

POST-WAR AGE OF ANXIETY

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
 - 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

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. 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. Primary producing economies especially vulnerable
 - a. Export prices declined sharply after 1929: sugar, coffee, beef, tin, nitrates, and so on
 - b. Latin American states enacted import tariffs that actually helped domestic industry
 - c. Brazil under dictator Getulio Dornelles Vargas built up steel and iron production
 - d. Impact on colonial Africa varied: exports hurt, but not local markets
 - e. China not integrated into world economy, less affected
 - f. Philippines was a U.S. colony; its sugar production protected by the United States
6. 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 anticipated 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 United States
 3. The global quality of the depression made it impossible for any purely national policy to restore prosperity and contributed to the second international world war.

***New governmental policies emerged to meet the crisis.
So did extremist political groups.***

There were three major types of responses to the crisis situation:

- 1) Government interference of the "**New Deal**" type" (also supported by the **Labour Party** in Britain). This approach was based on **Keynesian economics**, or "priming the pump" — the governments dumped a huge amount of money into the faltering economy to try to restore economic confidence, by hiring loads of people themselves if necessary, and through social services and welfare-type safety nets to keep citizens from growing too poor and desperate. This approach was not really tried in the U.S. until Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President and instituted the "New Deal." 3 GOALS:
 - Programs to put people back to work so that they could resume spending money as consumers and reinvigorate the economy.
 - Programs to guarantee financial institutions such as banks and savings and loan institutions, so that people would resume investing.
 - Psychological: to keep the country's morale from plummeting and making its citizens vulnerable to the preaching of communists and other radicals.

The U.S.'s "New Deal" was a moderate alternative to socialism or Marxism, but didn't really resolve the Depression or unemployment; which weren't resolved until WW II.

2) Communism:

- Communist propaganda during the Depression depicted a peaceful, progressive society which had escaped the Depression. It presented a compelling picture to the outside world.
- The Great Depression also looked to many like the fulfillment of Marx's predictions about the eventual worldwide fall of capitalism, and the hardships connected with the Depression helped sour many on private enterprise. There were Marxist movements within most of the major European nations, some of which almost succeeded.
- The threat of Communist insurrection also gave power both to FDR and the British Labour Party, and to the Fascists — both were claiming to be alternative answers to the Depression, which could stave off the communist threat.

3) Fascism:

- Claimed to be in opposition to communism, but in reality it shared many of the same practical features, though the philosophies behind the two were totally different. Fascism put the state as a whole above everything, and saw the natural business of a country as conquering.
- **Benito Mussolini** of Italy (early 1920s) & **Adolph Hitler** in Germany (1933) → Both leaders came to power through more-or-less legal means (albeit with some extra-legal bullying and stuffing of ballots)