Chapter 31

1) In brief, what groups made up the New Right and what were their concerns?

New Right refers to the group of military that were extremely powerful back in the 1970s and 1980s. It consisted of the evangelical Christians, middle-income suburban voters, free-market economic conservatives, anti-communist protesters and individuals who were unhappy with the cultural change in the 1960s. The evangelicals focused on problems, like abortion, school prayer and the traditional family values. The economic conservatives wanted cutback in taxes, deregulation and cutback in government spending. Supporters of hard military policies were the anti-communists (Corbett et al. 2014, p.855). They were both against liberal social programs, affirmative action and moral degradation. It is with their collaboration which allowed them to transform American politics, and played a huge role in the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980.

2) What was the basic premise behind Reaganomics?

According to the Reaganomics, lower taxes, deregulation of the government and encouraging individual investment, it was assumed that economic growth would be gained. As Reagan perceived, the cut in the taxes especially on businesses and the high earners would increase production, create jobs, and dependency on the economic activity; it is alternatively referred to as the supply side economics or the trickle-down economics. The government was also aiming at cutting federal spending on social welfare, and raise military budgets (Corbett et al. 2014, p.856). This gave Reagan more freedom to offer the private sector greater freedom and less government intervention and they would emerge even more stronger economically. Critics

claim that Reaganomics helped grow the economy, but inequality and deficits at federal levels also increased.

3) Why was Ronald Reagan called "The Great Communicator?"

Ronald Reagan was proclaimed the “Great Communicator” because of the exceeding ability to make the Americans interested to his personality through clear, optimistic, and relevant speeches. He was a former actor and the way he narrated some stories, with humour, and told them in simple words that easily explained the hard problems and assured the nation about harsh times. Reagan could emotionally appeal to the citizens by giving them hope and promise that America was safe, along with its future (Corbett et al. 2014, p.857). His speeches whether about the economy, cold war or the national tragedies were convincing and memorable. Communicational abilities were the reasons Reagan was able to develop a powerful popular support, impacting the national discussions and uniting diverse communities and, therefore, becoming one of the most influential speakers of modern political history.

4) What was the Heritage Foundation?

The Heritage Foundation was a right wing think tank that was formed in 1973 to influence the overall policy through carrying out a study and analysis besides lobbying. It also turned out to be one of the greatest intellectual movements of New Right and of the Ronald Reagan presidential administration. The organization promoted the small government, the economy based on free markets, the efficient national security and the traditional social values. The Heritage also formulated detailed policy decrees, the most significant one being the Mandate of Leadership, and through which Reagan led most of his early reforms (Corbett et al. 2014, p.858). The foundation attempted to shape the creation of laws, attempt to advise legislators and

sway the masses. It remains one of the strongest conservative groups in United States which has been continuously molding the politics.

5) How did racial profiling and mass incarceration originate?

The results of incarceration and profiling many people on the basis of race were creations of deeply rooted racism and political policies that prioritized law and order that started in the late 1960s. Policymaking under Nixon and Reagan respectively was directed towards combating the minority groups, especially the African Americans through the war on drugs, compulsory jail sentences and law-enforcement strategies. These laws discriminated against the black and Latino community, which was not the case with the different races with regard to the level of drug use (Corbett et al. 2014, p.862). The media portrayals intensified stereotypes that expressed that race has a close relationship with the crime. It, by the years, resulted in vicious sentencing, increase in prison system and establishment of larger police power which insured that minorities were much more susceptible to stop and frisk and arrest and incarceration.

6) What was the problem for the U.S. in Central America?

Central America at the time of 1980s was a significant battlefield in the cold war by the U.S. Washington feared that a left-wing revolution like the one witnessed in Nicaragua and El Salvador would strengthen the Soviet and Cuban powers in the West Hemisphere. This is the quandary of the weighting between the anti-communist interests, and the growing requirements of abuses of human being by the U.S supported governments and rebel forces (Corbett et al. 2014, p.864). The American intervention was as in form of finance, training, and arming the standards against communism, which had always been a typically controversial one. The region

became a moral and political question: the U.S. wanted to avoid communism and was accused of supporting the violent regimes and creating instabilities and sufferings among the civilians.

7) What was the unlikely intersection that occurred during the Reagan presidency between Iran and Nicaragua known as Iran-Contragate?

The Iran-Contragate is an illegal and secret plan of the presidency of Reagan, in which a nation that was not connected with another one was linked: Iran and Nicaragua. The American authorities sold armaments to Iran, though this was forbidden, in an effort to get American hostages in the Middle East freed. Thesearms sales revenues were later reimbursed into the pockets of Contras, which was a rebel force that was battling against a leftist government in Nicaragua, the Sandinista government (Corbett et al. 2014, p.875). This was an unlawful operation as the Congress had outlawed the use of aid to the Contras. The scandal not only damaged the image of Reagan when it was revealed, but also led to investigations and conviction of officials, and left the strength and responsibility of the executive and the government with a heavy question mark.

9) How did George Bush help to advance the civil rights movement in a bold new direction?

George H. W. Bush achieved the advancement in civil rights by signing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 that was among the most significant civil rights legislation since 1960s. ADA did not permit any form of discrimination of persons with disabilities in areas of employment, transport, access to public areas and communication. It forced companies and government agencies to accommodate and make equal opportunities on reasonable grounds. The act created a nationwide notion of access and inclusion, declining the civil rights of millions of individuals who had been disregarded (Corbett et al. 2014, p.877). The equality grounded by

Bush through his support displayed the bipartisan opinion concerning equality and has created an indelible mark in the American society in regards to recognizing the rights of disabled individuals as vital civil rights.

10) What was NAFTA?

The NAFTA was a free trade agreement between United States, Canada and Mexico that came to be effective in 1994. It decimated most of the tariffs among the three countries in an attempt to increase the degree of economic integration, consumer price lowering, and foreign direct investment. Those that advocated NAFTA defended the agreement on grounds that it increased competitiveness in North America and it opened up markets to the U.S. business (Corbett et al. 2014, p.872). It encouraged outsourcing and cost the jobs at the American manufacturing, claims the critics. NAFTA changed the tendencies in the trade during decades and became one of the most talked about economic policies in the U.S. history up to the moment when the policy was replaced by the USMCA in 2020.

11) Why did the Health Security Act fail?

The ignorance differentiation led to the failure of the initiative of Health Security Act which was introduced in 1993 by President Bill Clinton and remained highly complicated, something that central politics lacked and was strongly opposed by the insurance companies, the conservatives and even the Democratic Party. The scheme attempted to get universal health coverage but it was claimed to be bulky and difficult to understand. The opponents made effective advertising campaigns that the plan was going to limit the choice and the government will have an addition of better control (Corbett et al. 2014, p.874). Congress was now split and the administration could not make its proposal in a correct manner. Low social or political

support guaranteed the defeat of the bill since the U.S. remained without any serious health reform until 2010.

12) What was the problem with 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell?'

“Don't Ask, Don't Tell”, was intended to allow the gays and lesbians in America to serve in the military as long as they did not declare their sexuality. In practice, it forced the service members to make a secret life and be afraid and face danger of being discharged. Thousands were thrown out by simply being an out-of-the-closet gay. The policy failed to remove stigma and discrimination, but made it stronger. Instead of protecting the LGBTQ+ military personnel, it suppressed their speech, relations and identity (Corbett et al. 2014, p.876). Many people claimed that it contravened the fundamental rights and declining military integrity since it encouraged dishonesty. This policy was finally overturned in 2011 and it allotted open service.

13) What are your thoughts on the events of the Election of 2000?

The Election of 2000 was one of the most disputable elections in the U.S. history. It brought about vulnerabilities of the voting process like out dated voting machine, misplaced ballots, and lack of consistency in the recounting of the voting process. The slim lead in Florida led to a number of litigations and Supreme Court decision-Bush v. Gore--that practically murdered the recount, and awarded to George W. Bush the presidency. The judicial intervention impacted a number of American in a manner that it was assumed that it was not appropriate and deprived the democratic fairness and by the same breath, people believed they should stop the indecisiveness (Corbett et al. 2014, p.879). The election brought the weakness of the electoral processes into the limelight, and caused endless debates concerning voting rights, recounts rule, and the Electoral College.

References:

Corbett, P. S., Janssen, V., Lund, J. M., Pfannestiel, T., Waskiewicz, S., & Vickery, P. (2024). *US history*.