 **Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**HIS-144: America after World War II**

1. Explain the G.I. Bill. In what ways does it change America?

The G.I. Bill also referred to as the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, was a legislation that was enacted to help veterans of World War II transition back to civilian lifestyle. The bill did this by offering several benefits to these veterans, including loans to buy homes and education, all at low cost, unemployment compensation, vocational training, health care, getting employed, and strategies to assist them in adjusting to being a civilian again (Bound & Turner, 2002). Over time the bill has been revised, but the benefits are pretty much the same.

This bill changed America because it helped war veterans easily transition back into society. Unemployment compensation offered the veterans to wait until they had the job they wanted and not be desperate for jobs that they settled for low paying, jobs they did not want. Low-cost education loans allowed veterans who wanted to further their education the chance to do so. Some of these veterans went on to become prominent members of society, for example, fourteen Nobel Prize winners, Supreme Court Justices, Presidents, and Numerous senators, to name a few (Bound & Turner, 2002). The G.I Bill impact improved the lives of veterans and their families as well, a multigenerational impact.

1. Why did suburbanization occur after World War II? What changes does suburbia bring to American society?

The decade before World War II put America through two major events, the Great Depression and the Second World War. The Great Depression put the country under economic distress, and many people moved away from the cities as industries shut down and into the country in search of jobs. However, the Second World War revived America’s economy because more weapons and labor were required; hence, the cities experienced a flush of huge numbers of people, taking up numerous jobs, including soldiers. Consequently, America suddenly had many resources, and by the end of the war, they wanted to invest these resources. Most of these people wanted their own houses, so they turned to the suburbs because the cities were already crowded (Nicolaides & Wiese, 2017). Besides, to encourage the housing market development, the federal government ordered the Federal Housing Authority to grant mortgages with a period of thirty years and approve them with only a 10% deposit (Hanchett, 2000).

A second factor contributing to the growth of populations in the suburbs is the access to transportation to and from the city. Shortly after the war, cars were viewed as a necessity by Americans. In the 1950s, the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act led to the rapid expansion of road construction projects. These factors complemented each other and led to population growth in the suburbs. Thirdly, even veterans of the war who, after the war, wanted to settle in a quiet environment preferred the suburbs, and with the G.I Bill, their wishes were made possible.

1. Why is the automobile so important to post war America?

One of the reasons automobiles are crucial after the war in America is the economic value they add to the country. A significant population in America is dependent on the automobile industry for their livelihood. Some of these people include drivers of public vehicles like taxis, buses, and chauffeurs. Automobile manufacturing companies make up a billion-dollar industry employing thousands of employees, fast response of emergency services, delivery people, garage attendants, and people associated with drive-through restaurants, individuals in automobile insurance, hospitals require ambulances, and movement of goods across the country, to name crucial areas that highlight the importance of automobiles.

In addition, over the last few years, the world has experienced a global pandemic that left most people locked in their houses. Any and every need that people required had to be delivered, especially the basic needs. With automobiles, this was made possible, and many infections were prevented through these services. Therefore, automobiles have proven to be essential in the survival of humans, especially in times of need.

1. Describe gendered spheres in American society before WWII and how they changed after the war.

Before world war II, women were expected to stay at home and take care of their families, and those who chose to work, though rare, had jobs like office assistants or receptionists (Davies & Frink, 2014). However, this changed during the war. As more job opportunities opened up and more men enlisted to fight the way, the market had a gap to fill. Consequently, companies encouraged women to take up jobs in almost all fields of employment, and they did not hesitate. These women played the roles of employee, provider, father, and mother during the war period.

However, after the war, the men returned home, and women were expected o go back to their roles as homemakers. Some agreed, but others were unwilling to let go of their newly gained independence, so they chose to remain in their workplaces. Consequently, they faced many challenges, including demotion, sexual harassment, low pay, and discrimination. As time went by, women continued to fight for their rights and eventually joined the Civil Right Movement, which eventually resulted in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Houck & Dixon, 2009). This Act outlawed the discrimination of women based on sex, thereby opening up many opportunities for women in the workplace.

1. What was the role of religion in post-World War II American society?

After the Second World War, religion’s significant role was inspiring and driving the Civil Rights Movement. Martin Luther King Jr was a reverend and always insisted on the no-violence rule during protests, which he had adopted from Gandhi (LaFayette, 2004). In addition, his speech highlight was “I have a dream”, a phrase that inspired faith and hope. In addition, African American churches offered places for African Americans and their allies to meet up and were also used as training grounds.

Another prominent group during the Civil Rights Movement was the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, which was heavily influenced by religion as most of its leaders, like John Lewis, was seminary student (LaFayette, 2004). John Lewis stated that religion significantly motivated them and gave them faith and hope against fear, violence, and other challenges, including racial discrimination faced by African Americans.

Moreover, the post-World War II period saw a reduction in the number of people involved with religious events. Some of the factors that challenged religion were the literary elite during the 1920s, followed by the Great Depression, and then the Second World War. The suffering was too much for the people who most stopped attending church. However, religion grew again after the war and was used as a pillar of safety and uprightness in the suburbs, where people settled in large numbers.

1. Explain the development of youth culture in post war America.

Post World War II, the youth developed a culture that rebelled against their parents’ culture. Mainstream media and affluence highly influenced this rebellion. After the war, there was a boom in the mainstream media, and teenagers actively interacted with the content they were exposed to: music, fashion, hairstyles, and other lifestyle issues featured on the televisions were adopted by the youth (Schmidlechner, 2020).

Subsequently, affluence played a major role in shifting youth culture. For example, parents could buy big houses that gave teenagers their rooms. This freedom allowed the youth to express themselves, for example, sexually. Before the war, sex before marriage was highly condemned, but after the war, things changed, and although some did it in secret, they had an open mind towards sexuality. Also, before the war, the youth had a hard time getting jobs or keeping their salaries to themselves; however, after the war, teenagers could get part-time jobs and use their earnings as they wished. This gave them independence and the ability to buy their own things from music, magazines, clothes, etc.

**References**

Bound, J., & Turner, S. (2002). Going to war and going to college: Did World War II and the GI Bill increase educational attainment for returning veterans?. *Journal of labor economics*, *20*(4), 784-815.

Davies, A. R., & Frink, B. D. (2014). The origins of the ideal worker: The separation of work and home in the United States from the market revolution to 1950. *Work and Occupations*, *41*(1), 18-39.

Hanchett, T. W. (2000). The other ‘subsidized housing’: federal aid to suburbanization, 1940s-1960s. *From tenements to the Taylor Homes: In search of an urban housing policy in twentieth century America*, 163-179.

Houck, D. W., & Dixon, D. E. (Eds.). (2009). *Women and the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965*. Univ. Press of Mississippi.

LaFayette Jr, B. (2004). The role of religion in the civil rights movements. In *Faith and Progressive Policy: Proud Past, Promising Future Conference, sponsored by the Center for American Progress, City*.

LaFayette Jr, B. (2004). The role of religion in the civil rights movements. In *Faith and Progressive Policy: Proud Past, Promising Future Conference, sponsored by the Center for American Progress, City*.

Nicolaides, B., & Wiese, A. (2017). Suburbanization in the United States after 1945. In *Oxford research encyclopedia of American history*.

Schmidlechner, K. M. (2020). Youth Culture in the 1950s. In *Austria in the nineteen fifties* (pp. 116-137). Routledge.