**Europe in the Middle Ages**

In the year 1000, Western Europe was just emerging from the long depression commonly known as the Dark Ages. Shortly before the beginning of the millennium, the Holy Roman Emperor Otto III moved his capital and court back to the Eternal City. But what little grandeur Rome still possessed paled by comparison with the splendors of 'the new Rome', Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine empire. Byzantium was one of three centers of wealth and power in the known world of the 11th century, India and China were the others. There were sophisticated cultures elsewhere, notably the Mayans of Mexico, but they were virtually out of touch with other civilizations - thus lacking an essential condition for being considered part of world history.

Little of Europe's coming dynamism was apparent in the year 1000, although there were signs that the Continent was getting richer. Wider use of plows had made farming more efficient. The planting of new crops, notably beans and peas, added variety to Europe's diet Windmills and watermills provided fresh sources of power. Villages that were to become towns and eventually cities grew up around trading markets. Yet the modern nation-state, with its centralized bureaucracies and armies under unified command came into being in the 15th century. For most of the Middle Ages, Roman Catholicism was Europe's unifying force. Benedictine abbeys had preserved what fragments of ancient learning the Continent possessed. Cistercian monks had cleared the land and pioneered in agricultural experimentation. Ambitious popes competed with equally ambitious kings to determine whether the spiritual realm would hold power over the temporal, or vice versa. Symbolic of the church's power were the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe: construction of Reims began in the 13th century, and Charters-the most glorious of all such edifices-was consecrated in 1260.

By the 20th century the ingenuity, coupled with an aggressive wanderlust, brought Europeans and their culture to the ends of the earth. By the year 1914, eighty four per cent of the world's land surface, apart from the polar regions, was under the influence of European civilization. The hegemony of European civilization was based on the successful application of new knowledge to solving problems and conquering nature, and much of that success was based on circumstance and ingenuity.

**Vocabulary**

emerge - выходить

millennium - тысячелетие

asceticism - аскетизм

grandeur - великолепие, пышность, грандиозность

sophisticated - сложный

bureaucracies - чиновники

apparent - явный

watermill - водяная мельница

ambitious - честолюбивый

ingenuity - изобретательность

wanderlust - страсть к путешествиям

surface - поверхность

conquer - завоевать

assertion - утверждение

accomplishment - достижение

**Questions**

1. What was Europe like in the year 1000?

2. What were the centres of power in the known world of the 11th century?

3. What cultures were not considered part of world history?

4. Why was Europe getting richer after the year 1000?

5. When did modern nation-states come into being?

6. What did monks do for the development of the European civilization?

7. What do Gothic cathedrals symbolize?

8. What brought about the global spread of European civilization in the 20th century?