

The Americans

Chapter 20: Politics of the Roaring Twenties, 1919–1929

Politics of the Roaring Twenties, 1919–1929

Chapter Opener: Politics of the Roaring Twenties, 1919–1929

The United States seeks postwar normality and isolation. The standard of living soars amid labor unrest, immigration quotas, and the scandals of the Harding administration.

Section 0: America Struggles with Postwar Issues

Section Opener: America Struggles with Postwar Issues

A desire for normality after the war and a fear of communism and “foreigners” lead to postwar isolationism.

Slide 3: Postwar Trends

The Effects of Peace on the Public

- * War leaves Americans exhausted; debate over League divides them
 - * Economy adjusting: cost of living doubles; farm, factory orders down
 - soldiers take jobs from women, minorities
 - farmers, factory workers suffer
 - * Nativism—prejudice against foreign-born people—sweeps nation
 - * Isolationism—pulling away from world affairs—becomes popular
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Slide 4: Fear of Communism [continued]

The Red Scare

- * Communism—economic, political system, single-party government
 - ruled by dictator
 - no private property
 - * 1919 Vladimir I. Lenin, Bolsheviks, set up Communist state in Russia
 - * U.S. Communist Party forms; some Industrial Workers of the World join
 - * Bombs mailed to government, businesses; people fear Red conspiracy
 - * Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer takes action
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Slide 5: Fear of Communism [continued]

The Palmer Raids

- * Palmer, J. Edgar Hoover hunt down Communists, socialists, anarchists
 - * Anarchists oppose any form of government
 - * Raids trample civil rights, fail to find evidence of conspiracy
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Slide 6: Fear of Communism

Sacco and Vanzetti

- * Red Scare feeds fear of foreigners, ruins reputations, wrecks lives
 - * 1920, Sacco and Vanzetti, Italian immigrants, anarchists, arrested
 - charged with robbery, murder
 - trial does not prove guilt
 - * Jury finds them guilty; widespread protests in U.S., abroad
 - Sacco, Vanzetti executed 1927
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Slide 7: Limiting Immigration [continued]

Anti-Immigrant Attitudes

- * Nativists: fewer unskilled jobs available, fewer immigrants needed
- * Think immigrant anarchists and socialists are Communist

The Klan Rises Again

- * Bigots use anti-communism to harass groups unlike themselves
 - * KKK opposes blacks, Catholics, Jews, immigrants, unions, saloons
 - 1924, 4.5 million members
 - * Klan controls many states' politics; violence leads to less power
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Slide 8: Limiting Immigration

The Quota System

- * 1919–1921, number of immigrants grows almost 600%
- * Quota system sets maximum number can enter U.S. from each country
 - sharply reduces European immigration
- * 1924, European arrivals cut to 2% of number of residents in 1890
- * Discriminates against southern, eastern Europeans
- * Prohibits Japanese immigration; causes ill will between U.S., Japan
- * Does not apply to Western Hemisphere; many Canadians, Mexicans enter

Slide 9: A Time of Labor Unrest [continued]

Postwar Labor Issues

- * Government doesn't allow strikes in wartime; 1919 over 3,000 strikes
- * Employers against raises, unions; label strikers as Communists

The Boston Police Strike

- * Boston police strike over raises, right to unionize
- * Calvin Coolidge ends strike, replaces strikers with new policemen

Slide 10: A Time of Labor Unrest [continued]

The Steel Mill Strike

- * 1919, steel workers strike; companies use force, later negotiate
- * Talks deadlock; Wilson appeals; strike ends
- 1923 report on conditions leads to 8-hour day

Slide 11: A Time of Labor Unrest

The Coal Miners' Strike

- * 1919, John L. Lewis becomes head of United Mine Workers of America
- * Leads strike; defies court order to work; accepts arbitration
- * Miners receive 27% wage increase; Lewis becomes national hero

Labor Movement Loses Appeal

- * In 1920s, union membership drops from over 5 million to 3.5 million
 - * Less than 1% of African Americans, just over 3% whites in unions
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Section 1: The Harding Presidency

Section Opener: The Harding Presidency

The Harding administration appeals to America's desire for calm and peace after the war, but results in scandal.

Slide 13: Harding Struggles for Peace [continued]

International Problems

- * President Warren G. Harding voices public desire for "normalcy"
 - * Hosts Washington Naval Conference; invites major powers, not Russia
 - * Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes proposes disarmament, others agree
 - * In 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact nations renounce war as national policy
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Slide 14: Harding Struggles for Peace

High Tariffs and Reparations

- * Fordney-McCumber Tariff raises taxes on U.S. imports to 60%
 - Britain, France cannot repay U.S.
 - * Germany defaults; Dawes Plan—U.S. investors lend reparations money
 - Britain, France repay; resentment on all sides
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Slide 15: Scandal Hits Harding's Administration [continued]

Harding's Cabinet

- * Harding favors limited government role in business, social reform
 - * Creates Bureau of the Budget to help run government
 - * Has capable men in cabinet—Hughes, Herbert Hoover, Andrew Mellon
 - * Also appoints Ohio gang—corrupt friends who cause embarrassment
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Slide 16: Scandal Hits Harding's Administration [continued]

Scandal Plagues Harding

- * Harding does not understand all issues facing nation
 - * Corrupt friends use their positions to become wealthy through graft
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Slide 17: Scandal Hits Harding's Administration

The Teapot Dome Scandal

- * Teapot Dome scandal—naval oil reserves used for personal gain
 - * Interior Secretary Albert B. Fall leases land to private companies
 - * Takes bribes; is first person convicted of felony while in cabinet
 - * August 1923, Harding dies suddenly
 - * VP Calvin Coolidge assumes presidency, restores faith in government
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Section 2: The Business of America

Section Opener: The Business of America

Consumer goods fuel the business boom of the 1920s as America's standard of living soars.

Slide 19: American Industries Flourish [continued]

Coolidge's Economic Policy

- * Calvin Coolidge favors minimal government interference in business
 - allow private enterprise to flourish
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Slide 20: American Industries Flourish [continued]

The Impact of the Automobile

- * Cars change life—paved roads, gas stations, motels, shopping centers
 - * Give mobility to rural families, women, young people
 - * Workers live far from jobs, leads to urban sprawl (spread of cities)
 - * Auto industry economic base for some cities, boosts oil industry
 - * By late 1920s, 1 car for every 5 Americans
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Slide 21: American Industries Flourish

The Young Airplane Industry

- * Airplane industry starts as mail service for U.S. Post Office
- * Weather forecasting begins; planes carry radios, navigation tools
- * Lockheed Company produces popular transport plane of late 1920s
- * 1927, Pan American Airways inaugurates transatlantic flights

Slide 22: America's Standard of Living Soars [continued]

Incomes Grow

- * Average annual income rises over 35%, from \$522 to \$705

Electrical Conveniences

- * Factories use electricity to run machines
- * Development of alternating current gives electricity to suburbs
- * By end of 1920s, more homes begin to have electrical appliances
- * Appliances make housework easier, free women for other activities
- * Appliances coincide with trend of women working outside home

Slide 23: America's Standard of Living Soars

The Dawn of Modern Advertising

- * Advertising agencies hire psychologists to learn to appeal to public
- * Make brand names familiar nationwide; push luxuries as necessities
- * Businesspeople work with service groups
- promote selves as benefactors of society

Slide 24: A Superficial Prosperity [continued]

Producing Great Quantities of Goods

- * Most Americans believe prosperity will last forever
- * Productivity increasing, businesses expanding
- * Mergers in auto industry, steel, electrical equipment, utilities
- * Chain stores develop; national banks allowed to create branches
- * Income gap between workers, managers grows
- * Iron, railroad industries not prosperous; farms suffer losses

Slide 25: A Superficial Prosperity

Buying Goods on Credit

- * Installment plan—pay for goods over extended period with interest
- * Banks provide money at low interest rates
- * Some economists, business owners think installment buying excessive
- * Think is sign of fundamental weakness behind superficial prosperity

Slide 26: Let the Games Begin!

Play the Review Game

Compete with your classmates in this show-what-you-know game. Rack up points, reveal an image, and earn more points in a bonus round.
