

“The Political issues in 1920”

AP Seminar

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There are many issues in the 1920s that have not been acknowledged since we mostly hear how it was a good time period for many. However, the 1920s, a new era for Americans, was hard on black women and even white women, although they could vote. The United States biggest ideal is that all men are equal but black women were still at a disadvantage due to their race. In “Are you ready for the Roaring '20s?”, it talks about how indigenous or black women were not able to vote in the south while white women had the privilege to do so.(Hemmer) This shows how racism was still present especially in the south, and how white women gained the right to vote while women of color still had to fight their own battles against white supremacists. In addition, black women were excluded from suffrage groups and since the south was still very discriminant, black women were rejected so that it didn't seem that the south was granting them the same privilege and respect.(Dumenil) This led to black women having yet another loss due to racism still playing a big part in this time period even though America enforced how “all men are equal”, but as we see here the whites were still treating black people unequally and were taking away from their rights. However, white women that could vote were also facing discrimination and were banned from jury service in some states, they faced unequal treatment in divorce proceedings, child custody issues, and property disputes. (Gale) This shows how even though they had the right to vote, they were also treated differently from men and were seen as less. In the 1920s women were still facing issues regarding the same treatment as men and their rights. Although the economy was great, politically wise, the United States was still not living up to its ideals.

Susan Zeiger is an expert on U.S history with two books published, and taught many courses including women's history at Regis College for almost two decades. In her article “FINDING A CURE FOR WAR: WOMEN'S POLITICS AND THE PEACE MOVEMENT IN THE 1920s' ' she argues about changes made by women in the 1920s. The Cause and Cure of War (CCCW) was the largest women's peace organization of the 1920s. They protested against the military to prevent war and impose

peace.(Zeiger) In fighting for what they believe and want to enforce, the organization shows how this was a turnpoint because a new side of women taking the lead was shown and their involvement and commitment to create changes politically. According to the article Carrie Catt, an American women's suffrage leader, believed that women should participate in wartime service and that the only way America could be peaceful is if all the governments would be democratic.(Zeiger) This supports how the 1920s was a turnpoint for people because it connects to how women gained the courage to be heard and be treated as equal by society, and more voices were being heard about the political party that best fit the United States which led to more changes being made. Carrie Catt clearly stated her belief on the government that would be better for the country. Susan Zeigler also mentions how many religion groups changed their thinking after the war including church groups and religious publications who wanted to help others. (Zeiger) This shows the impact the war left on people and how they turned back to rely on religion due to the horrors of the war. This also connects to the effort of women groups in trying to get peace and stop America from going into war. Politics is not an easy thing to get into and in this article we see Zeigers argument on how politics was evolving and new opinions were being enforced through women therefore creating a turn point for many Americans.

Melissa Murray is an academic and legal scholar who is a professor of law at New York University. In the article “ABORTION, STERILIZATION, AND THE UNIVERSE OF REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS”, she argues about abortion restriction and the racism taking place due to the eugenics movement. The eugenics movement main focus was to prevent interracial marriage and to increase the population of native white Americans in whom they declared fit enough to reproduce. (Murray) This was a turnpoint in the 1920s because not only people of color were being discriminated against but also white people who were not in the “standards” of reproducing. In addition, the eugenics movement made immigration policies and laws in which Northern Europeans were encouraged to migrate but immigrants from other countries were seen as a disruption in the purification of the

country's gene pool.(Murray) The discrimination that took place during this era created dramatic change in how the United States was viewed and how the eugenics movement was not only affecting the states but other countries. Laws were also passed allowing sterilization to people that did not want to reproduce, people with disabilities, mental illnesses, or criminality. (Murray) Overall the eugenics movement only cared about converting the United States into a purely fit white population. They also wanted to reduce the population by sterilizing people who jeopardized their focus. Melissa Murray shows us the wrong doings that once took place in the United States which was a huge turning point for Americans since they were being picked apart.

The roaring twenties was a start for new beginnings however it was also the beginning of the prohibition era. Joe Bubar a writer, editor, and journalist who was a senior editor at The New York Times Upfront and got his work published by many known newspapers, is the writer of “The Prohibition Era One hundred years ago, a constitutional amendment banned the sale of alcohol nationwide-but a lawless underworld of mobsters, speakeasies, and bribery flourished”. In this article he talks about the changes occurring due to the prohibition laws. Alcohol was banned in the United states and became illegal because of the prohibition law however many smuggled illegal alcohol and underground bars were opened in garages, flower shops and many other places.(Bubar) This was a turning point because people were going against the law and started committing crimes and engaging in illegal activities. Gangbangers also had many turf wars due to the bootlegging businesses. (Bubar) This shows how criminal rates were increasing because many wanted control over the illegal business of selling alcohol. Although most people were against the prohibition act, women supported it due to their husbands always being drunk and wasting their money on alcohol. Many women also saw it as an opportunity to stop the

domestic violence they went through due to their husbands. (Bubar) This was a turnpoint for women because it allowed them to save their marriages and resolve the drinking issues of their husbands. As we see from this article written by Joe Bubar the 18th amendment had a huge impact in the 1920s and it led to dramatic change in people's actions all around the United States.

On the other hand Griffin Fariello, an award winner of the Myers Center for the Study of Human Rights, wrote about the horrors of the red scare. Fariello is the author of "Red Scare: Memories of the American Inquisition". In the book it talked about how people that would organize protests and would defend communists would be in jail for 5 years and had to pay one dollar.(Fariello) This was a turning point because people couldn't support or have an opinion since they would get unjust consequences. In addition, communist were seen as less and were not getting the same civil rights as everyone else.(Fariello) This shows how there was a lot of unfairness occurring in the 1920s which was targeted towards one group of people because they didn't agree with everyone else. Their rights were taken away and ignored which also shows how America was not enforcing their ideals. Racism was also a big factor during the red scare. A black professor who wanted housing and schools in the North for black people lost his job for activating and participating in movements.(Fariello) This was a turning point because as we see here racism was still taking place in the 1920 and black people were at a drawback due to wanting more opportunities that were available for white people. The United states claimed all men were equal but during the 1920s many were still discriminated against. .

Most people refer to the 1920s as the "roaring twenties" in which America was at a high and advancing; however, the brutal horrors were kept in the dark and pushed aside. Through Susan Zeiger, Melissa Murray, History, and students of history we were able to see all of the negative events occurring during that time and how it was a turnpoint for people.

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