

CHAPTER 35

AN AGE OF ANXIETY

INTRODUCTION

The decades between the two world wars were neither peaceful nor prosperous. These were anxious, uncertain years. Old certainties were shaken; the liberal ideals of the Enlightenment lost their potency. After 1929, a global depression intensified the social and political unrest, and new extreme ideologies gained momentum. Common elements of this “age of anxiety” include

- Disillusionment. The harsh realities of trench warfare shattered the illusions of many young intellectuals. The culture of the 1920s is characterized by uncertainty and experimentation. Old truths in science, art, and religion were challenged. Nothing seemed certain anymore.
- Political extremism. The momentum of the nineteenth century had been toward democracy and greater inclusion of the poor, minorities, and finally women in the political process. In desperate times, many found democracy too inefficient and sought simple solutions in charismatic dictators.
- Extreme nationalism. The Paris peace settlements both aroused and disappointed nationalist hopes, especially in Italy, Japan, and Germany. Nationalists in these countries were frustrated at being denied territory considered rightly theirs. These frustrations were channeled into militaristic parties: the Fascists and the Nazis.
- The communist alternative. The world watched, in horror and fascination, as the communist experiment unfolded in the Soviet Union. In spite of appalling losses through civil war, forced collectivization, and political purges, the Soviet Union did appear to deliver a basic living to all citizens. With capitalist nations slumped in depression, this was an intriguing alternative. Communism was violently attacked in Italy and Germany.

OUTLINE

I. Probing cultural frontiers

A. Postwar pessimism

1. The “lost generation”
 - a) Term used to describe pessimism of U.S. and European thinkers after the war
 - b) Postwar poetry and fiction reflected disillusionment with Western culture
 - c) Scholars—Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee—lamented decline of the West
2. Religious thought reflected uncertainty and pessimism
 - a) Karl Barth attacked liberal Christian theology embracing idea of progress
 - b) Older concepts of original sin and human depravity were revived
3. Attacks on the ideal of progress

- a) Science tarnished by the technological horrors of World War I
 - b) Most Western societies granted suffrage to all men and women
 - c) Many intellectuals disillusioned with democracy
 - d) Conservatives decried “the rule of inferiors”
- B. Revolutions in physics and psychology
- 1. Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity, 1906
 - a) Space and time relative to the person measuring them
 - b) Implication: reality or truth merely a set of mental constructions
 - 2. Werner Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, 1927
 - a) Impossible to state the position and velocity of a subatomic particle at same time
 - b) Atomic universe indeterminate; can only speak of probabilities
 - c) Challenged long-held assumptions about truth, cause and effect
 - 3. Freud’s psychoanalytic theory, 1896
 - a) Sought psychological causes of mental illness
 - b) Conflict between conscious and unconscious mental processes
 - c) Sexual repression frequent cause of neuroses
 - d) Freud’s ideas shaped psychiatric profession, influenced literature and arts
- C. Experimentation in art and architecture
- 1. Modern painting: when photography can reproduce nature, why should painting?
 - a) Painters like Pablo Picasso sought freedom of expression, emotional expression
 - b) Borrowed from artistic traditions of Asia, Pacific, and Africa
 - c) No widely accepted standards of good or bad art
 - 2. Modern architecture: the Bauhaus school started in Germany, 1920
 - a) An international style for twentieth-century urban buildings
 - (1) Walter Gropius: form should follow function; combined engineering and art
 - (2) Simple shapes, steel frames, and walls of glass
 - b) International style dominated urban landscapes well after 1930s

II. Global depression

- A. The Great Depression
- 1. The weaknesses of global economy
 - a) The tangled financial relationships: Germany and Austria borrowed money from United States, used it to pay reparations to Allies, who used the money to pay war debt to United States
 - b) In 1928 U.S. lenders withdrew capital from Europe; financial system strained

- c) Industrial innovations reduced demand for raw materials—rubber, coal, cotton
 - d) Postwar agriculture depressed in Europe, United States, Canada, Argentina, and Australia
2. The crash of 1929
 - a) U.S. economic boom prompted many to speculate, invest beyond their means
 - b) Black Thursday (24 October 1929): stock prices dropped, investors lost life savings
 - c) Lenders called in loans, forcing investors to keep selling
 3. Economic contraction in U.S. economy and the world
 - a) Overproduction and reduced consumer demand
 - b) Widespread business failure and unemployment
 - c) By 1932 U.S. industrial production and national income dropped by half
 4. Industrial economies felt banking crisis, unemployment
 - a) Germany and Japan unable to sell manufactured goods to purchase fuel and food
 - b) Germany by 1932: 35 percent unemployment, 50 percent decrease in industrial production
 - c) European industrial states and Japan unable to sell to United States because of tariffs
 5. Economic nationalism favored over international cooperation
 - a) High tariffs, import quotas, and prohibitions to promote economic self-sufficiency
 - b) U.S. trade restrictions provoked retaliation by other nations
 - c) International trade dropped 66 percent between 1929 and 1932
- B. Despair and government action
1. Government policies to reduce female employment, especially of married women
 2. Great Depression caused enormous personal suffering
 - a) Millions struggled for food, clothing, and shelter
 - b) Marriage and birthrates declined, suicide increased
 - c) Intensified social divisions and class hatreds
 - d) John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* criticized U.S. policy of "planned scarcity"
- C. Economic experimentation
1. John M. Keynes challenged classical economic theory
 - a) Classic theory: capitalism self-correcting, operated best if unregulated
 - b) Keynes argued the depression was a problem of inadequate demand, not supply

- c) Governments should play active role in stimulating economy, consumer demand
- 2. The New Deal of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt paralleled Keynes's ideas
 - a) After 1932, protected banking system, massive public works, farm subsidies
 - b) Also, legislation established minimum wage, social security, workers' unions
 - c) Military spending in WWII ultimately ended the depression in the United States

III. Challenges to the liberal order

A. Communism in Russia

- 1. Civil war, 1918–1920, between Bolsheviks and anticommunist forces, or the Whites
 - a) The Red Terror: secret police arrested and killed two hundred thousand suspected Whites
 - b) Bolsheviks executed Tsar Nicholas II and his entire family, June 1918
 - c) Despite some foreign support, the Whites were defeated by Red Army in 1920
 - d) Perhaps ten million died during civil war
- 2. Lenin's "war communism" transformed economy
 - a) Policy included nationalizing banks, industry, and church holdings
 - b) Private trade abolished; peasants reduced production
 - c) By 1920, industrial output at one-tenth, agricultural at half prewar levels
- 3. Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP), 1921
 - a) Reversed war communism, restored market economy
 - b) Returned small-scale industries to private ownership
 - c) Allowed peasants to sell their surplus at free market
 - d) Programs of electrification and technical schools were carried out
 - e) Lenin died, 1924; bitter power struggle followed
- 4. Joseph Stalin (1879–1953)
 - a) "Man of steel": Georgian by birth, Russian nationalist by conviction
 - b) Stalin favored "socialism in one country," not international socialism
 - c) Eliminated all rivals; by 1928, unchallenged dictator of Soviet Union
- 5. First Five-Year Plan, 1928–1932, replaced Lenin's NEP
 - a) Set production quotas, central state planning of entire economy
 - b) Emphasized heavy industry at expense of consumer goods
- 6. Collectivization of agriculture
 - a) States seized private farms, created large collective farms
 - b) Believed to be more productive, to feed industrial workers
 - c) Collectivization strongly resisted by peasants, especially the wealthier *kulaks*

- d) Half of farms collectivized by 1931; three million peasants killed or starved
- 7. As an alternative to capitalism during the depression, Soviet Union offered full employment and cheap housing and food, but few luxuries or consumer goods
- 8. The Great Purge, 1935–1938
 - a) Ruthless policy of collectivization led to doubts about Stalin’s administration
 - b) Stalin purged two-thirds of Central Committee members and more than half of the army’s high-ranking officers
 - c) By 1939, eight million people were in labor camps; three million died during “cleansing”
- B. The fascist alternative
 - 1. Fascism: new political ideology of 1920s
 - a) Started in Italy, then Germany; also found in other countries around the world
 - b) Fascism hostile to liberal democracies and to socialism and communism
 - c) Sought subordination of individuals to the service of state
 - 2. Emphasized an extreme form of nationalism, often expressed as racism
 - a) Veneration of the state, devotion to charismatic leaders
 - b) Militarism exalted, uniforms, parades
- C. Italian Fascism
 - 1. Benito Mussolini, founder of Italian Fascism, 1919
 - a) Armed Fascist squads called Blackshirts terrorized socialists
 - b) After march on Rome, Mussolini invited by king to be prime minister
 - 2. The Fascist state in Italy
 - a) All other political parties banned, Italy became a one-party dictatorship
 - b) Supported by business, the party crushed labor unions, prohibited strikes
 - c) Not aggressively anti-Semitic until after alliance with Hitler in 1938
- D. Germany’s National Socialism
 - 1. Adolf Hitler and the emergence of the Nazi party
 - a) 1923: attempt to take over Weimar Republic failed; Hitler jailed
 - b) Released in 1924, he organized party for a legal takeover, through elections
 - 2. The struggle for power after 1929
 - a) National Socialism enjoyed broad appeal, especially from lower-middle class
 - b) Public lost faith in democracy: associated with defeat, depression, inflation
 - c) 1930–1932, Nazi party became the largest in parliament
 - d) 1932, President Hindenburg offered Hitler the chancellorship

3. Rapid consolidation of power, 1933–1935
 - a) Nazis created one-party dictatorship; outlawed all other political parties
 - b) Took over judiciary, civil service, military
4. Nazi ideology emphasized purity of race
 - a) Women praised as wives and mothers; were discouraged from working
 - b) Cult of motherhood: propaganda campaign to increase births was unsuccessful
5. Nazi eugenics: deliberate policies to improve the quality of the German “race”
 - a) Compulsory sterilization of undesirables: mentally ill, disabled
 - b) State-sponsored euthanasia of physically and mentally handicapped
6. Anti-Semitism central to Nazi ideology
 - a) 1935, Nuremberg Laws deprived Jews of citizenship, outlawed intermarriage
 - b) Jews economically isolated, lost jobs, assets, businesses
 - c) 1938, *Kristallnacht*: official attacks on synagogues and Jewish businesses
 - d) 250,000 Jews fled to other countries; many others trapped

IDENTIFICATION: PEOPLE

What is the contribution of each of the following individuals to world history? Identification should include answers to the questions *who, what, where, when, how, and why is this person important?*

Albert Einstein

Sigmund Freud

Pablo Picasso

John Maynard Keynes

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Joseph Stalin

Benito Mussolini

Adolf Hitler

IDENTIFICATION: TERMS/CONCEPTS

State in your own words what each of the following terms means and why it is significant to a study of world history. (Terms with an asterisk are defined in the glossary.)

Uncertainty principle

Psychoanalysis

Bauhaus

Smoot-Hawley Tariff

New Deal

New Economic Policy*

Five-Year Plans*

Collectivization*

Fascism*

National Socialism

Weimar Republic

Mein Kampf

Eugenics

Nuremberg Laws

Kristallnacht

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are some indications of the “postwar pessimism” of the 1920s? Why did liberal values such as progress and democracy fall under attack at this time?
2. What were some of the economic problems facing the world powers in the 1920s? Specifically, what factors led to the crash of 1929 and the depression that followed?
3. What are some examples of “economic nationalism”? How effective were these measures?
4. What was the impact of the depression on social attitudes? On women and families?
5. What did John Maynard Keynes recommend as a solution to the economic crisis? How did the New Deal of President Roosevelt exemplify this solution?

6. How did Lenin and the Bolsheviks secure their power in Russia? How did Stalin secure his power within the party and within the Soviet Union?
7. What are the defining characteristics of fascism in both Italy and Germany? Consider the organizational structure and symbols that each adopted. To whom did this message appeal?
8. Compare the rise to power and consolidation of power by Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler.
9. What was the social vision of the Nazis? What attitudes are expressed in the passage from *Mein Kampf* on page 998 in the textbook? How did this vision impact women, families, and minorities?

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

1. Explain how new discoveries in physics and psychology undermined earlier ideas about reality and knowledge. Why were these new ideas so unsettling? How were these ideas represented in Western art between the wars?
2. Describe and analyze the experience of the Great Depression between the industrial nations and the primary producing nations. What parts of the world were most affected and what parts were least affected? What would be the economic explanation for this difference?
3. Compare the economic strategies embedded in Lenin's war communism, his New Economic Policy, and Stalin's Five-Year Plan. What were the aims of each program? Which was most effective?

STUDENT QUIZ

1. The author of *All Quiet on the Western Front* was
 - a. Ernest Hemingway.
 - b. Oswald Spengler.
 - c. Erich Maria Remarque.
 - d. W. Somerset Maugham.
 - e. Arnold Toynbee.
2. In the years after World War I, the idea of progress
 - a. gave a sense of hope in the midst of human suffering.
 - b. remained the foundation of Asian thought.
 - c. became even more popular among liberal Christian thinkers.
 - d. was bolstered by the growing popularity of Confucian thought.
 - e. was roundly attacked.
3. The notion that space and time are relative to the person measuring them was first articulated in
 - a. Heisenberg's uncertainty principle.
 - b. Kepler's three principles of interplanetary movement.
 - c. Spengler's *The Decline of the West*.
 - d. Einstein's theory of general relativity.
 - e. Newton's theory of gravity.

4. John Maynard Keynes
 - a. first discussed the uncertainty principle.
 - b. made early discoveries in psychoanalysis.
 - c. warned that democracy was a threat to the achievements of Western society.
 - d. was positive that laissez-faire capitalism would survive forever.
 - e. discussed the end of laissez-faire capitalism.

5. The father of psychoanalysis was
 - a. Werner Heisenberg.
 - b. Oswald Spengler.
 - c. Niokolai Berdiaev.
 - d. Sigmund Freud.
 - e. Albert Einstein.

6. According to Freud, the root of neurotic behavior was
 - a. a conflict between conscious and unconscious mental processes.
 - b. summed up in the term uncertainty "principle."
 - c. the traumatic bloodshed of World War I.
 - d. the hostility that young boys feel toward their mothers.
 - e. an easily explainable chemical reaction.

7. The spread of photography
 - a. led many painters to choose the camera as their instrument of expression.
 - b. resulted in a lack of creative artistic expression because of general pessimism.
 - c. led to a new artistic genre that tried to produce paintings that were more accurate than photographs.
 - d. led many painters to take an almost Luddite-like glee in smashing cameras.
 - e. led many painters to believe that the purpose of painting was not to mirror reality but to create it.

8. Which of the following was *not* one of the new artistic movements of the twentieth century?
 - a. expressionism
 - b. cubism
 - c. dadaism
 - d. impressionism
 - e. surrealism

9. One of the biggest results of the artistic experimentation of the 1920s and 1930s was that
 - a. artists learned to adhere to accepted public definitions of reality.
 - b. photography was no longer considered a legitimate art form.
 - c. generally accepted standards that distinguished between "good" and "bad" art disappeared.
 - d. impressionism was recognized as the single best art form.
 - e. a set of criteria was established that allowed art students to distinguish between "good" and "bad" art.

10. The work of Walter Gropius
 - a. is the best of the post-World War I painting movement known as cubism.
 - b. resulted in the spread of the uncertainty principle.
 - c. laid the foundation for later achievements in psychoanalysis.
 - d. reintroduced photography to an art world fascinated with cubism and Dadaism.
 - e. embodied the architectural principle that form should follow function.

11. The term *Bauhaus* is associated with
 - a. photography.
 - b. physics.
 - c. psychology.
 - d. painting.
 - e. architecture.

12. A troubling economic problem in the 1920s was the depressed state of agriculture caused by
 - a. virulent new strains of disease.
 - b. the success of several new communist regimes.
 - c. overproduction and falling prices.
 - d. the collapse of the cotton market in the southern United States.
 - e. dangerous underproduction.

13. During the Great Depression, most nations
 - a. cooperated globally to fight the problem on a scale never seen before.
 - b. dramatically reduced tariffs in an effort to facilitate international trade.
 - c. expanded the money supply and undertook public works to provide jobs.
 - d. practiced economic nationalism.
 - e. pushed for an expansion of trade.

14. In response to the Great Depression, economist John Maynard Keynes
 - a. proposed that the government should do nothing and wait out the economic hard times.
 - b. was a big supporter of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff.
 - c. felt that the government should tighten the money supply.
 - d. wrote that capitalism had failed and that it was time for the United States to experiment with communism.
 - e. urged the government to expand the money supply and undertake public works to provide jobs.

15. Which of the following was *not* one of the chief actions of Roosevelt's New Deal?
 - a. tighten the money supply
 - b. give workers the right to organize and bargain collectively
 - c. provide social security in old age
 - d. guarantee minimum wages
 - e. create jobs through public works projects

16. The Russian civil war that broke out after the revolution was between
 - a. Utopian socialists and Trotskyites.
 - b. Reds and Whites.
 - c. Leninists and Stalinists.
 - d. Nicholas II's Imperial Army and Lenin's Revolutionary Army.
 - e. eastern and western factions.

17. Lenin's New Economic Policy of 1921
 - a. pushed the peasants onto large state-run collectives.
 - b. stripped all land ownership away from the peasants.
 - c. called for a trading alliance with Communist China.
 - d. implemented free market reforms.
 - e. initiated the First Five-Year Plan.

18. The First Five-Year Plan was initiated by
 - a. Lenin.
 - b. Mussolini.
 - c. Stalin.
 - d. Hitler.
 - e. Trotsky.

19. The author of *Mein Kampf* was
 - a. Benito Mussolini.
 - b. Arthur de Gobineau.
 - c. Joseph Stalin.
 - d. Otto von Bismarck.
 - e. Adolf Hitler.

20. The *Kristallnacht* was
 - a. a new artistic movement that flourished after World War I.
 - b. a Nazi-arranged attack on thousands of Jewish stores.
 - c. Hitler's political treatise that expressed his main ideas.
 - d. the Russian term for the destructive civil war that followed the revolution.
 - e. a German term for the sense of disillusionment that followed World War I.

MATCHING

Match these figures with the statements that follow.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| A. Albert Einstein | E. Pablo Picasso |
| B. John Maynard Keynes | F. Sigmund Freud |
| C. Benito Mussolini | G. Franklin Delano Roosevelt |
| D. Joseph Stalin | H. Adolf Hitler |

1. ___ Innovative twentieth-century painter who resisted all notions of representative art.
2. ___ Founder of Italian Fascism.
3. ___ Founder of German fascism.
4. ___ British economist who suggested that governments should initiate public works and other spending programs to invigorate the economy after the depression.
5. ___ Party secretary who seized control of the Bolshevik Party after Lenin's death and eventually became absolute dictator of Russia.
6. ___ Austrian physician who explored the landscape of the unconscious mind.
7. ___ American president who launched the New Deal in an effort to turn around the Great Depression.
8. ___ German physicist who challenged the certainties of Newtonian physics by suggesting that time and space were relative.

SEQUENCING

Place the following clusters of events in chronological order. Consider carefully how one event leads to another, and try to determine the internal logic of each sequence.

- A.
- ___ While in prison, Hitler writes *Mein Kampf*, a blueprint for the Nazi Party.
 - ___ The Reichstag moves to eliminate rival parties and give Hitler absolute dictatorial power.
 - ___ The Nazi Party becomes the largest single party in the Reichstag.
 - ___ Hitler's first attempt to seize power fails, and he is jailed for a year.
 - ___ Global depression shatters the fragile German economy but strengthens support for the Nazis.
 - ___ Hitler is appointed chancellor by President Hindenburg.

B.

- _____ In order to stimulate production, Lenin launches the New Economic Program that allows individual ownership of farmland and limits free enterprise.
- _____ Russian peasants are forced to give up their land and join massive collective farms.
- _____ Lenin and the Bolsheviks defeat the White Russians and their western allies in a civil war. The Soviet Union is now under communist control.
- _____ Peasants who resisted collectivization are starved into submission: as many as ten million die over the next ten years.
- _____ Stalin cancels the NEP and imposes an ambitious five-year plan of industrial development.

C.

- _____ Once in power, the Fascists move swiftly to destroy opposition parties and restrict free speech and free press.
- _____ As the government breaks down, Mussolini presents himself as the savior of order and protector of property; the king appoints him prime minister.
- _____ Benito Mussolini launches a new political movement, intensely nationalistic and hostile to social and liberal democracy.
- _____ Postwar Italy is divided politically between conservative Catholics and radical socialists with little consensus.
- _____ Mussolini's Blackshirts start harassing Socialists and inciting riots.

QUOTATIONS

For each of the following quotes, identify the speaker, if known, or the point of view. What is the significance of each passage?

1. "And in the eyes of the people there is the failure; and in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage."
2. "All the great civilizations of the past died out because contamination of their blood caused them to become decadent."
3. "Can we advance our socialized industry at an accelerated rate while having to rely on an agricultural base, such as is provided by small peasant farming. . . ? No we cannot. . . The solution lies in enlarging the agricultural units, in making agriculture capable of accumulation. . . The Socialist way, which is to set up collective farms and state farms, the way which leads to the amalgamation of the small peasant farms into large collective farms, technically and scientifically equipped, and to the squeezing out of the capitalist elements from agriculture."

4. "The main targets of attack by the peasants are the local tyrants, the evil gentry and the lawless landlords. . . . With the collapse of the power of the landlords, the peasant associations have now become the sole organs of authority and the popular slogan 'All power to the peasant associations' has become a reality."

CONNECTIONS

In fifty words or less, explain the relationship between each of the following pairs. How does one lead to or foster the other? Be specific in your response.

- Social Darwinism and the Nuremberg Laws
- The New Deal and the Five-Year Plans
- Nicholas's secret police and Stalin's purges
- Heisenberg's uncertainty principle and fascism

FILMS

Stalin (1992). In the title role, Robert Duvall convincingly portrays one of the most brutal dictators of the twentieth century. The film covers the early history of the Russian Revolution and is far more generous to Lenin than most historians today.

1900 (1976). The film recounts the lives of two men, a peasant and a landowner, from 1900 to 1945. Events include the rise of fascism, communism, and the Second World War. Starring Robert DeNiro, Gerard Depardieu, Dominique Sanda.

The Triumph of the Will (1934). German filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl was hired by the Nazis to create a visual record of the party rally in Nuremberg in 1934. The result has long been considered a masterpiece of both documentary film and political propaganda. While chilling to watch, the film helps explain the appeal of fascism. In German with English subtitles.