



Question Four

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Explain the impact of U.S. involvement in WWI on three of the following:

African Americans

Civil Liberties

Business

Women

Labor Unions

Thesis

- ▶ World War I was a military conflict that began as a local European Conflict war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia in 1914. There were two groups that consisted of the Allies and the Associated Powers; this war was not only a conflict among neighboring nations, but a global conflict. U.S. involvement affected thousands of people and ideas around the world including Women, African Americans, and Civil Liberties.

WWI's Effects on African Americans

- ▶ World War I was a transformative moment; it became an event with revolutionary implications for the social, economic, and political future of black Americans. The war years coincided with the Great Migration, one of the largest internal movements of people in American history. Wartime opportunities in the north offered higher wages and improved working conditions which prompted thousands of black southerners to abandon their agricultural lives and start anew in the north.

WWI's Effects on African Americans

- ▶ The war was viewed by many African Americans as an opportunity to bring about true democracy. It became a crucial test of America's commitment to the ideal of democracy and the rights of citizenship for all people, regardless of race. The war was seen by many as a chance to demonstrate their patriotism and their place as equal citizens in the nation. When the war ended in 1918, African Americans hoped that their sacrifices would positively impact their rights, but for many the war brought anything but peace. Racial conditions failed to improve significantly after the war, which radicalized many African Americans and deepened their commitment to combat white racial violence.

Civil Liberties

- ▶ •During World War I, civil liberties were attacked. Millions of young men were drafted and President Wilson ordered steps to be taken in order to control the public opinion. At first, Wilson's main objective with trying to control the public opinion was to encourage more patriotic supports for war effort. In 1914, when Germany invaded France, the US under President Wilson remained neutral; this belief in neutrality helped Wilson win reelection in 1916- he was known as the "man who kept us out of war". Five months later, Wilson insisted that America must go to war in order to silence critics who were saying that the war was inspired by capitalist greed. The steps that Wilson took guarded American society from what he called, "the poison of disloyalty".

Civil Liberties

- ▶ •The government under President Wilson also built elaborate spy networks to watch German immigrants and American Radicals. During this time, Federal Agents arrested many people for giving anti-war speeches, such as Eugene Debs. In addition to attacks on free speech, the government violated basic legal protections in other ways.
- ▶ Months after WW1, the Espionage and Sedition Acts were tested in Supreme Court in the case Schenck vs. United States. The case consisted of Charles Schenck, the secretary of the Socialist Party of America, who was responsible for printing, distributing, and mailing material to prospective military draftees during WW1.

Women and WWI

- ▶ During the boom in industry, many of America's men were serving overseas in the war, and therefore unable to uphold their jobs in the factories. Women took on a lot of jobs that had previously been considered suitable only for men. Women began flocking to factories, they worked in farming and in forestry, on the railways and the buses, as van drivers and chauffeurs in order to support their families while the men were away at war. A lot of women were already working as nurses, of course, but many more became volunteer nurses for the duration of the war. Agatha Christie for example worked in a London hospital where she eventually went to work in the dispensary, and acquired the knowledge of poisons that came in useful when she started to write her mystery novels. Many women nurses went to serve overseas, some worked in field hospitals close to the front.

Women and WWI

- ▶ The independence of working women carried over into the after effects of World War I. Before the war, many women had embarked on campaigning for universal suffrage, but America's politicians were not ready to give women the right to vote. However, that attitude changed after the war, because so many women had shown that their strength and independence was equal to men, and they had helped the war cause in so many ways, President Wilson urged congress to give women the same rights as men because they deserved it.

Conclusion

- ▶ The United State's involvement in World War I affected the country in many ways. African Americans took advantage of economic opportunities involving the war effort, resulting in an influx of blacks in the North— known as the Great Migration. They sacrificed their lives for the country; however, racial conditions did not improve drastically. Civil liberties were violated when American citizens were arrested for speaking out against war, helping the public to realize the importance of their rights. Also, the lack of men in the country during the war allowed for women to take on many jobs that had been previously only deemed acceptable for men. Their attitude changed and the movement towards equal rights for women was intensified.