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APUSH – A2

Ch. 23 I-essay: Document Set 2

World War I demanded the United States too face adversity. It stressed the economy and tested American public opinion, which saw itself split by pacifists, racism, “preparedness campaigners,” moderates, etc. A war on a global scale not only drew our forces and interests outward, but inwards as well towards social improvement. This was achieved by a changing economy giving new roles to blacks and women. Movers like President Wilson had a big voice in changes that would occur, Wilson being one of the few idealists who believed that the change would be towards peace.

The social improvement occurred partly because of this type of mind-set, “This war could not have been fought, either by the other nations engaged or by America, if it had not been for the services of the women,” (Doc 3). President Wilson praises women contributions to the war effort. Constant political barrages by female activists on the government were also another cause of the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment. Finally, women suffrage had been attained, giving women more power at such a critical time. Another social improvement that could be noted was the Eighteenth Amendment, which put prohibition on alcoholic beverages. This was due to their German-esque names which prompted their immediate removal in fear of being degrading of American ethics and morals. Although, this amendment was of course later repealed.

The wars impact on Black Americans is somewhat depicted in Document 1. The migrant writing the document has given us a very scary account of how racism was such an imminent threat. As the economy was stressed and states such as Illinois saw thousands of black migrants, such massive relocation by blacks in desperate search for a cooler political climate and pay only spiked more racism. There were many violent occurrences during this time, but it dawned on America that civil rights was one already long overdue social improvement. The war had created an ill environment for blacks on the home front, even those returning from service. “We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting,” (Doc 2). This is a glance into those veteran’s heart, and how they faced obstacles almost no matter where they went.

Bolshevism was synonymous with communism, and both were would-be American taboos, a taboo which America had a fixation on. “There is no possible common ground between Bolshevism and organized labor… I must take this opportunity to point out that the hostility of the Bolshevists to the American Federation of Labor is of the same degree of intensity,” (Doc 4). Samuel Gompers’ attack on Bolshevism had become very typical of American belief. There was much light shed on this issue by America, as it seemed to be a threat to Democracy.

Document 6 recognizes how Germany was regrettably forced to pay such harsh reparations as a result of the Treaty of Versailles. “It gives the Germans too many good reasons for feeling themselves thoroughly abused,” (Doc 6). Although, the allies sought the reparations appropriate including President’s Wilsons complete neglect of Germany in his idealistic peaceful world, “The only nations that will not be admitted into it promptly are Germany and Turkey,” (Doc 7). However, the atmosphere during the signing of the treaty was very bitter with so many conflicting interests at work, Wilson even threatening to leave the Versailles palace at one point.

Those followers of Henry Cabot Lodge’s thought believed that the Treaty of Versailles did not owe a compromise. Document 6 states this position clearly, “the world which will result from the document can by no stretch of language be made to agree with the picture which the President had in mind.” Therefore, the United States Senate rejected the treaty and Wilson’s fourteen points “in their present from.” A social and political consequence of total war was an extremely hostile political domestic environment. By being in a global war, exposed to radically different views which may or may not have posed a threat against us, we soon became very paranoid of even ourselves to prevent any threat from becoming too harmful. This anti-radical paranoia lead to such events as the refusal to seat a socialist senator of German descent even though a strong believer in democracy, segregation of Asians in the San Francisco school system, etc. The Red Scare of 1919 could also be accounted by this same anti-radical paranoia.

World War I had many firsts in the history of the United States as for the world. It was the first time a President crossed the Atlantic (aboard the *George Washington*). Also, maybe not a first, but our old president collapsed of exhaustion demanded by his constant movement. Most consequences were not positive, though our adversity as a nation was demonstrated. This brought those racists demanding blacks to either go to war or die (doc 1), insight to the troubles faced not to mention the grizzly riots. The fact of the matter is our world changed drastically in the 20th century, particularly by the First World War which would soon set stage to the second.