

Race in turn of the century america

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The early twentieth century marked a time of mixed political and social developments for the United States. This nation was characterized by a unified government with clashing of beliefs between the Southerners and the Northerners. These beliefs divided the country into two regions, which are the Northern and Southern regions. Racial equality is one of the leading factors, which made the U. S. remain divided after the First World War. According to W. E. B. Du Bois, “ problem of color-line” is the key cause of the twentieth century’s problems (King & Ruggles, 1990). In his statement, Du Bois was particularly referring to the lack of black’s equality. However, it is necessary to note that “ color-line” also affected Native Americans and Immigrants. This paper identifies and discusses the specific states and national policies that encouraged “ the problem of color-line” in relation to American immigrants and African Americans through the First World War. It also describes how the racial ideas influenced the acceptance of immigrants within the American culture, and as a justification for the American imperialism in the 1920’s.

The problem of racial confusion was quickly becoming a serious issue, in the early twentieth century. This is because of the lack of a unified government, which would establish common grounds with racial equity and rights (King & Ruggles, 1990). After the end of the Civil War, eleven Southern States introduced national policies that further supported “ the problem of color-line”, in relation to immigrants and African Americans, through the First World War. For example, ten southern states introduced laws prohibiting the mixing of races in ferries, railways, and steamboats (King & Ruggles, 1990). For instance, Atlanta, from 1908, introduced racially segregated elevators.

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Additionally, taxicabs were separated in Florida, Birmingham, Jacksonville, and Mississippi, Alabama. Similarly, it was illegal for Black and white baseball clubs to play, in proximity, in Atlanta (King & Ruggles, 1990). Change in welfare policy, after civil wars also promoted “ the problem of color-line”. The Northern changed the social welfare policy to provide government assistances equally, and help recipients become self-independence (King & Ruggles, 1990). This policy was rejected, in the South because it gave both the African Americans and immigrants an opportunity to receive same services as the whites. This made the Southerners to further entrenchment of racism and slavery as a sign of disrespect to the Northerners, who defeated them in the civil wars. The Southern States that encouraged racism include Mississippi, South Carolina, North Carolina, Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, Arkansas, Virginia, Tennessee, and Florida (King & Ruggles, 1990).

The way people are treated within the context of a given culture or society has a direct influence on how they behave and perform, in that society (Polychroniou, 1995). For example, racial ideas were developed, in different parts of the world, to group people into different social groups such as perpetual low status and high class. In the early nineteenth century, The U. S. applied practices and policies created by racial ideas to group people into Native Americans, Europeans, and people of African descent (Polychroniou, 1995). Racial ideas entail myths about human diversity, and the abilities of people to organize themselves into different groups, races. These myths combine physical and behavioral aspects together, in a public domain, thereby improving the understanding of both cultural behavior and biological variations, indicating that they are genetically determined (Polychroniou, <https://assignbuster.com/race-in-turn-of-the-century-america/>

1995). After the American Civil Wars, most black and white intellectuals realized that human behavior is learned while physical outlook is genetically determined. The whites understood also understood that nobody is born with a built-in language or culture (Polychroniou, 1995). Additionally, they argued that an individual's personalities, temperaments, and dispositions are created within sets of values and meanings, which are known as culture, regardless of his or her genetic propensities (Polychroniou, 1995). With this in mind, white racist were made to understand that all children can be made to learn and test the reality of white cultures to form who they are. They thus began accepting Immigrants within American culture, and as a justification for the United States imperialism, in the 1990's.

References

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