



AP[®] European History 2001 Sample Student Responses

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The Protestant Reformation began with ~~Dr~~ Martin Luther's posting of the 95 theses on the Church door in ~~the~~ Wittenberg in 1517. In the following five decades, this action was to spread into the Protestant Reformation, which would touch most of Europe, and drastically reshape the political and ~~sto~~ social fabric of Europe. The Reformation changed social views and became a major tool for national and regional governments.

~~One of the biggest~~

One of the clearest examples of change both political and social, appeared in England. Although there had been a spattering of non-Catholic movements before, the real transition to Protestantism was a direct result of Henry VIII's personal agenda. After a conflict with the Pope over the legality of a divorce from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, Henry chose to separate from the Roman Catholic church, and place himself at its head. This political switch had far reaching effects in and out of England. Within England, the people were required to ~~swath~~ recognize Henry as the divine head of the church of England. Those who didn't - such as St./Sir Thomas More, found themselves in line to be executed. Henry also moved to take over and dismantle all of Britain's existing monasteries and convents. Beyond the idealistic reasoning for this, he also gained monetarily (a political motive), and erased the

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last vestiges of church authority from England. This centralized and strengthened his control of the kingdom.

Another instance of the Reformation's consequences occurred simultaneously in the Hapsburg Empire in Central Europe. The emperor, Charles V, had been having difficulties in maintaining authority over the many small electorates and principalities of his central European realm.

The ~~Prin~~ The Empire was Catholic, and Charles V saw it as his duty to maintain political and religious unity of his realm. The Princes sought to avoid his centralizing influence and so many shielded their activities behind claims to Protestant faith and conversion.

In fact, the Elector/Prin of Saxony played an important role by protecting Martin Luther when he was "wanted" for heresy in the empire. Eventually this conflict would lead to the fighting that ended with the Peace of Augsburg, where each prince could determine the religion of their principality.

There were also social results in Germany involving the peasants' classes. They interpreted Luther's words about liberty to mean political, and in the early 1520's rebelled against their wealthy overlords. (This was unsuccessful, and Luther condemned the ~~see~~ uprising for going against the social order.)

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Overall, there were also a few long-ranging social consequences that affected ~~all~~ Europe. First, the very possibility of multiple religious sects led to some opening up of ideas, and further emergence out of the Middle Ages into the Renaissance. Also, the idea that wealth, and the pursuit of it being allowable (as opposed to the Catholic view of money as evil) began to emerge, and formed into the "Protestant ethic". Finally, there were breakoffs of Lutheranism, notably Calvinism as espoused by John Calvin: This led to experiments such as the transformation of Geneva into a model city, with religion and municipal qualities integrated.

Overall, the Protestant Reformation was an important and far reaching event. It shifted the European world view, and would play an important role in European society and politics.

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~~The Protestant Reformation in the first half of the~~

After Martin Luther found an answer to the salvation contrary to that of the Catholic Church, the Protestant Reformation would begin. It would affect Europe for much time to come, as one can see a metamorphosis from temporal power to secular power. Beginning from the first half of the sixteenth century, the Protestant Reformation had numerous political and social consequences.

First, the Protestant Reformation greatly affected politics. Luther and Zwingli believed that all the superficial aspects of religion should be terminated, and people should rely solely on the bible. Thus, popes were eliminated. Politically speaking, with the elimination of the ~~many~~ popes, who could once dominate people's lives, the government was allowed more power over their ~~pe~~ subjects. Furthermore, Luther and Zwingli also believed that the church was subservient to the state. Finally, with Protestantism, governments and religion were able to rely on each other to some extent. When for instance, when German peasants revolted and expected Luther to defend their action, Luther responded with the publication of On the Killing and Murdering Hoards of Peasants. It condemned the peasants and supported the government to crush the rebellion. In return, Luther ~~received~~ was able to gain support from German prince in his spread of Protestantism.

Second, the Protestant Reformation also affected social aspects. Anabaptists were strong believers in equality and even allowed women to hold offices. Furthermore,



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with Protestantism, education was fostered. Despite the fact that men and children of all classes were schooled. Despite the fact that this was to instill Protestant beliefs at an early age and form loyal, Protestant adults, children's literacy was literacy it was a great change. - many children learn to read as a result of teaching the kids to read the bible in these schools. Finally, the Protestant Reformation also curtailed some freedoms women had. Even though Anabaptists allowed women positions in office, other Protestant sects did not. Especially before the reformation, women had been allowed to enter the clergy, but since the clergy was pitted during the reformation, women were become solely bound to the home.

It is evident that the Protestant Reformation affected both political and social aspects of Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century.