

These are essay question for History. Question are already written out for you convenience. Copyrighted by George Smith.

Modern European History

1. What did Paul Valery mean in saying that the mind of Europe doubted itself profoundly?

Before 1914, people in Europe believed in progress, peace, prosperity, reason, and rights of individuals. During that time, people began to believe in the Enlightenment, industrial developments were just starting and scientific advances began to take place. People then really believed in progression and further developments.

Unfortunately, World War I broke out. Nevertheless, the optimistic people of Europe still did not doubt the outcome and were so convinced that it was not going to have any long term effects. They looked toward happier times and hoped life will go back to where it was before. But little did they know, as a result of the war, total war broke out and crushed all the hopes and accomplishments that the people had established. This shocking reality was unbearable and uncomprehending to the people's hopes and dreams. And as this lasted over the years, the age of anxiety was created. People didn't know or what to expect anymore. They did not know what was going to happen after the war. They're so devastated by the war that many who were still alive lost faith and all hopes. Many intellectuals began to doubt the Enlightenment and even the future of Western civilization. This state of uncertainty and unpredictability brought out many modern philosophers of that time. One of them was a French poet and critic Paul Valery. He stated that "Europe was looking at its future with dark foreboding." In his writings, he said that "The storm has died away, and still we are restless, uneasy, as if the storm were about to break." The storm in this case was the war. People were so terrified by it that they were still in shock

and

unsure of its outcome and consequence and the possibility that it might cause another

war to break out. Valery saw that many people suffered from anxiety. He argued that the people looked at the future with great unease and discomfort for what the war had

done and what the war will cause. He also suggested that "Europe doubted itself profoundly" because of all the loss of all optimistic ideas and accomplishments.

People did not have the strength or will to believe in themselves anymore. They were too devastated by the war. They also saw no hope and thus doubted themselves for making any more progress.

2. Why do you think many veterans felt that they were part of a lost generation?

Veterans during the war were just realizing what the war is all about. They saw

what the war had done to people's lives and body parts. They sometimes couldn't even believe that such shattered bodies were once human beings who lived happily among them. Most of them grew up in the war knowing nothing of life but despair, fear, death, and sorrow. These veterans felt that they were part of a last generation upon

whom which the war was caused by. Now these young men must carry on the blood shed and fight for their fathers and country. Most of them didn't even know what the

war was about and why they were fighting. And yet it didn't stop them from innocently slaying one another obediently. I don't think they know how to stop the war and not knowing what will happen next.

3. What reasons can you think of why many Germans were attracted to

paramilitary organizations immediately after the war?

Germans were attracted to paramilitary organizations immediately after the war. The war had brought violence, pleasure, and the excitement of survival for thousands of soldiers. During these years of excitements, soldiers began to gain new

ideas of life and moral judgements. After returning home from the war they were bored just sitting around not fulfilling their thirst for more blood shed and adventure.

It was the war that held them together as a union, that never discharged them, that will always provide a home and excitement for them. The Germans saw a great opportunity and gain their gasp on these soldiers. They knew that these soldier couldn't resist the excitement of war and thus posted appeals on the street corners for

volunteer units to defend Germany's eastern borders. In a way, the soldiers fulfilled

both Germany and themselves.

4. How did Sigmund Freud describe the prevailing mood in Europe just prior to the war. How did the war alter this mood and create a "legacy of embitterment"?

Life prior to the war was full of joy and happy things to look forward to. People were making progress, developments were taking place, and western civilization was beginning to make some real progress and establishments. But as the

war broke out, people lost all hope and dreams. They couldn't rely on either other which once united them together. They didn't know what to think anymore being terrified to learn the shocking truth of the reality of the war and what it has done to

their society, people and accomplishments. People suffered from great anxiety and a "legacy of embitterment" was created. The enjoyment of common civilization was no more and total war was declared. Peace from among men were no existent. And those bonds will be impossible to establish for a long duration.

