CHAPTER 22

Social, Cultural, and Economic Challenges in the West through the Present

THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY MOVEMENT OF PEOPLES

- World War II created a terrible refugee problem as millions of people were displaced from their homes. Between 1945 and 1960, half a million Europeans left Europe each year.

AP® KEY CONCEPTS
4.4 Demographic changes, economic growth, total war, disruptions of traditional social patterns, and competing definitions of freedom and justice altered the experiences of everyday life.
   I. The twentieth century was characterized by large-scale suffering brought on by warfare and genocide as well as tremendous improvements in the standard of living.
   II. The lives of women were defined by family and work responsibilities, economic changes, and feminism.
   III. New voices gained prominence in political, intellectual, and social discourse.

TOWARD A WELFARE STATE

- The emergence of a modern European welfare state evolved after the economic dislocation, unemployment, rise of authoritarian states, and the devastating effects of World War II. After World War II, the concept that social insurance against risks should be available to all citizens came into being. Britain created the first welfare state, with universal health coverage for all citizens.
- Western European attitudes toward providing social security and coverage to their citizens grew in response to communist promises (largely unfounded) of the same.

AP® KEY CONCEPTS
4.2 The stresses of economic collapse and total war engendered internal conflicts within European states and created conflicting conceptions of the relationship between the individual and the state, as demonstrated in the ideological battle among liberal democracy, communism, and fascism.
   IV. Postwar economic growth supported an increase in welfare benefits; however, subsequent economic stagnation led to criticism and limitation of the welfare state.

NEW PATTERNS IN THE WORK AND EXPECTATIONS OF WOMEN

- Women in the years since World War II have made important gains in the workplace. More women are in managerial positions and have better opportunities, but gender inequality remains a problem.
AP® Key Concepts

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Transformations in Knowledge and Culture

- Many intellectuals in the 1930s viewed communism as a vehicle for protecting humane values. Some did not know of Stalin’s terror; others simply ignored it or defended it. Four events that were crucial to the transformation of intellectual thought with regard to communism: the Spanish Civil War, the great public purge trials of the 1930s, the Nazi-Soviet pact, and the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956.
- Many intellectuals remained fans of Marxism, which they distinguished from the agenda of the Communist Party. Another powerful intellectual trend during this time was existentialism, which had its roots in the thinking of Søren Kierkegaard and Frederick Nietzsche.
- The university populations in Europe expanded in the postwar years, with higher education available to women throughout Europe.
- In the postwar years, the American military presence in Europe, tourism, and student exchanges have all led to the Americanization of Europe.

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Art Since World War II

- Broadly speaking, the influence of the Cold War was mirrored in artistic developments.
- Socialist realism dominated in the Soviet Union, focusing on the heroic.
- In Western Europe and the United States, abstract styles continued to dominate.

AP Key Concepts

4.3 During the twentieth century, diverse intellectual and cultural movements questioned the existence of objective knowledge, the ability of reason to arrive at truth, and the role of religion in determining moral standards.

I. The widely held belief in progress characteristic of much of nineteenth-century thought began to break down before World War I; the experience of war intensified a sense of anxiety that permeated many facets of thought and culture, giving way by the century’s end to a plurality of intellectual frameworks.

IV. During the twentieth century, the arts were defined by experimentation, self-expression, subjectivity, and the increasing influence of the United States in both elite and popular culture.

The Christian Heritage

- Christianity continues to struggle against the forces of secularization in contemporary society. Strands of neo-orthodoxy and liberalism are evident in contemporary Christianity.
The Roman Catholic Church has remained generally traditionalist, but some popes, such as John XXIII attempted sweeping reforms.

**AP® Key Concepts**

4.3 During the twentieth century, diverse intellectual and cultural movements questioned the existence of objective knowledge, the ability of reason to arrive at truth, and the role of religion in determining moral standards.

III. Organized religion continued to play a role in European social and cultural life, despite the challenges of military and ideological conflict, modern secularism, and rapid social changes.

**Late Twentieth-Century Technology: The Arrival of the Computer**

- The importance of the computer in the twentieth century cannot be underestimated. It altered forever the way business was done, and it effectively brought the world closer together, with new means of technological communication like email and the Internet.

**AP® Key Concepts**

4.3 During the twentieth century, diverse intellectual and cultural movements questioned the existence of objective knowledge, the ability of reason to arrive at truth, and the role of religion in determining moral standards.

II. Science and technology yielded impressive material benefits but also caused immense destruction and posed challenges to objective knowledge.

**The Challenges of European Unification**

- Much of Western Europe’s political power has come from its postwar cooperation.
- In 1957, the members of this group agreed to form a new organization, called the European Economic Community (EEC), or Common Market. This group hoped to achieve the elimination of tariffs, a free flow of capital and labor, and similar benefits in their countries.
- In 1988, the leaders of the EEC had decided that by 1992 the EEC was to be a free-trade zone with no trade barriers or restrictive trade policies. In 1991, the Treaty of Maastricht proposed a series of steps leading to a unified European currency (the Euro) and a strong central bank. In 1993, the EEC was renamed the European Union. The euro was launched in 1999.
- In 2004, the proposed European Constitution triggered controversy. Opposition to the constitution represented the first major challenge to the steady trend of unification.

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