

Journal

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Week10 Journal How did minorities both benefit and suffer from their WWII experience? Provide at least 2 specific examples to substantiate your claim. Although it might be tempting to discuss the way in which minorities suffered or benefited from the World War II experience, the fact of the matter is that such a discussion is extraordinarily nuanced and cannot be represented in broad platitudes. More specifically, certain minorities suffered greatly as a result of the United States involvement in the Second World War, even more greatly as compared to their overall level of hardship prior to the United States in three of the war. Similarly, other minorities experienced partial benefits as a result of the United States entry into the war and were able to leverage these benefits as a means of effecting positive changes in the immediate future. As a function of analyzing this dynamic, the following discussion will focus specifically upon two distinct minorities: African-Americans and Japanese Americans.

With respect to African-Americans, not a great deal of benefit was achieved on their part as a result of the United States involvement in the Second World War. For the most part, racism, segregation, and the enforcement of Jim Crow laws within the South remained largely unabated. Faragher points out that the social norms and racial disparities experienced by African Americans, specifically in the South, did not alter greatly as a result of WWII (Faragher, 691). However, it is also fair to note that many African-Americans were able to engage with the workforce in a manner that they had previously been unable to do. For instance, the high demand for labor and the production of war material created a need for all able-bodied employees to land their services to this effort. As such, African-Americans that had previously been passed over for factory jobs or production jobs were hired

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and began to learn valuable skills that were utilized once the Second World War concluded. In such a way, African-Americans indirectly benefited from the overall level of training and engagement in the workforce that the Second World War was able to provide. However, by means of comparison and contrast, their participation in combat was still segregated as compared to white soldiers and they were deemed as inherently less valuable by almost each and every military leader (Best 203).

Likewise, in terms of the overall impact of the Second World War on Japanese Americans, the analyst should necessarily consider the fact that this particular conflict drastically reduced their standing within American society. It further partially destroyed their civil rights, and ultimately set this particular demographic and racial group back many years (Bensyl 89). After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States government, under executive order 9066, initiated a very racial response to the provocation that the Imperial Japanese power had affected (Hecht 608). As such, it was determined that the Japanese-American population within the United States was a security threat and should be dealt with in much the same way that criminals are dealt with (Takemoto 56). As a result, tens of thousands of Japanese were forcibly removed from their homes, businesses, and places of education, and placed within government run internment camps; not at all dissimilar from the way in which the German interred within concentration camps (Faragher 683). Whereas it is ultimately true that the United States did not torture or kill the individuals within the internment camps, these nonetheless served as an exemplification for the way in which race and racism continued impact upon decisions that the majority of Americans identified with and stripped these individuals of their inherent civil rights and

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ability to engage with society (Roxworthy 99).

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