini's support of <u>Freemasonry</u> would however prove a bone of contention for Evola; accordingly, Evola broke with Reghini in 1928.<sup>[6]</sup> Reghini himself broke from Evola, accusing Evola of plagiarizing his thoughts in the book *Pagan Imperialism*<sup>[8]</sup> Evola, on the other hand, blamed Reghini for the premature publication of *Pagan Imperialism*<sup>[6]</sup> Evola's later work owed a considerable debt to René Guénon's text *Crisis of the Modern World*,<sup>[28]</sup> though he diverged from Guénon on the issue ofthe relationship between warriors and priests<sup>[6]</sup>

## Views on sex and gender roles

Julius Evola believed that the alleged higher qualities expected of a man of a particular race were not those expected of a woman of the same race. He held that "just relations between the sexes" involved women acknowledging their "inequality" with men.<sup>[6]</sup> In 1925, he wrote an article titled "La donna come cosa" ("Woman as Thing").<sup>[14]</sup> Evola later quoted Joseph de Maistre's statement that "Woman cannot be superior except as woman, but from the moment in which she desires to emulate man she is nothing but a monkey."<sup>[40]</sup> Evola believed that women's liberation was "the renunciation by woman of her right to be a woman".<sup>[41]</sup> A woman "could traditionally participate in the sacred hierarchical order only in a mediated fashion through her relationship with a man."<sup>[8]</sup> He

held, as a feature of his idealized gender relations, the Hindu <u>sati</u>, which for him was a form of sacrifice indicating women's respect for patriarchal traditions.<sup>[42]</sup> For the "pure, feminine" woman, "man is not perceived by her as a mere husband or lover, but as her lord."<sup>[9]</sup> Women would find their true identity in total subjugation to mel<sup>[8]</sup>

Evola regarded matriarchy and goddess religions as a symptom of decadence, and preferred a hypenasculine, warrior ethos.<sup>[43]</sup>

Evola was influenced by Hans Blüher; he was a proponent of the *Männerbund* concept as a model for his proposed ultra-fascist "Order". [8] Goodrick-Clarke noted the fundamental influence of Otto Weininger's misogynist book *Sex and Character* on Evola's dualism of male-female spirituality. According to Goodrich-Clarke, "Evola's celebration of virile spirituality was rooted in Weininger's work, which was widely translated by the end of the First World War." [15] Unlike Weininger, Evola believed that women needed to be conquered, not ignored. [8] Evola denounced homosexuality as "useless" for his purposes. He did not neglect sadomasochism, so long as sadism and masochism "are magnifications of an element potentially present in the deepest essence of eros." [8] Then, it would be possible to "extend, in a transcendental and perhapecstatic way, the possibilities of sex."

Evola held that women "played" with men, threatened their masculinity, and lured them into a "constrictive" grasp with their sexuality.<sup>[12]</sup> He wrote that "It should not be expected of women that they return to what they really are ... when men themselves retain only the semblance of true virility'<sup>[9]</sup> and lamented that "men instead of being in control of sex are controlled by it and wander about like drunkards"<sup>[7]</sup> He believed that in Tantra and in <a href="mailto:sex magic">sex magic</a>, in which he saw a strategy for aggression, he found the means to counter the "emasculated" West.<sup>[7][10]</sup> According to Annalisa Merelli, Evola "went so far as to justify rape" because he saw it "as a natural expression of male desire".<sup>[9]</sup> Evola also said that the "ritual violation of virgins",<sup>[8]</sup> and "whipping women" were a means of "consciousness raising",<sup>[8]</sup> so long as these practices were done to the intensity required to produce the proper "liminal psychic climate".<sup>[8]</sup> He wrote that "as a rule, nothing stirs a man more than feeling the woman utterly exhausted beneath his own hostile rapture.<sup>[9]</sup>

Evola translated Weininger's *Sex and Character* into Italian. Dissatisfied with simply translating Weininger's work, he wrote the text *Eros and the Mysteries of Love: The Metaphysics of Sex*, where his views on sexuality were dealt with at length.<sup>[8][6]</sup> Arthur Versluis described this text as Evola's "most interesting" work aside from *Revolt Against the Modern World*.<sup>[28]</sup> This book remains popular among many New Age adherents.<sup>[44]</sup>

#### Views on race

Evola's dissent from standard biological concepts of race had roots in his aristocratic elitism, since Nazi <u>völkisch</u> ideology inadequately separated aristocracy from "commoners.<sup>[8]</sup> According to Furlong, Evola developed "the law of the regression of castes" in <u>Revolt Against the Modern World</u> and other writings on racism from the 1930s and World War II period. In Evola's view "power and civilization have progressed from one to another of the four castes—sacred leaders, warrior nobility, bourgeoisie (economy, 'merchants') and slaves".<sup>[6]</sup> Furlong explains: "for Evola, the core of racial superiority lay in the spiritual qualities of the higher castes, which expressed themselves in physical as well as in cultural features, but were not determined by them. The law of the regression of castes places racism at the core of Evola's philosophy, since he sees an increasing predominance of lower races as directly expressed through modern mass democracies.<sup>[6]</sup>

In 1941, Evola's book *Synthesis of the Doctrine of Race*(Italian: *Sintesi di Dottrina della Razza*) was published by <u>Hoepli</u>. It provides an overview of his ideas concerning race and <u>eugenics</u>, introducing the concept of "spiritual racism", <sup>[45]</sup> and "esoteric-traditionalist racism".

Prior to the end of War, Evola had frequently used the term "Aryan" to mean the nobility, who in his view were imbued with traditional spirituality. Wolff notes that Evola seems to have stopped writing about race in 1945, but adds that the intellectual themes of Evola's writings were otherwise unchanged. Evola continued to write about elitism and his contempt for the weak. His "doctrine of the Aryan-Roman's uper-race was simply restated as a doctrine of the 'leaders of men' ... no longer with reference to the SS, but to the mediaeval Teutonic knights of the Knights Templar, already mentioned in Rivolta. [13]

Evola spoke of "inferior non-European races". Peter Merkl wrote that "Evola was never prepared to discount the value of blood altogether". Evola wrote: "a certain balanced consciousness and dignity of race can be considered healthy" in a time where "the exaltation of the negro and all the rest, anticolonialist psychosis and integrationist fanaticism [are] all parallel phenomena in the decline of Europe and the West." While not totally against race-mixing, in 1957, Evola wrote an article attributing the perceived acceleration of American decadence to the influence of "negroes" and the opposition to segregation. Furlong noted that this article is "among the most extreme in phraseology of any he wrote, and exhibits a degree of intolerance that leaves no doubt as to his deep prejudice against black people. [6]

#### **National mysticism**

For his spiritual interpretation of the different racial psychologies, Evola found the work of German race theorist Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss invaluable. Like Evola, Clauss believed that physical race and spiritual race could diverge as a consequence of <a href="miscegenation"><u>miscegenation</u></a> [12] Evola's racism included racism of the body, soul, and spirit, giving primacy to the latter factor, writing that "races only declined when their spirit failed. [15]

Like René Guénon, Evola believed that mankind is living in the Kali Yuga of the Hindu tradition—the Dark Age of unleashed, materialistic appetites. He argued that both Italian fascism and Nazism represented hope that the "celestial" Aryan race would be reconstituted. He drew on mythological accounts of super-races and their decline, particularly the Hyperboreans, and maintained that traces of Hyperborean influence could be felt in Indo-European man. He felt that Indo-European men had devolved from these higher mythological races. Gregor noted that several contemporary criticisms of Evola's theory were published: "In one of Fascism's most important theoretical journals, Evola's critic pointed out that many Nordic-Aryans, not to speak of Mediterranean Aryans, fail to demonstrate any Hyperborean properties. Instead, they make obvious their materialism, their sensuality, their indifference to loyalty and sacrifice, together with their consuming greed. How do they differ from 'inferior' races, and why should anyone wish, in any way to favor them?' [22]:106

Concerning the relationship between "spiritual racism" and biological racism, Evola put forth the following viewpoint, which Furlon described as pseudo-scientific:

The factor of "blood" or "race" has its importance, because it is not psychologically—in the brain or the opinions of the individual—but in the very deepest forces of life that traditions live and act as typical formative energies. Blood registers the effects of this action, and indeed offers through heredity, a matter that is already refined and pre-formed ...[6]

#### **Views on Jews**

Evola endorsed Otto Weininger's views on the Jews. Though Evola viewed Jews as corrosive and anti-traditional, he described Adolf Hitler's more fanatical anti-Semitism as a paranoid idée fixe that damaged the reputation of the Third Reich. [15] Evola's conception did not emphasize the Nazi racial conception of Jews as "representatives of a biological race"—in Evola's view the Jews were "the carriers of a world view ... a spirit [that] corresponded to the 'worst' and 'most decadent' features of modernity: democracy, egalitarianism and materialism. [13]

Evola argued that <u>The Protocols of the Elders of Zion</u>—whether or not a forgery—accurately reflect the conditions of modernity. He believed that the *Protocols* "contain the plan for an occult war, whose objective is the utter destruction, in the non-Jewish peoples, of all tradition, class, aristocracy, and hierarchy, and of all moral, religious, and spiritual values. He wrote the foreword to the second Italian edition of the *Protocols*, which was published by the Fascist Giovanni Preziosi in 1938. [49][50]

Following the murder of his friend <u>Corneliu Zelea Codreanu</u>, the leader of the Fascist Romanian <u>Iron Guard</u>, Evola expressed anticipation of a "talmudic, Israelite tyranny."<sup>[15]</sup> However, Evola believed that Jews had this "power" only because of European "decadence" in modernity<sup>[8]</sup> He also believed that one could be "Aryan", but have a "Jewish" soul, just as one could be "Jewish", but

have an "Aryan" soul.<sup>[51]</sup> In Evola's view Otto Weininger and <u>Carlo Michelstaedter</u> were Jews of "sufficiently heroic, ascetic, and sacral" character to fit the latter category. [22]:105

## **Fascism**

Evola developed a complex line of argument, closely related to the spiritual orientation of Traditionalist writers such as René Guénom and the political concerns of the European Authoritarian Right. [6] Evola's first published political work was an anti-fascist piece in 1925. In this work, Evola called Italy's fascist movement a "laughable revolution," based on empty sentiment and materialistic concerns. He applauded Mussolini's anti-bourgeois orientation and his goal of making Italian citizens into hardened warriors, but criticized Fascist populism, party politics, and elements of leftism that he saw in the fascist regime. Evola saw Mussolini's Fascist Party as possessing no cultural or spiritual foundation. He was passionate about infusing it with these elements in order to make it suitable for his ideal conception of Übermensch culture which, in Evola's view, characterized the imperial grandeur of pre-Christian Europe. [7] He expressed anti-nationalist sentiment, stating that to become "truly human," one would have to "overcome brotherly contamination" and "purge oneself" of the feeling that one is united with others "because of blood, affections, country or human destiny." He also opposed the futurism that Italian fascism was aligned with, along with the "plebeian" nature of the movement. [22]:86 Accordingly, Evola launched the journal La Torre (The Tower), to voice his concerns and advocate for a more elitist fascism. [12] Evola's ideas were poorly received by the fascist mainstream as it stood at the time of his writing.

#### Mussolini

Scholars disagree about why <u>Benito Mussolini</u> embraced racist ideology in 1938—some scholars have written that Mussolini was more motivated by political considerations than ideology when he introduced anti-semitic legislation in Italy.<sup>[52]</sup> Other scholars have rejected the argument that the racial ideology of Italian fascism could be attributed solely to Nazi influence.<sup>[53]</sup> A more recent interpretation is that Mussolini was frustrated by the slow pace of fascist transformation and, by 1938, had adopted increasingly radical measures including a racial ideology. Aaron Gillette has written that "Racism would become the key driving force behind the creation of the new fascist man, the *uomo fascista*."<sup>[54]</sup>

Mussolini read Evola's *Synthesis of the Doctrine of Race* in August 1941, and met with Evola to offer him his praise. Evola later recounted that Mussolini had found in his work a uniquely Roman form of Fascist <u>racism</u> distinct from that found in <u>Nazi Germany</u>. With Mussolini's backing, Evola launched the minor journal *Sangue e Spirito* (Blood and Spirit). While not always in agreement with German racial theorists, Evola traveled to Germany in February 1942 and obtained support for German collaboration on *Sangue e Spirito* from "key figures in the German racial hierarchy." Fascists appreciated the palingenetic value of Evola's "proof" "that



Julius Evola (1940)

the true representatives of the state and the culture of ancient Rome were people of the Nordic race."<sup>[12]</sup> Evola eventually became Italy's leading racial philosopher<sup>[14]</sup>

Evola blended <u>Sorelianism</u> with Mussolini's <u>eugenics</u> agenda. Evola has written that "The theory of the Aryo-Roman race and its corresponding myth could integrate the Roman idea proposed, in general, by fascism, as well as give a foundation to Mussolini's plan to use his state as a means to elevate the average Italian and to enucleate in him a new mat<sup>55</sup>.

In May, 1951, Evola was arrested and charged with promoting the revival of the Fascist Party, and of glorifying Fascism. Defending himself at trial, Evola stated that his work belonged to a long tradition of anti-democratic writers who certainly could be linked to fascism—at least fascism interpreted according to certain Evolian criteria—but who certainly could not be identified with the Fascist regime under Mussolini. Evola then declared that he was not a Fascist but a "superfascist". He was acquitted:

#### **Third Reich**

Finding Italian fascism too compromising, Evola began to seek recognition in Nazi Germany. Evola spent a considerable amount of time in Germany in 1937 and 1938, and gave a series of lectures to the German–Italian Society in 1938. Evola took issue with Nazi populism and biological materialism. SS authorities initially rejected Evola's ideas as supranational and aristocratic though he was better received by members of the conservative revolutionary movement. The Nazi Ahnenerbe reported that many considered his ideas to be pure "fantasy" which ignored "historical facts." Evola admired Heinrich Himmler, whom he knew personally, but he had reservations about Adolf Hitler because of Hitler's reliance onvölkisch nationalism. Himmler's Schutzstaffel ("SS") kept a dossier on Evola—dossier document AR-126 described his plans for a "Roman-Germanic Imperium" as "utopian" and described him as a "reactionary Roman," whose goal was an "insurrection of the old aristocracy against the modern world." The document recommended that the SS "stop his effectiveness in Germany" and provide him with no support, particularly because of his desire to create a "secret international order" [8][56][57]

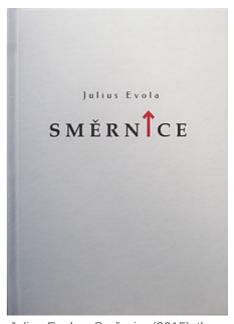
Despite this opposition, Evola was able to establish political connections with pan-Europeanist elements inside the Reich Main Security Office. [8] Evola subsequently ascended to the inner circles of Nazism as the influence of pan-European advocates overtook that of Völkisch proponents, due to military contingencies. [8] Evola wrote the article Reich and Imperium as Elements in the New European Order for the Nazi-backed journal European Review. [8] He spent World War II working for the Sicherheitsdienst [8] The Sicherheitsdienst bureau Amt VII, a Reich Main Security Office research library, helped Evola acquire arcane occult and Masonic texts. [58][25][8]

Italian Fascism went into decline when, in 1943, Mussolini was deposed and imprisoned. At this point, Evola fled to Germany with the help of the Sicherheitsdienst. Although not a member of the National Fascist Party, and despite his apparent problems with the Fascist regime, Evola was one of the first people to greet Mussolini when the latter was broken out of prison by Otto Skorzeny in 1943. Subsequently, Evola helped welcome Mussolini to Adolf Hitler's Wolf's Lair. Following this, Evola involved himself in Mussolini's Italian Social Republic. It was Evola's custom to walk around the city of Vienna during bombing raids in order to better "ponder his destiny". During one such raid, 1945, a shell fragment damaged his spinal cord and he became paralyzed from the waist down, remaining so for the rest of his life.

#### **Post-War**

After World War II, Evola continued his work in esotericism. He wrote a number of books and articles on sex magic and various other esoteric studies, including *The Yoga of Power: Tantra*, *Shakti*, *and the Secret Way* (1949), *Eros and the Mysteries of Love: The Metaphysics of Sex* (1958), and *Meditations on the Peaks: Mountain Climbing as Metaphor for the Spiritual Quest* (1974). He also wrote his two explicitly political books *Men Among the Ruins: Post-War Reflections of a Radical Traditionalist* (1953), *Ride the Tiger: A Survival Manual for the Aristocrats of the Soul* (1961), and his autobiography, *The Path of Cinnabar* (1963). He also expanded upon critiques of American civilization and materialism, as well as increasing American influence in Europe, collected in the posthumous anthology *Civiltà Americana* (1961)

Evola's occult ontology exerted influence over post-war neo-fascism. [12] In the post-war period, Evola's writing evoked interest among the neo-fascist right. [13] After 1945, Evola was considered the most important Italian theoretician of the conservative revolutionary movement [13] and the "chief ideologue" of Italy's post-war radical right. [14] According to Egil Asprem and Kennet Granholm, Evola's most significant post-war political texts are *Orientamenti* and *Men Among the Ruins* [62]



Julius Evola – *Směrnice* (2015), the Czech translation of his book *Orientamenti* (1950).

*Orientamenti* was a text against "national fascism"—instead, it advocated for a European Community modeled on the principles of the Waffen-SS.<sup>[8]</sup> The Italian Neo-fascist group Ordine Nuovo adopted *Orientamenti* as a guide for action in postwar Italy.<sup>[63]</sup> The European Liberation Front, who were affiliated with Francis Parker Yockey, called Evola "Italy's gretest living authoritarian philosopher" in the April 1951 issue of their publication Front fighter.<sup>[8]</sup>

During the post-war period, Evola attempted to dissociate himself from totalitarianism, preferring the concept of the "organic" state, which he put forth in his text *Men Among the Ruins*.<sup>[6]</sup> Evola sought to develop a strategy for the implementation of a "conservative revolution" in post World War II Europe.<sup>[6]</sup> He rejected nationalism, advocating instead for a European *Imperium*, which could take various forms according to local conditions, but should be "organic, hierarchical, anti-democratic, and anti-individual.'<sup>[6]</sup> Evola endorsed Francis Parker Yockey's neo-fascist manifesto *Imperium*, but disagreed with it because he believed that Yockey had a "superficial" understanding of what was immediately possible.<sup>[8]</sup> Evola believed that his conception of neo-fascist Europe could best be implemented by an elite of "superior" men who operated outside normal politic.<sup>[8]</sup>

Giuliano Salierni was an activist in the neo-Fascist <u>Italian Social Movement</u>during the early 1950s. He later recalled Evola's calls to violence. Roberto Fiore and his colleagues in the early 1980s helped the <u>National Front</u>'s "Political Soldiers" forge a militant elitist philosophy based on Evola's "most militant tract", *The Aryan Doctrine of Battle and Victory. The Aryan Doctrine* called for a "Great Holy War" that would be fought for spiritual renewal and fought in parallel to the physical "Little Holy War" against perceived enemies. Wolff attributes extreme-right terrorist actions in Italy in the 1970s and 1980s to the influence of Julius Evola.

Thomas Sheehan has argued that Evola's work is essential reading for those seeking to understand <u>Eurofascism</u>, in the same way that knowledge of the writings of Karl Marx is necessary for those seeking to understand Communist action [36]

## **Political influence**

The Italian Fascist leader Benito Mussolini, the Nazi Grail seeker Otto Rahn, and the Romanian fascist sympathizer and religious historian Mircea Eliade admired Julius Evola. [17][58][13][8] After World War II, Evola's writings continued to influence many European far-right political, racist and neo-fascist movements. He is widely translated in French, Spanish, partly in German, and mostly in Hungarian (the largest number of his translated works [see <http://www.tradicio.org/bibliographia.pdf> pp. 130–154]). Amongst those he has influenced are the American Blackshirts Party, the "esoteric Hitlerist" Miguel Serrano, [8] Savitri Devi, GRECE, the Movimento sociale italiano (MSI), Gaston Armand Amaudruz's Nouvel Ordre Européen, Pino Rauti's Ordine Nuovo, Troy Southgate, Alain de Benoist, Michael Moynihan, Giorgio Freda, the Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari (Armed Revolutionary Nuclei), Eduard Limonov, Forza Nuova, CasaPound Italia, Tricolor Flame and the Conservative People's Party of Estonia. Giorgio Almirante referred to him as "our Marcuse—only better." [36] According to one leader of the neofascist "black terrorist" Ordine Nuovo, "Our work since 1953 has been to transpose Evola's teachings into direct political action. [64] The now defunct French fascist group Troisième Voie was also inspired by Evola [65] Jonathan Bowden, English political activist and chairman of the far right, spoke highly of Evola and his ideas and gave lectures on his philosophy

Evola has also influenced the alt-right movement, which also cites Oswald Spengler, H.L Mencken, Sam Francis, and Pat Buchanan as influences. Additionally, Evola has influenced Vladimir Putin advisor Aleksander Dugin Aleksander

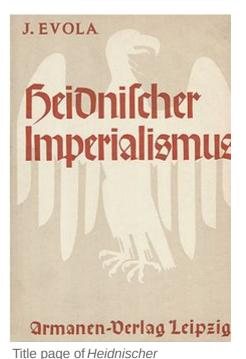
Donald Trump's former chief adviser Steve Bannon noted Evola's influence on the Eurasianism movement; [69][70] According to Joshua Green's book *Devil's Bargain*, Evola's *Revolt Against the Modern World* had initially drawn Bannon's interest to the ideas of the Traditionalist School. Alt-right leader Richard B. Spencer said that Bannon's awareness of Evola "means a tremendous amount". Some members of the alt-right expressed hope that Bannon might have been open to Evola's ideas, and that through Bannon, Evola's ideas could become influential. According to multiple historians cited by *The Atlantic*, this is contradictory, as Bannon cited Evola in defense of the "Judeo-Christian west", while Evola hated and opposed Judaism and Jews, Christianity in general, Anglo-Saxon Protestantism specifically, and the culture of the United States. In a leaked email sent by Bannon in March 2016, he told Milo Yiannopoulos, "I do appreciate any piece that mentions Evola.

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## See also

- José López Rega also known as Argentine Evola
- Occultism and the far right
- Traditionalist School
- Hans Thomas Hakl



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# Julius Evola

Baron Giulio Cesare Andrea Evola. known to the English-speaking world as **Julius Evola** (1898 - 1974), was an Italian political philosopher. His philosophy is "considered one of the most radically and consistently antiegalitarian, antiliberal, antidemocratic, and antipopular systems in the 20<sup>th</sup> century",<sup>[1]</sup> and as such, he is often considered an important pillar of neo-fascist thought, though Evola himself opposed fascism in Italy (he was actually disliked by the fascists at the time) and instead preferred to call himself a radical traditionalist. The alt-right and neoreactionary movements, as well as the more intellectual end of neo-Nazism. are big fans.

A prolific writer, his chief works are Revolt Against the Modern World<sup>W</sup> (1934), Men Among the Ruins<sup>W</sup> (1953), and Ride the Tiger<sup>W</sup> (1961).

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## Beliefs [edit]

He was an eclectic mystic in the traditions of Tantra, hermeticism, and

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ritual magic, demonstrating a lifelong interest in the occult and Eastern religions, from his 1929 *Introduction to Magic: Rituals and Practical Techniques for the Magus*<sup>W</sup> to 1972's *Taoism: The Magic, the Mysticism.*<sup>W</sup>

#### Racialism [edit]

See the main article on this topic: Racialism

He borrowed heavily from Helena Blavatsky's Theosophical notion of "root races", adopting a curious notion of evolution running in reverse, in which the ancient world was filled with enlightened beings such as are imagined to have dwelled in Atlantis:

Our starting point will be not the modern theory of evolution but the traditional doctrine of involution. We do not believe the man is derived from the ape by evolution. We believe that the ape is derived from man by involution. We agree with Joseph De Maistre that savage peoples are not primitive peoples, in the sense of original peoples, but rather the degenerating remains of more ancient races that have disappeared.

—The Metaphysics of Sex, 1983, pps. 9-10.)

"

According to Joscelyn Godwin, "the basic outlines of Evola's prehistory resemble those of Theosophy, with Lemurian, Atlantean, and Aryan root-races succeeding each other, and a pole-shift marking the transition from one epoch to another". [2] The most valuable race to belong to is the Nordic European race, because they were descended from the Arctic paradise of the Hyperboreans.

#### The virtue of war [edit]

Evola believed that we were now living in the *Kali Yuga*, a dark age of materialism and spiritual degeneracy. As usual, his prescription involved a "spiritual rebirth" through submission to unreasoning tradition. The Italian philosopher of history Giambattista Vico provided Evola with the concepts of primordial heroic law, "natural heroic rights" and the meaning of the Indo-European Latin term  $vir^{[3]}$  as indicative of "wisdom, priesthood and kingship."

Matriarchy and women's rights were evidence of regression, while patriarchy is a progressive force. [4]

Given this, it is unsurprising that heromanticized war. In Metaphysics of War, he held that the political goals of war are mostly irrelevant; what made war such a good thing is that it aided the warrior in his path of spiritual self-realization. According to him, pacifism was materialistic, and made people comfortable and weak.

#### Sex: hold on to your semen [edit]

See the main article on this topic: Sex

Evola was a devotee of Tantric and similar sorts of sex mysticism. It's important for men to hold on to their semen; this re-energizes them and moves them towards self-mastery. "Virya<sup>[5]</sup>, or spiritual manhood, if lost or wasted results in death and if withheld and conserved leads to life"."<sup>[6]</sup> He approved of homosexuality in the context of Platonic relationships, while saying that actual same-sex acts were materialistic and lead to a fall from grace.

## Politics [edit]

Evola's politics flow from his mystical attitudes towards manliness and spirituality; he held that politics should be an act of spiritual discipline, and should look upward and beyond the self. He opposed democracy as a sort of modern "demagogic" politics. Its materialism is a result of the inversion of the



Conan the Barbarian, the kind of guy who ought to be in charge. John Milius would be proud. Art by Harold S. De Lay for *Weird Tales*.

natural order of things, in which disciplined warriors are in charge. He admired the Hindu caste system, Plato's *Republic*, and the medieval European social order as systems where people who concerned themselves with merely materialistic stuff like food and other commodities were subjugated to their betters in spirituality and prowess.

Like Oswald Spengler, he believed that decadent times had come when commercial interests became more powerful than religious or military interests in society. The current order, instead, places weak and materialistic merchants and businesspeople on top rather than the warriors or priests. He writes, "Opposite to the 'soldier' was the type of the warrior and the member of the feudal aristocracy; the caste to which this type belonged was the central nucleus in a corresponding social organization. This caste was not at the service of the bourgeois class but rather ruled over it, since the class that was protected depended on those who had the right to bear arms."<sup>[7]</sup>

Evola was also a fierceanti-Semite. In many of his writings, he blamed the Jews for fostering the rise of the modern capitalist society and the spread of materialist values, and felt that anti-Semitism was a necessary part of any "racial rebirth". He wrote an introduction to an Italian translation of *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, saying that he wasn't concerned with whether the actual text was authentic or a fabrication — to him, the essence of what it was saying was true, and that was all that mattered.

#### **Relationship with fascism** [edit]

See the main article on this topic: Fascism

While Evola's writings were hugely influential among post-World War II fascist sympathizers, Evola himself opposed fascism on a number of points. He never belonged to any capital-F Fascist parties, and in fact, he and the Fascist Italian government had several bitter disagreements that saw some of his work censored. Evola's anti-fascism was, however, not because of its xenophobic and warlike tendencies, but because he felt it was not spiritual, ascetic, or enlightened enough to fulfill the purpose of restoring a warrior wonderland. In his view, fascism was too preoccupied with mass movement politics, petty nationalism, and demagoguery to serve as a true font for such restoration, and that, far from being a traditionalist alternative to liberal democracy and capitalism, it copied most of their qualities and merely repackaged the bourgeois values that it purported to oppose. In short, Evola was a guy who thought that the fascists didn't go far enough.[8] He did, however, see some glimmer of hope in fascism's racial politics and militarism, and as such, he attempted to steer Fascist Italy in a direction more in line with his radical traditionalist views. He later concluded that Benito Mussolini's failure to adopt his ideas was largely responsible for the failure of the fascist "revolution".

Whatever his disagreements with Mussolini and Italian fascists, Evola proved far more amenable to Nazi Germany. He was a huge fan of SS chief Heinrich Himmler, whom he met in person<sup>[9]</sup> and actively worked for the *Sicherheitsdienst*, the intelligence agency of the SS, during World War II.<sup>[10]</sup> During his trial in 1951, Evola

denied being a fascist and instead referred to himself as... a "superfascist." $^{[11]}$ 

Even though many of Evola's more political writings were censored in Fascist Italy, Mussolini did read his book *Sintesi di Dottrina della Razza* (*Synthesis of the Doctrine of Race*), personally meeting with Evola to praise it for presenting a uniquely Italian/Roman form of racialism distinct from that promoted byNazi Germany. With Mussolini's backing, in 1941 Evola published a minor journal called *Sangue e Spirito* (*Blood and Spirit*) that further expounded upon such views. Evola also regarded the *Waffen-SS* as a model "racial elite," with its hierarchy, its rituals, its belief in "transcending" humanity, and its ethical requirements, writing that "[w]e are inclined to the opinion that we can see the nucleus of an Order in the higher sense of tradition in the 'Black Corps.'"[12]

In 1951, the Italian government put Evola on trial on a charge of attempting to revive fascism. Evola was acquitted, since he was never a member of any fascist party or movement, and his actual writings were critical of fascism. The fact that he criticized fascism from a position even further to the right seems to have escaped them.

## External links [edit]

- Julius Evola, Ride the Tiger
- Joscelyn Godwin, Julius Evola: Theosophy and Beyond

## References [edit]

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- 3. ↑ "Man" as in 'male person'. In Latin this contrasts with *homo*, "human being"; hence English "virile", "virtue", etc.
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- 5. ↑ Sanskrit; cognate with Latin *vir*.
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