

Chapter 7 Lesson 4

The Impact of WWI

Economic issues:

- 1) Inflation: people rushed to buy goods that had been rationed, and producers raised prices that had been fixed leading to inflation
- 2) Strikes: inflation caused workers to desire higher wages, companies did not want to do that because operating costs were increasing, strikes resulted
- 3) By end of 1919, over 3,600 strikes had occurred
- 4) The Seattle General Strike: started by shipyard workers, led to a general strike of all workers. Over 60,000 workers went on strike. The concept of a general strike created fear among the population.
- 5) The Boston Police Strike: about 75% of the police force went on strike; Governor Coolidge called in the National Guard. The police were fired and Coolidge refused to rehire them. His actions led to him being the Vice-President.
- 6) The Steel Strike: 350,000 steel workers went on strike. US Steel tried to break the strike and the union. 18 strikers died and the union was damaged for years.

Racial issues:

- 1) Racial unrest as soldiers returned home and found jobs taken by African Americans (some of whom were laid off), racism and overall frustration led to increased violence
- 2) Summer 1919: race riots broke out all around the US
 - a. Texas: whites burned shops and homes of AA
 - b. Washington DC: gangs of AA and whites fought each other in the streets for days until troops gained control
 - c. Chicago: riot breaks out after AA go to a white only beach, an African American teenager drowns during the violence—then a full riot breaks out as each side angrily attacks the neighborhoods of the other side—it lasted 2 weeks, National Guard had to be called out and 38 people died.
- 3) Many African Americans were discouraged because their war efforts did not seem to matter, but others organized and fought back by joining the NAACP and fighting against lynching and other forms of discrimination

The Red Scare:

- 1) A nationwide panic that “Reds” or communists from Russia/Europe were going to lead a revolution
- 2) The Palmer Raids: after a spate of homemade bombs in the mail, riots involving socialists and bombings in 8 cities—A. Mitchell Palmer (Justice Department) had his agents begin to target groups, seeking info about the bombings, etc. The agents generally targeted foreigners, in November of 1919, the Union of Russian Workers offices were raided. Later 249 Russians were

deported. The agents also went after radical groups. Many people were detained and their rights were often violated. For a short period of time Palmer was seen as a hero, but his raids turned up no sign of a conspiracy.

- 3) Several states passed laws making it illegal to join groups that were advocating revolution. There were also increased calls to limit immigration (because immigrants were seen as connected to radicalism).

The election of 1920:

- 1) The Democratic ticket of James Cox and FDR is defeated. They ran on a progressive platform but people wanted change.
- 2) The republican ticket of Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge ran on a platform of a return to normalcy. Harding wins by a landslide.