

Candidate 4 evidence

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34	<p>Before the 1920s, American had operated on an 'open door' policy regarding immigration. This meant they allowed virtually anyone into the country. However, in 1921 the Emergency Quota Act was passed, which said that only 3% of each nationality living in the US at that time would be allowed into the country. This was due to a noticeable change in attitude towards immigration. The view that 'social fears were the main reason for changing attitudes towards immigration in the 1920s' is valid to a certain extent, however the main reason why attitudes were chaing was due to an increase in prejudice and racism. Social fears were important, however prejudice and racism was the most important, with other significant factors such as fear of revolution and isolationism also contributing.</p> <p>The view that 'social fears were the main reason for changing attitude towards immigration in the 1920s' is valid to a certain extent, as social fears contributed to the rise in suspicion towards immigrant minorities in America. High crime rates were beginning to be blamed on immigrant numbers, as crime rates increased in the country alongside immigrant population. This was important as it demonstrated the view that many white Americans possessed; that immigrants were largely inherrent criminals, and much of American's crime would be caused solely by them. Sacco and Vancetti were two Italian immigrants, put on trail for robbery and murder. They were convicted on largely circumstantial evidence by an all-white jury. This proves how eager people were to pin crimes on immigrants. However on the other hand, social fears had less of an impact on changing attitudes as charity workers and social workers were responsible for highlighting the real cause of crime, which was down to lonliness, terrible living conditions and poverty. This proved that crime rated would be evident even in the absence of immigrants. Therefore, the view is valid, however not completely valid as prejudice and racism was the main reason. This is because social workers also had proved that the vast majority of crimes committed by immigrants were petty crimes such as theft, and so it proved that immigrants had someone on their side. Prejudice and racism however was prevalent throughout society and meant little people would fight to defend immigrants.</p> <p>Prejudice and racism was the main reason why attitudes towards immigrants changed in the 1920s. The White Anglosaxon Protestants (WASPs) were a group of original settlers from Western European countries who didn't want their way of life being influenced by Southern and Eastern European immigrants who did not share the share culture or religion. The Klu Klux Klan (KKK) were established in the 1860s following the abolishment of the slave trade, but saw a revival in 1915. By 1925 they peaked at 5 million members. This was important as it showed the huge percentage of the country who had largely prejudiced views on immigrants. Not only this, many respected members of the community were involved with the KKK. These included policemen, sherrifs and ministers. This gave the impression that the KKK were worthy of support, and made it increasingly hard to fight againt them as huge numbers of the public had KKK connections. However on the other hand, by 1929 the KKK had reached under one million members, and by the 1930s under 30,000. This was evidence of extreme white superiorism was dying out, as were concerns regarding immigrants. Despite this, prejudice and racism was more important than social fears, as President Warren G Harding was believed to be a secret</p>	

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	<p>member of the KKK - which proved how widespread they were. Social fears were largely based on the views and ideas of groups such as the KKK and therefore weren't as significant.</p> <p>Fear of revolution was another important factor that makes the view that 'social fears were the main reason for changing attitudes towards immigration in the 1920s' less valid. In 1917, Russia had undergone a communist revolution which massively contradicted the ideas of the 'American Dream'. This made people cautious of immigrants, as they feared a revolution initiated by immigrants because it threatened the livelihood of those who had done well for themselves in America. Mitchell Palmer was the top US law enforcement officer at the time who led raids to arrest and deport approximately 6000 alleged subversives. This was important as it showed the extent at which the government was prepared to go to in order to avoid a communist revolt. It only developed the anxiety already contained within the US public, as it made them feel like they had something to fear if the government was going to such lengths. However this was less significant as Mitchell Palmer had presidential ambitions, and so needed to be seen as a good leader - and so exaggerated the real chance of a communist revolution. Subsequently, the fear of a revolution was less important in the changing of attitudes towards immigration as the fear of revolution was relatively short term, as by the 1st of May the revolution Palmer had predicted never came to anything. Prejudice and racism was much more of an ongoing issue and lasted for a much longer period of time, as the KKK still exist in their small numbers today.</p> <p>A final reason as to why the view isn't entirely valid is because isolationism also contributed to the changing of attitudes in the US. In World War One, America had lost over 116,000 troops, even after being slow and reluctant to get involved in the first place. On top of this, many 1st wave immigrants had been from Western European countries such as Germany and Britain, and so at the outbreak of WWI divisions in society were created. German houses and businesses were targeted, and German culture was boycotted. Because of this, America had the intention of isolating itself from foreign influence, as a means to prevent further conflict and separation within communities. However, the WWI experience towards immigrants wasn't all bad in America - liberty bonds were encouraged to be bought by immigrants, which they did in their thousands. This was a vital contribution to the war effort, that demonstrated the relationship between immigrant minorities and US citizens could be one of peace.</p> <p>In conclusion, the view that 'social fears were the main reason for changing attitudes towards immigration in the 1920s' is valid, but only to a certain extent. The accurate main reason was because of an increase in prejudice and racism throughout America. This was more important than isolationism, as the war effort made by immigrants through Liberty Bonds was one of significance - whereas prejudice and racism caused them to oversee this war effort as they possessed their racially discriminatory views. The fear of revolution only went so far in influencing changing attitudes as it was relatively short term, as the fear of revolution fizzled out as it never came to anything. This compared to prejudice and racism, which is still evident in society proves that it had much</p>	

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	<p>more of an influence over changing attitudes. The view is partially correct, as social fears were important as high crime rates were often associated with increasing immigrant numbers, however social fears werent as important as prejudice and racism. This is because social and charity workers publicised the real cause of high crime in America, proving that immigrants had someone to stand against the stereotypy reagrding social fears. Prejudice and racism however was common in some form throughout the community, and people based their social fears off common racially prejudiced ideas. Therefore, the view is not completely valid as prejudice and racism was the main reason for the changing of attitudes towards immigration in the 1920s. This is because the rise and existence of groups such as the KKK and the WASPs spread a negative and dishonest representation of the role of immigrants within American society, and impacted every American citizen to a certain extent.</p>	