

Impact of World War II on Canadian Society

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Although Canada participated in both world wars, it is only up to the Second World War that Canada gained a firm standing in the global geopolitics due to the crucial contribution to the war. During the First World War, Canada participated in the war mainly because it was a semiautonomous region of Britain, and therefore it had to bear some of the burdens of Britain. However, during the Second World War, Canada played a significant role in the war, and although it was still allied to Britain, the resoluteness of the war was mainly motivated by the need to protect their empire, which led to direct attacks on Canada (Durflinger, 2004). This essay explores the impacts of the Second World War on society.

The Second World War changed the social aspects of Canadian society, as can be seen from the growth of nationalism and British identity in Canada and the changes in gender roles and family units. The rise in nationalism and identity with the British was more common in some towns and cities than others, as it can be seen in Verdun city in Quebec that played a major role in enlistment and participation in the war. There was growth of nationalism and British identity as can be seen from the enlistment and participation of the Canadians from Verdun in Quebec, in the war that was enabled by their strong British identity and allegiance that promoted patriotism. Due to this patriotism and sense of nationalism, the city of Verdun in Quebec had the highest enlistment rates globally for the countries that participated in the war (Durflinger, 2004). The allegiance was mainly from the English Canadians, who were three times more than the French Canadians played a significant role too. The period between the two wars solidified the memory of this widespread patriotism and helped shape responses of the Canadian society during the Second World War. The war saw changes in the family unit and gender roles mainly because of the high enlistment rates of the men in the Canadian army. At the ages of 15 and 16,

the Canadian young men hit the military service age and this prompted majority of them to join the military hence depriving the society of their productivity, and this pushed women to work, which in return affected the long term gender roles, equality, and the entirety of the family structure.

Some of the economic impacts of the war were the contribution in moving Canada from an agrarian society to an industrial society to support the war, enabled planning of some sectors of the economy, and set the right conditions for post-war growth. The need for war material raw materials, and food supplies during the war prompted the Canadian economy to become more industrialized due to the war's demands, which significantly changed the Canadian economic model to a more industrial economy over an agrarian economy. The war enabled the Canadian government and relevant stakeholders to participate in a more planned economy, which can be seen from the government intervention in rationing power demands to deal with the shortages of power, allowing some sectors of the economy such as those in the military-industrial complex to thrive over other sectors (Eveden 2005). The planned economy was vital because it created a platform for post-war economic growth as the government control over the market was used to control other sectors such as production, mining, and transportation that became more important after the war, hence contributing to the post-war economic growth.

The Second World War significantly affected the political landscape of Canada, as it can be seen from the strengthened ties between Britain and Canada and more government intervention in social lives. As evident from the German invasion of Britain, Canada made it a personal initiative to protect Britain and hence strengthening the ties between the two countries (Durflinger, 2004). These excellent relations can be seen by the willingness of the Canadians to enlistment in the military. The geopolitical relations between Canada and Britain led to direct

attacks on Canadian waters and the mainland by the Axis powers during the war, as seen from the attack in the Battle of St. Lawrence and Estevan Point in British Columbia. The war also led to more government intervention in social lives that can be seen from the imposition by the federal government to ration power usage and promote power conservation during the war (Eveden, 2005). The rationing and conservation were meant to conserve power for use in factories, allow the government to have control over some sectors of society, and protect Canada from external enemy attacks during the night.

In conclusion, the Second World War had significance in Canadian society, with some of these impacts still dominating contemporary Canadian society. Some of the social factors of the war to the Canadian society include the growth of nationalism, patriotism, British identity in Canada, and changes in the gender roles and family unit. Some of the political factors of the war that impacted the Canadian society were the stringer geopolitical relations with Britain and Allied countries and dented relations with Axis powers, and more government intervention in the social lives. Some of the economic impacts of the war include a more planned and controlled economy, the adoption of an industrial economy over an agrarian economy, and preparation of postwar economic growth.

References

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