Focus Question: What changes did Western society and culture experience after World War I?

As you read this section in your textbook, complete the concept web below to identify supporting details related to “Changes to Society” and “Cultural Changes.”
In reaction to World War I, society and culture in the United States and elsewhere underwent rapid changes. During the 1920s, new technologies helped create a mass culture, and to connect people around the world. American culture was characterized by a greater freedom and willingness to experiment. One symbol of this new age was jazz, with its original sound and improvisations, and it gave the age its name—the Jazz Age. Another symbol was the liberated young woman called the flapper. Labor-saving devices freed women from household chores. In this new era of emancipation, women pursued careers. Not everyone approved of the freer lifestyle of the Jazz Age, however. For example, Prohibition was meant to keep people from the negative effects of drinking. Instead, it brought about organized crime and speakeasies.

New literature reflected a powerful disgust with war. To some postwar writers, the war symbolized the moral breakdown of Western civilization. Other writers experimented with stream of consciousness. In the cultural movement called the Harlem Renaissance, African American artists and writers expressed pride in their culture and explored their experiences in their work.

New scientific discoveries challenged long-held ideas. Marie Curie and others found that atoms of certain elements spontaneously release charged particles. Albert Einstein argued that measurements of space and time are not absolute. Italian physicist Enrico Fermi discovered atomic fission. A Scottish scientist, Alexander Fleming, discovered penicillin, a nontoxic mold that killed bacteria. It paved the way for the development of antibiotics to treat infections. Sigmund Freud pioneered psychoanalysis, a method of studying how the mind works and treating mental illness.

In the early 1900s, many Western artists rejected traditional styles that tried to reproduce the real world. For example, Vasily Kandinsky’s work was called abstract. It was composed only of lines, colors, and shapes—sometimes with no visually recognizable subject. Dada artists rejected tradition and believed that there was no sense or truth in the world. Another movement, surrealism, tried to portray the workings of the unconscious mind. In architecture, Bauhaus buildings based on form and function featured glass, steel, and concrete, but little ornamentation.

**Review Questions**

1. What was the impact of new technologies in the 1920s?

2. How did Western artists reject traditional styles?
Focus Question: What political and economic challenges did the leading democracies face in the 1920s and 1930s?

A. As you read “Politics in the Postwar World,” “Postwar Foreign Policy,” and “Postwar Economics,” complete the chart below to identify the main ideas under each heading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Foreign Policy</th>
<th>Economics</th>
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B. As you read “The Great Depression,” and “The Democracies React to the Depression,” complete the chart below to identify the main ideas on the causes, effects, and reactions related to the Great Depression.

The Great Depression

- Causes
- Effects
- Reactions

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In 1919, after World War I, Britain, France, and the United States appeared powerful. However, postwar Europe faced grave problems. The most pressing issues were finding jobs for veterans and rebuilding war-ravaged lands. These problems made radical ideas more popular. Britain had to deal with growing socialism and the “Irish question.” Fear of radicals set off a “Red Scare” in the United States.

The three democracies also faced international issues. Concern about a strong Germany led France to build the Maginot Line and insist on strict enforcement of the Versailles treaty. Many nations signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact promising to “renounce war as an instrument of national policy.” In this optimistic spirit, the great powers pursued disarmament. Unfortunately, neither the Kellogg-Briand Pact nor the League of Nations had the power to stop aggression. Ambitious dictators in Europe noted this weakness.

The war affected economies all over the world. Both Britain and France owed huge war debts to the United States and relied on reparation payments from Germany to pay their loans. Britain was deeply in debt, with high unemployment and low wages. In 1926, a general strike lasted nine days and involved three million workers. On the other hand, the French economy recovered fairly quickly, and the United States emerged as the world’s top economic power. In the affluent 1920s, middle-class Americans enjoyed the benefits of capitalism, buying cars, radios, and refrigerators.

However, better technologies allowed factories to make more products faster, leading to overproduction in the United States. Factories then cut back, and many workers lost their jobs. A crisis in finance led the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates. This made people even more nervous about the economy. In the autumn of 1929, financial panic set in. Stock prices crashed. The United States economy entered the Great Depression, which soon spread around the world.

Governments searched for solutions. In the United States, President Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced the programs of the New Deal. Although the New Deal failed to end the Depression, it did ease much suffering. However, as the Depression wore on, it created fertile ground for extremists.

Review Questions
1. After the war, what international agreement was intended to ensure peace?

2. What economic problems did Britain face after the war?
**Focus Question:** How and why did fascism rise in Italy?

A. As you read “Mussolini’s Rise to Power” and Mussolini’s Rule,” complete the flowchart below as you identify the main ideas under each heading.

- **Dissatisfaction and Unrest**
  - 
  - 
  - 

- **Mussolini Takes Power**
  - 
  - 
  - 

- **Mussolini Changes Italy**
  - 
  - 

B. As you read “The Nature of Fascism,” use the table below to identify the main ideas for each heading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Is Fascism?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Values</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Characteristics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Differences from Communism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Similarities to Communism</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After World War I, Italian nationalists were outraged when Italy received just some of the territories promised by the Allies. Chaos ensued as peasants seized land, workers went on strike, veterans faced unemployment, trade declined, and taxes rose. The government could not end the crisis. Into this turmoil stepped Benito Mussolini, the organizer of the Fascist party. Mussolini’s supporters, the Black Shirts, rejected democratic methods and favored violence for solving problems. In the 1922 March on Rome, tens of thousands of Fascists swarmed the capital. Fearing civil war, the king asked Mussolini to form a government as prime minister.

Mussolini soon suppressed rival parties, muzzled the press, rigged elections, and replaced elected officials with Fascists. Critics were thrown into prison, forced into exile, or murdered. Secret police and propaganda bolstered the regime. In 1929, Mussolini also received support from the pope. Mussolini brought the economy under state control, but basically preserved capitalism. His system favored the upper class and industry leaders. Workers were not allowed to strike, and their wages were kept low. In Mussolini’s new system, loyalty to the state replaced conflicting individual goals. “Believe! Obey! Fight!” loudspeakers blared and posters proclaimed. Fascist youth groups marched in parades chanting slogans.

Mussolini built the first modern totalitarian state. In this form of government, a one-party dictatorship attempts to control every aspect of the lives of its citizens. Today, we usually use the term fascism to describe the underlying ideology of any centralized, authoritarian governmental system that is not communist. Fascism is rooted in extreme nationalism. Fascists believe in action, violence, discipline, and blind loyalty to the state. They praise warfare. They are antidemocratic, rejecting equality and liberty. Fascists oppose communists on important issues. Communists favor international action and the creation of a classless society. Fascists are nationalists who support a society with defined classes. Both base their power on blind devotion to a leader or the state. Both flourish during economic hard times.

Fascism appealed to Italians because it restored national pride, provided stability, and ended the political feuding that had paralyzed democracy in Italy.

**Review Questions**

1. What was the result of the March on Rome?

2. How are communism and fascism similar?
Focus Question: How did Stalin transform the Soviet Union into a totalitarian state?

As you read this section in your textbook, complete the chart below by identifying the main ideas about the Soviet Union under Stalin for each heading.
Under Joseph Stalin, the Soviet Union grew into a totalitarian state, controlling all aspects of life, including agriculture, culture, art, and religion. The state also developed a command economy, in which it made all economic decisions. Stalin’s five-year plans set high production goals. Despite great progress in some sectors, products such as clothing, cars, and refrigerators were scarce. Stalin forced changes in agriculture, too. He wanted peasants to farm on either state-owned farms or collectives, large farms owned and operated by groups of peasants. Some peasants balked. Stalin believed that the kulaks were behind the resistance. He took their land and sent them to labor camps, where many died. In 1932, Stalin’s policies led to a famine that caused millions to starve.

The ruling Communist party used secret police, torture, and bloody purges to force people to obey. Those who opposed Stalin were rounded up and sent to the Gulag, a system of brutal labor camps. Fearing that rival party leaders were plotting against him, Stalin launched the Great Purge in 1934. Among the victims of this and other purges were some of the brightest and most talented people in the country.

Stalin demanded that artists and writers create works in a style called socialist realism. If they refused to conform to government expectations, they faced persecution. Another way Stalin controlled cultural life was to promote russification. The goal was to force people of non-Russian nationalities to become more Russian. The official Communist party belief in atheism led to the cruel treatment of religious leaders.

The Communists destroyed the old social order. Instead of creating a society of equals, Communist party members became the heads of society. Still, under communism most people enjoyed free medical care, day care for children, cheaper housing, and public recreation. Women had equal rights by law.

Soviet leaders had two foreign policy goals. They hoped to spread world revolution through the Comintern, or Communist International. At the same time, they wanted to ensure their nation’s security by winning the support of other countries. These contradictory goals caused Western powers to mistrust the Soviet Union.

Review Questions
1. How did Stalin’s changes in agriculture lead to a famine?

2. How did the Communist party and Stalin force people to obey?
Focus Question: How did Hitler and the Nazi Party establish and maintain a totalitarian government in Germany?

As you read this section in your textbook, complete the flowchart below to identify the main ideas about Hitler and the rise of Nazi Germany for each heading.
READING CHECK

What was the purpose of the Nuremberg Laws?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word regime mean in the underlined sentence? Circle the words in the sentence that refer to the phrase “the new regime.” What do you think is the meaning of regime?

READING SKILL

Identify Main Ideas Reread the last paragraph in the Summary. Write the main idea of that paragraph on the lines below.

Review Questions

1. What were the basic features of the Weimar constitution?

2. Why did many Germans support Hitler?