



AP[®] European History (Operational) 2004 Sample Student Responses

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R-1

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Since its beginnings, Europe has been a continent of many nations, ethnicities, and religions. Although it has been making efforts to achieve differing levels of unity since the days of the Holy Roman Empire, some of the most significant unifying/dividing forces have occurred during the years between 1945 and 2001. The forces that rose to unify Europe and help it recover from the devastation of WWII included the formation of NATO, the re-unification of Germany in 1989, and the formation of the European Union. The forces that countered the spirit of European unity included the communism v. capitalism, conflict, nationalism, and finally (later) the dissolution of the USSR.

Europe has been paving the way for significant unification since the creation of ~~the~~ NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization following WWII. NATO, ~~an~~ an alliance of almost all Western European nations allows Europeans to work together to achieve common military/diplomatic goals and ensure that justice is maintained where it is needed. In order for NATO to act, its member nations must decide to act together, a process ~~and~~

4

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which encourages unity. The ~~collapse of~~ fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 was also another step in the European unification process. Since Yalta, Germany had been divided into eastern and western portions. But the fall of the Berlin wall allowed the two Germanies to reunite and though it was on a smaller scale than say, NATO, it nevertheless made one less nation in Europe. Finally, the European Union was a key ~~step~~ factor in unifying Europe. At ~~the~~ Maastricht (the place where the EU was born) many western and eastern nations came together economically, advocating a common (the Euro) currency, standards for education, trade regulations, etc. (with the exception of Great Britain, which kept its old currency). Maastricht and the EU helped promote European Unity by instilling a common economic bond between the various European nations.

Despite great strides + factors contributing to European Unity, many factors still threaten the peaceful coexistence of a united European continent. One of the key factors contributing to disunity after 1945 was communism. The refusal of Communist Russia (and later, the other Soviet nations) to cooperate with capitalistic Western Europe (and vice versa for that matter)

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R-3

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prevented Europe from unity and accomplishing greater economic goals. The communism v. Capitalism conflict created tension and hostility between the two halves opposite "the Iron Curtain" that was characteristic of the divided Cold War.

The dissolution of the USSR also contributed to the disunity of the European continent. Though there had been many differences between USSR territories and the system had not been entirely effective, it nevertheless added an element of unity to its members. When the USSR collapsed (after some "Velvet" and not-so-velvet revolutions), this element of unity disappeared from the European political economic arena. A final factor that contributed to the disunity of the European continent was

^{ethnic} nationalism. In fact, nationalist struggles continue to divide Europe to this day. The War in Bosnia was due to Serb/Croatian nationalism. The conflicts in Palestine and Israel are due largely to nationalism/territorial "rights."

Both conflicts have prevented peaceful coexistence and unity ~~between~~ the nations of these various ethnic groups. The ~~ability~~ ^{nationalistic} inability of two ~~or~~ ~~ethnic~~ ^{nationalistic} ethnic groups

^{ethnic} groups to reconcile their differences divides not only the nations themselves, but also the rest of Europe, which divides itself over who to support in the conflict.

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Since 1945, Europe has continually been in a tug-of-war between unifying/disunifying factors. While some factors, like Communism's, role ~~was~~ in this struggle have significantly diminished, others, like NATO, the EU, and nationalism, continue on to this day. In more years, the trend has been moving ~~more~~ ^{and} more steadily in favor of ~~unity~~ unity and peace and one can only hope that Europe will continue on this path.

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After the end of World War II, many factors have ~~not~~ worked for and against European unity from 1945 to 2001. Such factors are to include ~~the~~ economic factors, political factors, and social factors. The world experiences advances in technology and communication ~~that~~ post 1945 that have been ^{used} ~~unrepeated~~ throughout history. Along with these technologies there was the Cold War and the tensions between Democracy and Communism.

Many things occurred economically between 1945 and 2001 that have worked to unify Europe. The largest of which was the formation of the European Union (EU). This union worked to bring one collective economy to European countries. There was also the establishment of free trade among these countries. A common currency, called the euro, was put into place and used by many of the members of the EU. One exception to this was England who continued to use the pound.

Political factors basically split Europe between east and west. Democracy ~~is~~ ^{was} the favored government in the west, while communism was favored in the east. Winston Churchill referred to this split as a "iron curtain" that split Europe in half. From this political race sprang the cold war. New technologies including spy planes were used in this mostly nonviolent arms race. Eventually ~~whereas~~ communism would fall (1989 fall of the Berlin Wall) and ~~the~~ East and West Europe would more or less have resolved their major political differences.

Social factors along with new technologies ~~has~~ and advances

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communications
 in ~~technology~~ have really worked to unite Europe. The invention and popularization of the internet ^{and TV} have been important to the speed at which information and conversation can be spread throughout Europe. A message can be sent by the common citizen to anyone else they desire in Europe or throughout the world. After WWII, and during the massive reconstruction of Europe, different countries began to ~~build~~ connect themselves in the rebuilding of their infrastructures in order to allow for easier transportation and ~~ability~~ trade among European nations. An example of this is the tunnel built between England and France across the English Channel.

The Cold War ~~was~~ has been one of the only factors keeping Europe apart ~~or~~ since 1945. ~~The~~ The EU has been able to unify Europe economically, while ~~Europe~~ Europeans have been able to assimilate through increased communication technologies. Post Cold War Europe continues develop closer and closer together as more countries become active in the United Nations and as more countries except the euro.