Fear of Radicalism

How did Americans respond to people who had new ideas about social change?

The years after World War I were an uncertain time in the United States. Tired of war and world responsibilities, the American people longed for a return to a way of life they viewed as normal. As a result, many people grew more suspicious of foreigners and those holding views different from their own.

The Russian Revolution fueled some of these suspicions. In 1917 the Bolsheviks had gained control in Russia. The Bolsheviks were Communists who believed that all people should share ownership of property. They urged workers around the world to overthrow capitalism (KA • puh • tuh • ihlz • uhmm), the economic system based on private property and free enterprise. Many Americans feared that "Bolshevism" threatened society.

Fanning the fears were the actions of anarchists (A • nuhr • ihkstz)—people who believe there should be no government. A series of anarchist bombings in 1919 in New York City, Seattle, and other cities frightened Americans.

Fear of the "Reds"

Reds was a popular term for Communists, and the term Red Scare refers to this time of heightened public fear. During the Red Scare, the government went after Communists and others with radical views. In late 1919 and early 1920, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and his deputy, J. Edgar Hoover, arrested more than 10,000 suspected Communists and anarchists. Palmer and Hoover also led raids on the headquarters of "suspicious" groups. They never found the large supplies of weapons they claimed they were seeking. The government deported—expelled from the United States—a few hundred of the aliens it arrested. It quickly released many others for lack of evidence.

Sacco and Vanzetti

The case of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti highlighted the fears and suspicions of this time. The two men were Italian immigrants and admitted anarchists. They were also accused of killing two men during a robbery. Though they claimed innocence, Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted of this crime in July 1921 in Massachusetts. They were then sentenced to death.

Some people felt Sacco and Vanzetti did not get a fair trial. It was clear that their beliefs and nationality had played some part in their conviction. Others, however, demanded their execution. In 1927 a special advisory committee upheld the verdict. Sacco and Vanzetti were put to death.

Analyzing What events of the 1920s might be used as examples of prejudice against immigrants?

Thinking Like a HISTORIAN

Analyzing Primary Sources

The Alien Act, which Congress passed in October 1917, stated that the United States could expel from the country any alien who was a member of any anarchist organization. Journalist and critic H. L. Mencken responded angrily to this law. He said, "Government, today, is growing too strong to be safe. There are no longer any citizens in the world; there are only subjects."

For more about analyzing and interpreting information, review Thinking Like a Historian.

Analyzing Primary Sources Explain what you think Mencken meant when he said "There are no longer any citizens in the world. There are only subjects."

Labor and Racial Strife

Why did social change lead to labor unrest and racial tension?
After World War I, industrial workers used strikes to get wage increases that would keep up with rapidly rising prices. Many Americans believed that Bolsheviks and radicals were causing this labor unrest. At the same time, racial tensions increased. In the North, many whites resented African American competition for factory jobs.

**Workers Go on Strike**

During World War I, the Russian Revolution put Communists in control in Russia. A series of strikes in the United States after World War I created fears that Communists were trying to start a revolution in the United States, too. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer viewed these strikes as a threat to the American values of religion, private property, and democracy. He declared, "The blaze of revolution [is] eating its way into the homes of the American workman."

In September 1919, about 350,000 steelworkers went on strike. They demanded an increase in wages and an eight-hour workday. The steel companies accused the strikers of being "Red agitators." The strikers lost public support and were forced to end the strike—but not before 18 strikers died in a riot in Gary, Indiana.

That same month, Boston police officers went on strike. They wanted the right to form a union. Many Americans did not think public safety employees, such as police officers and firefighters, should be allowed to strike. They applauded when Massachusetts governor Calvin Coolidge called out the National Guard. When the strike collapsed, the entire police force was fired.

Many workers linked labor unions to the idea of radicalism and refused to join them. Such distrust of unions, as well as pressure from employers and government, led to a sharp drop in union membership in the 1920s.

Despite the unions' decline, a dynamic leader named A. Philip Randolph started the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. This union of African American railroad workers gained additional members in the 1930s, when the government began giving greater support to unions.

**Racial Tensions and a Response**

In 1919 rising racial tensions led to violence. In the South, more than 70 African Americans were lynched. In the North, conflict followed the Great Migration. Hundreds of thousands of African Americans had moved north during and after World War I. Some whites lashed out at the new racial landscape.

In Chicago, for example, violence raged after a group of whites threw stones at an African American youth swimming in Lake Michigan. The youth drowned, and the incident set off rioting. For two weeks African American and white gangs roamed city streets. The riot left 15 whites and 23 African Americans dead and more than 500 people injured.

Many African Americans turned to Marcus Garvey for answers to the growing racial tensions. Garvey, a powerful leader with a magnetic personality, was born to a poor family in Jamaica. He did not support integration (ihn • tuh • GRAY • shuhn)—African Americans and whites living side-by-side. Instead he offered a message of racial pride. Garvey supported a "back-to-Africa" movement, urging African Americans to establish their own country in Africa. Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914 to promote African American achievement and pride. With offices in New York City's Harlem neighborhood, the association promoted economic strength for African Americans. Garvey gained a large following in New York and other cities.

**Explaining** Did Marcus Garvey support or oppose integration? Explain.

**LESSON 1 REVIEW**

**Review Vocabulary**

1. Use each of these terms in a sentence that explains the term's meaning.
   a. anarchist
   b. deport
   c. integration

2. Explain the Bolshevik view of capitalism.

**Answer the Guiding Questions**

3. **Explaining** What was the outcome of the Boston police strike of 1919?
Searching for "normalcy," the American people turned to probusiness and isolationist leadership.

Harding and Coolidge

How did Harding and Coolidge try to return America to quieter ways?

In the 1920 campaign, Warren G. Harding promised a return to "normalcy." What Harding meant by "normalcy" was not really clear. However, the word sounded reassuring to Americans. Many people longed for a simpler time, free of war and other frightening problems. Harding understood that longing.

Harding's running mate was Massachusetts governor Calvin Coolidge. The Republican team won a landslide victory in November 1920—the first presidential election in which women could vote. They easily defeated the Democratic candidate, Governor James Cox of Ohio, and his young running mate, Franklin Delano Roosevelt of New York.

Harding named several talented people to his cabinet, or team of advisors. For example, he included Charles Evans Hughes, a former Supreme Court justice, as secretary of state. Andrew Mellon, a Pittsburgh banker, headed the Treasury Department. Herbert Hoover, a skilled organizer, became secretary of commerce.

Political Scandals

Though President Harding named some talented people to his cabinet, he also gave top jobs to political supporters—the so-called Ohio Gang. Many of these people were unqualified.

Some turned out to be dishonest. One example was Albert Fall, Harding's secretary of the interior. In 1922 Fall secretly leased, or rented, government oil reserves to two oil companies. In return, Fall received more than $400,000. A court found Fall guilty of bribery. He became the first cabinet official ever to go to prison. Newspapers called the scandal "Teapot Dome," after the location of one of the oil reserves. The affair became a symbol of widespread dishonesty in the Harding government.

Harding himself was not involved in any scandals. As the rumors spread, however, he grew troubled. In the summer of 1923, Harding took a trip west to escape his political problems. During the trip, he suffered a heart attack and died.

Coolidge as President

Vice President Calvin Coolidge learned of Harding's death while he was vacationing in Vermont. Coolidge's father, a justice of the peace, administered the presidential oath of office to his son.

Calvin Coolidge was the opposite of Harding in many ways. Harding loved to talk and meet people. Coolidge earned the nickname "Silent Cal." The new president also had a reputation for honesty. Coolidge supported investigations into the Harding scandals, and he quickly replaced dishonest members of the Ohio Gang.

Like Harding, Coolidge believed in laissez-faire (leh • say • FEHR)—the idea that government should be involved as little as possible in the lives of citizens and businesses. He said, "If the federal government should go out of existence, the common run of the people would not detect the difference for a considerable length of time."

Support for Business

President Coolidge and the Republican-controlled Congress believed government could aid prosperity by supporting business. Under their leadership, the government cut spending, lowered income tax rates on wealthy Americans and corporations, and raised tariffs. Their government also overturned laws regulating child labor and women's wages. All of these steps helped make it easier for American businesses to earn greater profits.

The 1924 Election

The public loved Coolidge. The Republicans eagerly nominated him to run in 1924. The Democrats nominated John W. Davis of West Virginia as their candidate. Wisconsin senator Robert La Follette was the choice of a third party, the Progressives. Coolidge swept the opposition away, however, winning 54 percent of the popular vote. Also in 1924, two American women made election history. For the first time, women won governors' races—Nellie Tayloe Ross in Wyoming and Miriam Ferguson in Texas.

Describing Why was Harding's focus on "normalcy" an effective campaign strategy?
Foreign Policy

How did the United States try to avoid involvement in international disputes?

Many Americans supported limited American involvement with other nations, a policy known as isolationism. Both Harding and Coolidge also favored a limited role for the nation in world affairs. They desired world peace but did not want the nation to enter the League of Nations or join foreign alliances. Harding had promised the American people that he would not lead them into the League "by the side door, back door, or cellar door."

Seeking Peace

After World War I ended, the United States, Britain, and Japan began a naval arms race. The Harding administration, however, made serious efforts for peace. In 1921 Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes met with officials from Japan and Britain to discuss the arms race. In February 1922, the three nations, along with France and Italy, signed the Five-Power Treaty to limit the size of the nations' navies. The treaty marked the first time in modern history that world powers agreed to disarm.

In addition, in August 1928 the United States joined 14 other nations in signing the Kellogg-Briand Pact. This agreement called for outlawing war. Within a few years, 48 other nations signed the pact. The pact, however, lacked any way to force countries to live up to their agreement.

A More Peaceful Neighbor

To support American businesses, the United States intervened in Latin America several times in the early 1900s. By 1920 American troops were stationed in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, and relations with Mexico were tense.

During the 1920s, the United States took a more peaceful stance. American troops withdrew from the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua after those countries held elections. American investors asked President Coolidge to send troops into Mexico when its government threatened to take over foreign-owned companies. Instead, President Coolidge chose to negotiate and reached a peaceful settlement with Mexico.

**Explaining** Why would the Kellogg-Briand Pact prove to be ineffective?

**Connections to TODAY**

**Third Parties**

Throughout its history, the United States has usually had only two main political parties. However, third parties, such as the Progressive Party, have appeared from time to time. In the 2008 presidential election, third-party candidates won a combined total of more than 1 million popular votes.

LESSON 2 REVIEW

**Review Vocabulary**

1. Use each of these terms in a sentence that explains the term's meaning.
   a. lease
   b. laissez-faire

**Answer the Guiding Questions**

2. **Speculating** Why did President Harding give important government jobs to unqualified people?

3. **Drawing Conclusions** Why did Harding and Coolidge attempt to return the nation to "normalcy"?

4. **Summarizing** What was the U.S. approach to foreign policy during the Harding and Coolidge years?
Growth in the 1920s

How did electricity improve the lives of people in the 1920s?

After World War I, the United States went through a recession (ree • SEH • shuhn), or economic downturn. Then, in the early 1920s, the economy began to grow. It continued growing for most of the decade. In 1922 the nation’s gross national product (GNP)—the total value of all goods and services produced—was $70 billion. By 1928 GNP had risen to $100 billion.

Technology helped spur rapid industrial growth. Electricity provided the power. Before World War I, 30 percent of U.S. factories ran on electricity. By 1929 electricity powered 70 percent of all factories. Because electricity was cheaper than steam power, the cost of making factory products dropped. Businesses spent less money to make their products. This meant they could charge less for them—and increase profits at the same time.

New Ways of Managing

Businesses also changed the way they operated. Many employers hired experts with advanced knowledge to create scientific management methods. These methods enabled workers to do more with less effort. Scientific management lowered costs and increased productivity—the amount of work each worker could do. This also helped the economy grow.

Larger businesses began using mass-production techniques. Henry Ford used the assembly line in his automobile factories. Assembly lines increased productivity and cut production costs.

Businesses also tried to build better relations with workers. They set up safety programs that lowered the risk of death or injury on the job. Some provided health and accident insurance. Others encouraged workers to buy stock in the company. These efforts, known as welfare capitalism, aimed to link workers more closely to the company they worked for. One goal of these efforts was to keep workers happier and less likely to join labor unions.

The Economy and the Consumer

Electricity helped create an economy driven by consumer buying. By the 1920s, more than 60 percent of American households had electricity. Availability was uneven. It would be some years before power lines reached many farming communities. Still, availability of electric power was growing. As more households got electricity, companies made new electric devices—refrigerators, stoves, vacuum cleaners, and radios. Using electric appliances made many household chores easier. It gave people more leisure time and a better standard of living.

To sell their new products, businesses spent more money on advertising. Newspapers and magazines were filled with ads. The spread of radio helped create a new advertising form—the commercial announcement.

Encouraged by ads, consumers found a new way to make purchases. With installment buying, consumers bought goods by making small, regular payments over a period of time.

Explaining Why did the price of some consumer goods decrease?

The Automobile Age

How did the automobile change America during the 1920s?

The car became a major part of American life and the American economy in the 1920s. Nearly 4 million Americans worked in the automobile industry or in related jobs. Detroit, Michigan, became the auto-making center of the world.

Henry Ford was the industry’s great pioneer. He built his Model T using assembly-line methods. The car was sturdy, reliable, and inexpensive. In 1914 Ford began paying workers the high wage of five dollars a day. Many workers bought their own Model T’s.

Soon, General Motors and others cut into Ford’s sales. All carmakers made improvements and the industry grew rapidly.

Cars and Prosperity
The demand for cars led to greater prosperity. Governments built new highways to satisfy Americans' love of driving. Thousands got jobs on these projects. Thousands of gas stations and restaurants made money from drivers traveling around the country.

Industries that made products used in cars also did well. The steel, rubber, and glass industries grew. Cars also helped suburbs grow. Because people could drive to work, they could live farther from their jobs in the city.

**Uneven Prosperity**

Not all Americans shared in the boom times of the 1920s. Farmers, in particular, had difficulties. During the war, the government had bought wheat, corn, and other products. Prices were high, and farmers prospered. After the war, American farmers saw a decrease in demand for their crops. European farmers began to grow food again. As a result, European countries needed to import less food from the United States. This competition meant that American farmers had to accept lower prices. Farm incomes dropped. Many farmers had trouble paying their debts and lost their farms.

Farmers were not alone. New technology created difficult times for railroad workers and coal miners as well. Carmakers now produced trucks that companies could use to carry their products. Trucks began to take business from railroads, and electricity replaced coal as a power source.

Textile workers also suffered. Americans were buying less cotton clothing and more clothes made of synthetic fibers. Cotton prices plunged and many textile factories shut down. By 1929 nearly three-fourths of all families had incomes below $2,500, the amount considered necessary for a comfortable life.

**Explaining What groups did not share in the nation's prosperity?**

**LESSON 3 REVIEW**

**Review Vocabulary**

1. Use each of these terms in a sentence that explains the term's meaning.
   a. gross national product
   b. productivity
   c. recession

2. What does it mean when someone says he or she wants to use installment buying to purchase a new vacuum cleaner?

**Answer the Guiding Questions**

3. **Explaining** What was the role of electric power in the booming economy of the 1920s?

4. **Describing** How did businesses try to build better relations with workers?

5. **Identifying** Identify two key Ford innovations.

6. **Summarizing** Why was the automobile so important to the American economy?

7. **Narrative** Write a short story about a family that buys its first automobile. Explain how the car changes this family's life.
The 1920s was a period of many social and cultural changes but it was also a period of conflict between traditional and modern values.

**Social and Cultural Change**

*Why did American art and society change during the 1920s?*

While the economy was booming, American culture was also undergoing rapid change. New styles, habits, and entertainment challenged old ways of thinking.

**New Opportunities for Women**

Women were perhaps most affected by the cultural change. One important development was the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. The amendment guaranteed women in all states the right to vote. Women soon ran for political offices.

Most married women continued to work at home as mothers and homemakers. The number of women working outside the home, however, grew steadily. Most working women became teachers, nurses, or office workers. A few college-educated women began professional careers. The symbol of the new "liberated" woman of the 1920s was the flapper—a carefree young woman with short "bobbed" hair, heavy makeup, and a short skirt.

**New Forms of Communication**

The growth of mass media—forms of communication that reach a wide audience—helped spread cultural changes. Mass media such as newspapers and radio grew, reaching millions.

Movies were also a form of communication that grew in the 1920s, and the motion picture industry became a big business. The radio was another device that changed American life. In the 1920s, radio networks broadcast news, concerts, sporting events, and comedies to growing audiences. Businesses realized that the radio offered an enormous audience for messages about their products. They began to sponsor radio programs. Radio stations also sold advertising time to companies.

**Popular Events and Activities**

Radio allowed listeners to listen to sporting events live, making sports like baseball and football more popular. Sports stars such as baseball player Babe Ruth became national heroes.

Americans also took up new activities with enthusiasm. Board games and crossword puzzles became widely popular. Contests such as flagpole sitting and dance marathons made headlines.

**Jazz and the Harlem Renaissance**

Jazz was not new in the 1920s. However, the exciting, upbeat music captured the spirit of the era so well that the 1920s are often called the Jazz Age.

Jazz was rooted in African American culture, and many top performers were African Americans. They include trumpeter Louis Armstrong, composer Duke Ellington, and singer Bessie Smith. W.C. Handy, who won fame for pioneering a type of jazz known as the blues, was also making music at this time.

The rhythm and themes of jazz helped inspire a blossoming of culture in Harlem, an African American neighborhood of New York City. During this "Harlem Renaissance," writers such as Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, and Zora Neale Hurston shared the African American experience in novels, poems, and stories.

**The Lost Generation**

Beyond Harlem, some writers were questioning American ideals in the aftermath of World War I. Some became expatriates (eks•PAY•tree•uhhts)—people who choose to live in another country. Writer Gertrude Stein called these Americans "the lost generation." Among them were F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway. Fitzgerald, for example, wrote of a deep unhappiness beneath the high spirits of the times.


*Explaining* What leisure activities were popular during the 1920s?
A Clash of Cultures

Why did various groups clash over important issues?

Many Americans did not identify with the new, urban America of the 1920s. They believed that known and valued traditions were under attack. Disagreements arose between those who defended traditional beliefs and those who welcomed the new.

Prohibition

One issue that divided Americans was the use of alcohol. The temperance movement, the campaign against alcohol use, was rooted in a belief that society would benefit if people could not drink.

With ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1919, the movement reached its goal. This amendment established prohibition (proh • uh • BIH • shuhn)—a ban on the manufacture, sale, and transportation of liquor. In the rural South and Midwest, prohibition had some success. Elsewhere, continuing demand for alcohol led many people to break the law. Illegal bars and clubs, known as speakeasies, sprang up in cities.

The ban on alcohol contributed to organized crime. Powerful gangsters, such as Chicago's Al Capone, made millions of dollars from bootlegging—producing and selling illegal alcohol. They used their profits to influence businesses, labor unions, and governments.

The nation came to realize that prohibition had failed. In 1933, the Twenty-First Amendment repealed prohibition. It is the only amendment that overturned an earlier amendment.

An Up Surge in Nativism

The rapid changes in society were frightening to many Americans. Their concerns led to a rise in nativism (NAY • tih • vih • zuhn)—the belief that native-born Americans are superior to foreigners.

Along with this renewed nativism came a revival of the Ku Klux Klan. The new Klan, set up in 1915, still preyed on African Americans. It also targeted Catholics, Jews, immigrants, and other groups it believed to represent "un-American" values. In the 1920s, the Klan spread from the South to other areas of the country.

Nativism also arose because some Americans believed foreigners would take their jobs. Southern and eastern Europeans and Asians were the main targets of this prejudice.

In 1921 Congress responded to these fears by passing the Emergency Quota Act. This law set up a quota system, a fixed number of immigrants allowed from each country each year. The act limited annual immigration from a country to 3 percent of that country's American population in 1910. The policy favored immigration from northern and western Europe.

Three years later, Congress went even further. The Immigration Act of 1924 cut the country quota from 3 percent to 2 percent. It also set a total immigration limit of 150,000 to go into effect in 1927. The 1924 act based the 2 percent quota on the census of 1890, when few southern or eastern Europeans lived in the United States. The law also excluded Japanese immigrants completely. The Chinese were already excluded under an 1890 law.

Quotas did not apply to Western Hemisphere countries. As a result, immigration from Canada and Mexico increased. By 1930 more than 1 million Mexicans had come to live in the United States.

The Scopes Trial

The role of religion in society became an issue in the 1920s. The conflict gained national attention in 1925 in one of the most famous trials of the era.

In 1925 Tennessee passed a law making it illegal to teach evolution (eh • vuh • LOO • shuhn)—the scientific theory that humans and other species developed over vast periods of time. Christian fundamentalists—people who believe in strictly following the Bible—supported the law. They believed in the Biblical story of creation, and they saw evolution as a challenge to their beliefs.

John Scopes, a young high school teacher, wanted to challenge the Tennessee law. He deliberately broke it and was arrested. His trial took place during the summer of 1925. The nation followed it with great interest.

Two famous lawyers took opposing sides in the Scopes trial. William Jennings Bryan, Democratic candidate for president in 1896, 1900, and 1908 and a strong opponent of evolution, led the prosecution. Clarence Darrow, who had defended many radicals and labor union members, represented Scopes.
Scopes was found guilty of breaking the law and fined $100. The fundamentalists, however, lost the larger battle. Darrow’s defense made it appear that Bryan wanted to force his religious beliefs on the entire nation. Later, the Tennessee Supreme Court overturned Scopes’s conviction.

Although the Scopes case may have dealt a blow to fundamentalism, the movement continued to thrive. Rural people, especially in the South and Midwest, remained faithful to their religious beliefs. When large numbers of farmers migrated to cities during the 1920s, they took fundamentalism with them.

Analyzing How did new laws limit immigration?

The Election of 1928

Who were the presidential candidates of 1928, and what were the major issues of the campaign?

In 1927 President Coolidge was expected to run for another term. When he announced that he would not, Herbert Hoover declared his candidacy for the Republican nomination.

Hoover had won respect for his efforts to organize food relief for Europe during World War I. He showed such a gift in this role that “to Hooverize” came to mean “to economize, to save and share.” Later, as secretary of commerce, he became known as a supporter of business. He easily won the nomination.

Because he favored a ban on sales of alcohol, Hoover was considered the “dry” candidate. The Democrats nominated a far different kind of candidate—Alfred E. Smith, governor of New York. The son of immigrants and a man of the city, Smith opposed prohibition. He championed the rights of the poor and the working class.

As the first Roman Catholic nominee for president, Smith was the target of anti-Catholic prejudice. Hoover spoke out against these attacks. Still, the charges hurt Smith’s candidacy.

Smith’s bigger problem, however, was the prosperity of the 1920s. Republicans took credit for the economic growth, and voters elected Hoover in a landslide. The contest reflected many of the social, cultural, and political tensions present in the United States at that time.

Summarizing Why was Hoover elected by a landslide in 1928?

LESSON 4 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. Explain the meaning of:
   a. expatriate
   b. mass media
   c. nativism

2. Examine the two terms below. Then write a sentence explaining what the terms have in common in the context of this chapter.
   a. prohibition
   b. quota system

Answer the Guiding Questions

3. Summarizing How did the arts in the United States reflect changes in society in the 1920s?

4. Describing What were the key cultural conflicts of the 1920s?
5. **Contrasting** How did the election of 1928 reflect the tensions of the times?

6. **ARGUMENT** You are running for governor of your state in 1928. Write a campaign speech that will persuade your audience to vote for you. Address major cultural and social issues of this era.