

The forties world war

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History and Political Science Topic: The Forties World War II

The Forties World War II created a tremendous upheaval in the American society both at the sociological and economic fronts. Grim events were taking place at the warfronts, loss of lives of the American soldiers continued without intermission with war escalating, but like the aftershocks of a major earthquake, many areas of American society continued to suffer individually and collectively. These changes arrived with an unpredictable speed of an avalanche. The politicians and the administration had a tough time facing the day to day challenges, the quick-changing public moods, and bitter criticisms in handling the post-war situations. Churning process was going on in America that altered the political equations. The economic and social measures introduced by President Franklin D. Roosevelt brought about structural changes in the economy and the political scenario of America, with massive buildup of infrastructure and fillip to the art and cultural fronts. On the other hand, deep psychological fissures took concrete shape and administrative measures were taken to keep a watch on the ethnic groups belonging to the enemy country. Even though majority of them were citizens of America, the war situation rendered them suspect as a community. This created another area of dissention within the American society. Whether legally justified or not, American administration had no other option but to keep a close watch with some harsh measures, on the section of the population that was considered sympathetic to the enemy. The entire nation was in turmoil. Labor groups and student unions were taking up the path of communist ideology. Marxist study groups were formed at many universities for teaching that ideology to professors and students. American

administration began to develop the infrastructure on a massive scale and cultural renaissance was afforded priority to keep the people engaged in arts and culture and the Federal Government took responsibility to develop these areas. Unionization was recognized and regulated by law and this provided fillip to the worker's movement. Most importantly, the Social Security Act was passed that ensured the welfare of the senior citizens on retirement. The Wealth Tax Act taxed the rich, brought new high revenues to the Government and a sense of relief amongst the poor that the Government is paying attention to their welfare.

Japan was the enemy country and the people of Japanese origin were ordered to be interned by Executive Order No. 9066 by the President Franklin D, Roosevelt issued on February 19, 1942. This action was taken mainly as protection against espionage and sabotage of national-defense material. Free movement of persons was restricted and they were put in barracks, with enclosure of barbed wire and under the guard of the military. Such restrictions, though well-intentioned in the interest of the security of America, caused genuine problems to Japanese nationals who were in America for over a century, and affected their solidarity with their mainstream society. It caused them irritation and isolated them and gave rise to litigation in the American courts terming it as a case of racial discrimination. Standing in Q for food and other amenities in the concentration camps was a humiliating experience for the Japanese nationals.

In war situations families of the soldiers and officers are immensely affected. Their family members are under tremendous psychological pressure. The Government avails all options to raise funds for financing the war and

imaginative posters that appeal to the emotional world of the citizens are pasted at vantage points. The poster showing a woman with her two children and appealing to the citizens, 'I gave a man—will you give at least 10% of your pay in war bonds?' requires no further elucidation. People are also advised to conserve material as every penny becomes precious to sustain the economy of the country. In war situations citizens have a special moral responsibility, not to spread rumors. That may cause enormous damage to the country and in one poster it has been rightly compared to 'murder.' Women who lost their husbands are encouraged to take up jobs to support their families, and a special cell was created by the government, to provide employment opportunities. Women did all sorts of job, which they would have never thought of in peace time. Everyone was encouraged to do hard work, to sustain the war efforts and the course of life for many families changed beyond their comprehensions.

America persisted with practices of racism even in war situations, during World War II. Negro soldiers were separated from the white soldiers at the base and discrimination was thus practiced in all areas and they were given low-designated jobs like mess personnel, orderlies etc. There was no democracy, equality or justice in actual terms, though legally it was very much there.

Conclusion

The New Deal brought about a silent revolution in the social and economic fronts of America. It created lasting impacts in American society and a new type of relationship developed amongst business and government. For the first time, people reposed confidence that their social welfare needs will be taken care with appropriate interventions by the Federal Government.

Works Cited

References provided by the customer.