

# UNIT 5

## At Home and Abroad: Prosperity and Depression, 1917–1940

- Section 1** War and Prosperity: 1917–1929 (after WWI + 1920s)  
**Section 2** The Great Depression

### UNIT OVERVIEW

During the decades of the 1920s and 1930s, the United States completed the transition to a modern, urban, industrial nation. In the 1920s, the United States experienced sharp differences in income levels and shifts in cultural values, which created tensions in society and raised issues of civil liberties. At the end of that decade, the nation and the world plunged into a severe economic depression. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs in the 1930s attempted to overcome the effects of the Great Depression in the United States.

Some key questions to help you focus on America between the wars include:

- What tensions developed between the people who were a part of the traditional rural culture and those who were members of the new, urban-based society in the 1920s? –
- What were the causes of the Great Depression, and how did that event affect the American people and their institutions?

## SECTION

# 1

## War and Prosperity: 1917–1929

### SECTION OVERVIEW

The 1920s were a time of many changes in the economic and social aspects of life in the United States. Following World War I, the United States struggled to return to what President Harding called “normalcy.” However, the impact of the war, the new age of consumerism, the automobile, and the growth of the suburbs contributed to the creation of a different and new national lifestyle.

While transportation and communications technology served to unite the nation, a clash of values between the new urban-centered life and the legacy of the traditional rural life caused uneasiness and conflict. In addition, all Americans did not share in the good times. Beneath the surface was an economy with structural flaws that brought the Roaring Twenties to an abrupt end with the stock market crash in October 1929.

### KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

As you review this section, take special note of the following key themes and concepts:

**Diversity** What effects did World War I have on women and minorities?

**Economic Systems** Who benefited, and who was left out of economic growth in the 1920s?

**Factors of Production** What caused the increase in mass consumption in the 1920s?

**Culture and Intellectual Life** What social changes caused a clash of values during the twenties?

**Government** What major constitutional and legal issues emerged during the twenties, and how were these issues resolved?



### THE BIG IDEA In the 1920s and 1930s:

- American society was unsettled by social and cultural change.
- The boom economy of the 1920s was not shared by all, and it came to an end with the 1929 stock market crash.
- The Great Depression dominated American life in the 1930s.
- FDR's New Deal helped relieve some of the suffering, but did not end the Great Depression.



### KEY TERMS

Coolidge prosperity  
on margin  
flapper  
Harlem Renaissance  
Jazz Age  
Red Scare  
quotas  
Scopes Trial



## KEY PEOPLE

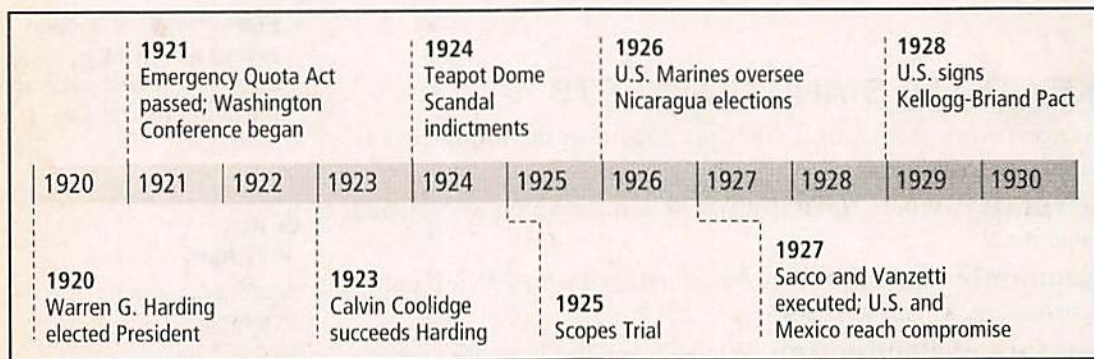
As you review this section, take special note of the following key people:

Warren G. Harding	Zora Neale Hurston
Calvin Coolidge	Alain Locke
Charles Evans Hughes	Duke Ellington
Albert Fall	Bessie Smith
Andrew Mellon	A. Mitchell Palmer
Sigmund Freud	Nicola Sacco
Charlie Chaplin	Bartolomeo Vanzetti
F. Scott Fitzgerald	Clarence Darrow
Ernest Hemingway	William Jennings Bryan
Langston Hughes	

## THE IMPACT AND AFTERMATH OF WAR

World War I triggered a number of important changes in American society, most notably for some women and for many immigrants and African Americans. Some changes were subtle and gradual, while others were immediate and dramatic.

### The Twenties



### ANALYZING DOCUMENTS

Based on the timeline above, how many years did Warren G. Harding serve as President?

### *Effects on Women and Minorities*

As many men went off to fight in Europe, the roles and responsibilities of women were affected in limited ways. Some women went to work in male-dominated fields, such as weapons factories. Many women served overseas with the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. Most, however, worked in traditionally female jobs, for which there was an increased demand. Only about five percent of the women entering the wartime workforce were new to work outside the home. At war's end, with the return of male workers, women were expected to quit their



jobs. Between 1910 and 1920, only 500,000 more women were added to the workforce.

The war had harsh consequences for immigrant families. Further immigration to the United States was halted. Many immigrant families already in the country faced fierce social and job discrimination in an antiforeign climate whipped up by the war.

Most African American civil rights leaders supported World War I, and some 400,000 African American troops served in it. Black soldiers were assigned to segregated units and often worked as laborers. Discrimination was common.

Where they saw combat, African American soldiers served with distinction. Several black regiments fighting alongside of French troops were honored by that nation. Many returning black soldiers questioned why the liberties and freedoms they had fought to preserve in Europe were denied them in their own country. Civil rights leader W.E.B. Du Bois expressed resentment at the continuing racism.

We return.

We return from fighting.

We return fighting.

—W.E.B. Du Bois

## PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

Examine the graphic below and use your knowledge of social studies to answer the following questions.

- What is the cause of the effects of World War I shown in the graphic?
- Did any of these conditions exist after World War II? If so, what actions were taken in the late 1940s and 1950s?

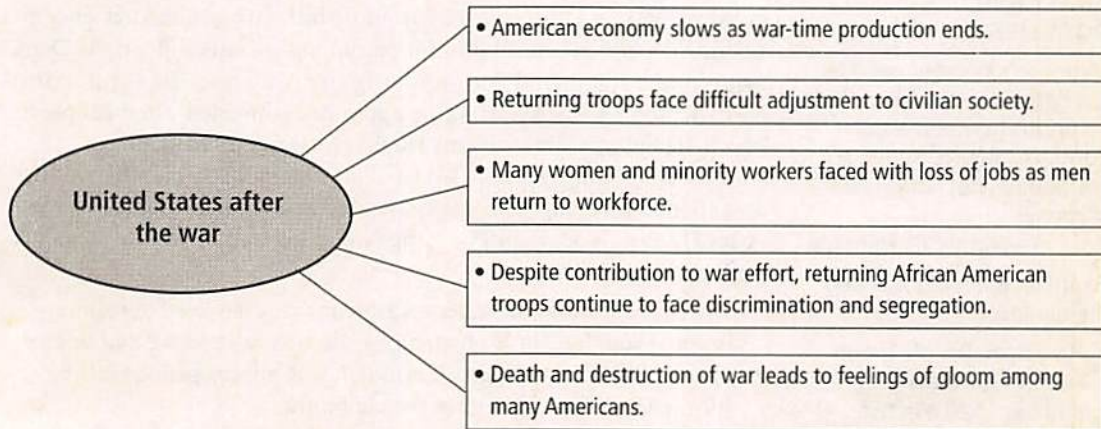
## READING STRATEGY

### Formulating Questions

Read the quote in the text by W.E.B. Du Bois again.

- What question does it raise?
- What message is Du Bois sending?
- To whom is he speaking?

## After World War I



After World War I, many Americans faced a difficult adjustment to peacetime life.

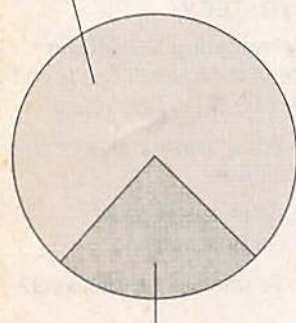


## GEOGRAPHY IN HISTORY

- Who participated in the migration to the North from 1910 until the 1940s?
- What was the reason for this migration?

### Election of 1920

Republican Warren G. Harding  
76% of electoral vote



Democrat James M. Cox  
24% of electoral vote

## ANALYZING DOCUMENTS

"America's present need is not heroics, but healing, not nostrums [remedies] but normalcy, not revolution but restoration, not surgery but serenity."

—Warren G. Harding

Examine the pie graph and the quotation.

- How does the pie graph support the statement that the 1920 election was a landslide in favor of "normalcy"?

## Migration to the North

World War I accelerated the migration of African Americans to northern cities. This migration began after the Civil War. From about 1910 to 1920, southern agricultural jobs were lost to floods and to crop damage. About 500,000 African Americans moved from the South to jobs in the industrial North. Meanwhile in the North, workers were needed to meet war production goals. The wartime immigration ban produced an additional need for workers to replace those in uniform.

After the war, this northward migration continued. Between 1910 and the 1940s, almost 2 million African Americans left the South. Although they were usually able to improve their economic situation, they still faced discrimination, segregation, and sometimes even race riots.

## The "Return to Normalcy," 1918–1921

After World War I, disillusioned Americans wanted to return to the traditional foreign policy of isolationism. The 1920 landslide election of Republican President Warren G. Harding and Vice President Calvin Coolidge represented the desire of many Americans to remove themselves from the pressures of world politics. Progressivism continued, but at a slower pace, and reforms took place largely at the state and local levels.

## THE 1920s: BUSINESS BOOM OR FALSE PROSPERITY?

For many Americans, postwar life did return to "normalcy." Yet beneath the surface, troubling political and economic problems had begun to develop.

## Greed and Scandal Under Harding

Harding was an Ohio newspaper publisher with little experience in politics. Historians credit him for pardoning socialist Eugene V. Debs (who had been jailed for opposing the war) and for supporting antilynching legislation. Harding appointed some dedicated people to office, including Charles Evans Hughes as secretary of state.

However, the President also gave political jobs to members of the so-called Ohio Gang, corrupt associates who took advantage of him. After Harding's death in 1923, the public learned of several scandals during his administration.

- **Theft:** The head of the Veterans Bureau was convicted of selling hospital supplies for his own profit. He was imprisoned and fined.
- **Fraud:** The Alien Property Custodian was imprisoned for selling former German property for private profit.
- **The Teapot Dome Scandal:** Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall was convicted of accepting bribes from two oil executives in exchange for allowing them to lease government-owned petroleum reserves. One of the oil fields was at Teapot Dome, Wyoming.



### Under Coolidge, Prosperity for Some

Calvin Coolidge became President when Harding died in office in 1923. In the 1924 election, Coolidge was returned to office. Coolidge is best known for his laissez-faire approach to the economy and his strong commitment to business interests. Coolidge retained financier Andrew Mellon as secretary of the treasury. Mellon acted on the philosophy that government's role was to serve business.

**RECESSION** The end of World War I was followed by a recession caused by the shift from a wartime to a peacetime economy. Production, farm income, and exports fell. Unemployment rose, reaching 12 percent in 1921. For farmers, in particular, hardship continued throughout the decade.

**RECOVERY** In other sectors of the economy, however, a period of economic recovery had begun by 1923, when Coolidge became President. The years between 1923 and 1929 were seen as a time of booming business. The Gross National Product (GNP) rose 40 percent. Per capita income went up 30 percent. With little inflation, actual purchasing power—and therefore the standard of living—increased. At the time, few people questioned this **Coolidge prosperity**.

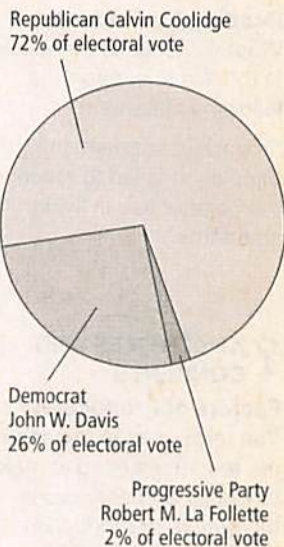
**PRO-BUSINESS POLICIES** Some groups, especially big corporations and the wealthy, benefited greatly from Coolidge prosperity. For example:

- Businesses and the most wealthy were helped by tax laws that reduced personal income tax rates, particularly for upper income groups, removed most excise taxes, and lowered corporate income taxes.
- The government reduced the national debt and balanced the budget by raising tariffs and demanding repayment of war debts.
- Tariff rates were raised in a return to protectionism. Republicans argued that higher tariffs would limit foreign imports, thus helping both industry and agriculture. However, the actual effect was to weaken the world economy.
- Regulatory agencies such as the Federal Reserve Board, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Interstate Commerce Commission saw their role as assisting business rather than regulating it.
- A relaxed attitude toward corporate mergers was supported by the executive branch and by the Supreme Court. By 1929, about 1,300 corporations produced three fourths of all American manufactured goods, and 200 companies owned half the nation's wealth.

### Economic Boom Bypasses Others

Coolidge prosperity was not for everyone. Key segments of the population failed to share in the general rise in living standards.

### Election of 1924



### PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

You will need to understand certain important economic terms on the exam.

**The Gross National Product (GNP)** is the total value of all goods and services produced in one year.

**Per Capita Income** means income per individual; it is based on the national income divided by the population.



## READING STRATEGY

### Reading for Evidence

What evidence is presented in the text to support the following statement?

“Important segments of the population failed to share in the general rise in living standards.”

## KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

### Factors of Production

The term used to describe the resources used to make all goods and services is the *factors of production*. The three factors of production are land, labor, and capital.

- *Land* refers to all natural resources needed to produce goods and services. Land includes coal, water, or farmland.
- *Labor* is the paid effort that a person devotes to a task. Labor can include the medical aid provided by a doctor as well as the tasks performed by an assembly-line worker.
- *Capital* is any human-made resource used to produce other goods and services. Physical capital includes factory buildings and tools, while human capital includes workers' knowledge and experience.

**LABOR** Strikes had dropped sharply during World War I, mainly because the Wilson government supported collective bargaining in return for a no-strike pledge. Membership in the American Federation of Labor grew, and wages for war industry employees rose sharply. However, inflation wiped out any real gains in buying power.

The 1920s saw a reversal of any union gains. Strikes in the steel, mining, and railroad industries failed, in part because the government used not only troops to end the strikes but also injunctions, which are court orders that prohibit specified actions. The Supreme Court also ruled against child labor laws and against minimum wages for women and children. In addition, some companies began to offer health and life insurance in hopes of lessening workers' interest in unions. The strategy often worked. Membership in labor unions fell from a high of about 5 million in 1921 to under 3.5 million in 1929.

Unemployment remained between 1 and 11 percent throughout the 1920s. In general, however, real wages for workers increased only slightly during this period, boosted primarily by wages of workers in the new industries, such as communications and automobile manufacturing. Therefore, even though workers' wages increased 26 percent and their productivity increased 40 percent, they could not afford to buy many of the new consumer goods.

**FARMERS** The only farmers to benefit from Coolidge prosperity were those involved in large commercial operations. Small farmers were hurt by a combination of factors.

- Farmers expanded production during World War I in response to rising prices and the demand for food. They added to their acreage and bought more farm machinery.
- New machinery and new farm techniques increased farmers' crop yield per acre.
- After the war, when European farms began producing again, American farmers were growing too much. The prices of both farm products and farmland decreased dramatically.
- Net farm income fell 50 percent during the 1920s. As a result, the number of farmers declined, too. By 1930, only about 20 percent of the labor force made a living by farming.

**NATIVE AMERICANS** During the 1920s, Native Americans had the highest unemployment rate of any group and the shortest average life span. Most lived on reservations, without the basics of heat and running water.

**AFRICAN AMERICANS** African Americans who migrated to the North enjoyed a higher standard of living than in the South. However, they still earned less than white workers and experienced a higher rate of unemployment.



## Stock Market Speculation

The economic recovery helped produce a surge of investment in the stock market. Optimistic business and government leaders saw no end to the boom. They encouraged everyone to play the bull market—that is, the rising stock market. Some families invested their life savings. The profits rolled in—for a while.

Yet the new wealth flowed from a stock market with a deeply flawed structure. Many stocks were traded **on margin**. This meant that buyers could purchase stocks by making only small down payments in cash—sometimes as low as 5 percent of the value of the stocks. They borrowed the rest from brokers and counted on their profits to repay the loans. The system worked as long as the profits continued.

## MASS CONSUMPTION

The 1920s were a time of mass consumption—huge quantities of manufactured goods were available, and many people had more money to spend on them.

### The Effects of New Industries on American Life

Automobile Industry:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. stimulated steel, rubber, paint, glass, and oil industries</li> <li>2. set off a real-estate boom in suburbs</li> <li>3. led to an increase in highways and a decline in railroad construction and use</li> <li>4. caused tractors to replace horses on farms</li> <li>5. increased social equality as low prices made cars available to Americans at almost all income levels</li> <li>6. stimulate installment buying</li> <li>7. contributed to growing sophistication of advertising techniques</li> </ol>
The Electrical Industry:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. changed homes, businesses, and cities through electric lights</li> <li>2. helped double business productivity through electric power</li> <li>3. transformed life and leisure with electric-powered durable goods such as washing machines, stoves, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, and irons</li> <li>4. stimulated installment buying</li> </ol>
Radio and Motion Pictures:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. helped erase regional differences and homogenize American culture</li> <li>2. increased people's expectations, often unrealistically</li> <li>3. helped end rural isolation</li> <li>4. helped popularize ragtime and jazz</li> <li>5. provided an outlet for advertising</li> <li>6. increased interest in politics and spectator sports</li> </ol>

### KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

#### Science and Technology

Homogenization is a process used to keep the cream in milk distributed throughout the container rather than rising to the top. The term can also be applied to cultures. Radio, movies, and telephones helped produce a more homogenized national culture in which regional differences became less distinct.

- What technology since the 1920s has resulted in further national and even international homogenization?
- According to the chart, in what ways did the automobile, electrical industry, radio, and motion pictures influence the lifestyle of the 1920s?



**READING STRATEGY****Formulating Questions**

Consider that in the 1920s:

- 15 million cars were sold.
- 80 percent were bought on credit.
- A Model T Ford cost \$290 in 1920.
- 20% of U.S. homes had electricity by the end of the decade.
- 10 million families owned radios by 1929.

In addition to these facts, what information do you need in order to have a more complete picture of the effect of new technologies in the 1920s?

**Role of Technology**

Technology, combined with new marketing strategies, best explains the transformation of American society in the 1920s. Led by Henry Ford and the automobile industry, mass production and the moving assembly line resulted in uniform products produced at lower costs. It made possible a consumer-oriented economy, one in which more goods were available to more Americans. Often these goods were purchased over time through installment buying.

**Growing Cultural Homogenization**

The new technology also made American culture more homogeneous, or uniform. Americans from one coast to the other tended to use the same products, wear the same styles, see the same movies, and listen to the same music. Regional and class differences were blurred, and individualism became less important than conformity.

**Suburban Growth**

With over half the population living in places with populations of more than 2,500 people, the United States in the 1920s was an urban rather than a rural nation for the first time in its history. Only the Great Depression ended the building boom that was part of this growth. Suburbs grew even faster than cities. These new suburbs drew people from the cities. The ultimate result was the present-day conflict between urban and suburban needs, priorities, and values.

**SHIFTING CULTURAL VALUES**

During the 1920s, American society experienced a struggle with social change as it became an urban, industrial nation. Changes in lifestyle, values, morals, and manners increased tension and conflict. Wealth, possessions, having fun, and sexual freedom—ideas influenced by the psychology of Sigmund Freud—were the new values.

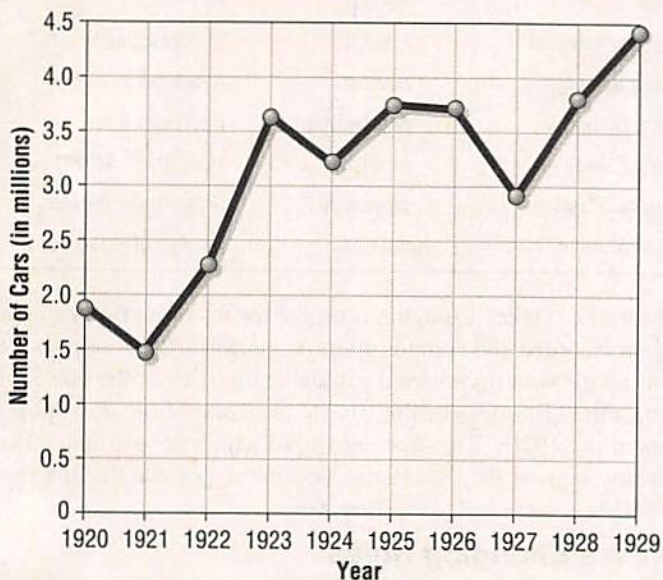
**LEISURE** With a shorter work week and with more paid vacation, Americans had more leisure time. Movies such as *The Ten Commandments* and the first movie with sound, *The Jazz Singer*, drew millions of people a week to theaters during the 1920s. Americans idolized Charlie Chaplin and other movie stars. They also admired sports figures, such as Babe Ruth. Games such as bridge, crossword puzzles, and the board game of mah-jongg swept the country.

The popular image of young women of the 1920s was the **flapper**, a young, pretty woman with bobbed hair and raised hemlines. She drank alcohol, she smoked, she thought for herself, and she took advantage of women's new freedoms. However, the flapper lived more in the media than in reality. The flapper figured in movies, magazines, advertising, and novels, such as those of F. Scott Fitzgerald.

**LITERATURE** The conflict and concern created by changing American values also saw expression in literature. American writers of the 1920s protested the effects of technology and mass consumption. They criti-



### Passenger Car Sales, 1920–1929



Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*

#### ANALYZING DOCUMENTS

What information from the graph at left helps you to gain a more complete picture of the effect of the automobile industry in the 1920s?

cized the business mentality, the conformity of the times, and the preoccupation with material things. Some writers, such as Ernest Hemingway, became expatriates, leaving the United States to settle in Europe.

**HARLEM RENAISSANCE** One of the most important cultural movements of the 1920s was the **Harlem Renaissance**, led by a group of African American writers in the New York City neighborhood of Harlem. These creative intellectual figures—mainly well-educated members of the middle class—felt alienated from the society of the 1920s. In their works they called for action against bigotry and expressed pride in African American culture and identity. Outstanding literary figures of the Harlem Renaissance include W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Alain Locke.

The Great Depression of the 1930s ended the Harlem Renaissance, cutting the sales of books and literary magazines. However, during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the writers of the Harlem Renaissance and their works attracted renewed interest.

African American artists, musicians, and dancers also participated in the Harlem Renaissance. Black musicians in the South blended elements of African, European, and American music to create the distinctive sounds of jazz and the blues. This music was carried all over the country and abroad.

#### ANALYZING DOCUMENTS

“We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on the top of the mountain, free within ourselves.”

—Langston Hughes,  
on the Harlem  
Renaissance in  
*The Big Sea*

- What ideas of the Harlem Renaissance are expressed in this quote?



## KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

### Culture and Intellectual Life

The culture and intellectual life of a time period reflects the era's social, economic and political mood.

- How did the work of each writer in the chart at right reflect the 1920s?
- How did the Harlem Renaissance express the feelings of its participants?
- How did it have an influence beyond its time?

### Leading Writers of the Twenties

Willa Cather	novelist	<i>My Antonia</i>
F. Scott Fitzgerald	novelist	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Ernest Hemingway	novelist	<i>A Farewell to Arms</i>
Langston Hughes	poet, novelist	<i>The Weary Blues</i>
Sinclair Lewis	novelist	<i>Main Street, Babbitt</i>
Eugene O'Neill	playwright	<i>Desire Under the Elms</i>
Edith Wharton	novelist	<i>The Age of Innocence</i>

Edward K. “Duke” Ellington is one of the towering figures in jazz. Ellington recorded and composed music, performed on the piano, and conducted his own orchestra until his death in 1974. Bessie Smith, known as the “Empress of the Blues,” was one of the most popular singers of the 1920s. This new music, to which people danced such daring new steps as the Charleston, became so popular that the period of the 1920s is often called the **Jazz Age**.

### Women's Changing Roles

The conflict between modern and traditional values in the 1920s also found expression in the contradictory roles of women.

**WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE** Throughout the 1920s, the number of women in the workforce increased. By 1930, 10.5 million women were working outside the home, making up 22 percent of the workforce. This figure, however, represented an increase of only 1.4 percent of the total workforce. Most working women were single, widowed, or divorced. Most Americans still believed that married women belonged at home, where 90 percent of them were to be found. When working women married, they usually quit or were fired from their jobs.

Most women who worked outside the home continued to hold jobs in traditionally female—and traditionally low-paying and low-status—occupations, such as teaching, clerical work, and retail sales. Fewer than 20 percent worked in better-paying factory jobs. The number of female doctors and scientists actually decreased.

One important gain for working women was the creation in 1920 of the Women's Bureau, part of the federal Department of Labor. It tried to improve working conditions for women from inside the government and provided data about working women.

**INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS** In 1920, women voted in a national election for the first time. However, their vote did not have a distinctive effect on the outcome. Women did not vote in large numbers, nor did they vote as a bloc. To encourage women to play a greater part in politics, the National American Woman Suffrage Association reorganized itself as the nonpartisan League of Women Voters.



**HEALTH, RIGHTS, AND WORKING CONDITIONS** The divisions of the 1920s were reflected in the fate of two pieces of legislation. Encouraged by women reformers, Congress passed the Sheppard-Towner Act in 1921. With the aim of reducing infant mortality, the law provided for public health centers where women could learn about nutrition and health care. The program came to an end in 1929, largely because of opposition from physicians.

An equal rights amendment to the Constitution, proposed by Alice Paul in 1923, led to bitter disagreement among women. Many feminists supported it, but others opposed it because they believed it would do away with special laws protecting women workers.

**DAILY LIFE** Contrary to the image of the flapper, women were still restricted by economic, political, and social limits. The image of the flapper meant little to most women.

In some ways, technology made life easier in the 1920s. With electric washing machines, vacuum cleaners, stoves, and refrigerators, household chores did not require so much time, and there was less need for servants. On the other hand, the typical homemaker now was expected to handle almost all the household tasks herself and to meet higher standards of cleanliness.

**EMPHASIS ON WIFE RATHER THAN MOTHER** The role of the woman as wife received increased importance. Women did have more choices in life. Families changed during this period, and divorce and family planning became more acceptable. However, divorce laws continued to favor men, and wives were expected to stay at home rather than work outside the home. Family size decreased; only 20 percent of women who married during the 1920s had five or more children. The family, which in earlier times had been a producing unit, growing and processing much of its food, was now a consuming unit. Marketing and advertising appeals flooded the media, encouraging consumers to buy more goods.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL ISSUES

Major constitutional and legal issues divided Americans in the 1920s. Many issues reflected the struggle between modern and traditional values and showed how international affairs affected domestic policies and attitudes.

### *Threats to Civil Liberties*

In the 1920s, the Red Scare and the Ku Klux Klan threatened the civil liberties of some Americans.

**THE RED SCARE 1918–1919** The imposition of stern measures to suppress dissent after World War I in a crusade against internal enemies was known as the **Red Scare**. It was fueled by the October 1917

## KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

### Diversity

In the 1920s women were workers, flappers, wives, mothers, voters, students, and housewives. In what ways were their lives different from the lives of women during the following periods in history?

- the first half of the 19th century
- the second half of the 19th century
- the Progressive Era
- World War I
- the Great Depression
- World War II
- the 1950s
- the 1960s and 1970s
- today



**PREPARING FOR THE EXAM**

Remember that fear of foreigners and of foreign ideas has been an issue that has arisen many times throughout United States history.

- 1790s: Alien and Sedition Acts
- 1840s: nativism and Know-Nothings
- 1917–1918: suppression of dissent during World War I
- 1920s: Ku Klux Klan, Sacco and Vanzetti case, National Origins Quota Acts
- 1940s: internment of Japanese Americans during World War II
- 1950s: McCarthyism

Bolshevik Revolution, an uprising of Communists in Russia. In the United States, Communists made up only one half of 1 percent of the population, but many of them were targeted by the crackdown, as were various other groups viewed as un-American. Among them were socialists, anarchists, labor leaders, and foreigners.

The Red Scare was led by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. It was sparked by several events that took place after the war ended. Frustration over discrimination led to race riots in more than 25 cities. In Boston, a series of labor strikes climaxed with a walkout by the police. Several unexplained bombings added to the hysteria. All these events were seen as part of a Communist conspiracy.

The attorney general ordered the first so-called Palmer raids late in 1919. In 33 cities, police without warrants raided the headquarters of Communists and other organizations. Eventually they arrested 4,000 people, holding them without charges and denying them legal counsel. Some 560 aliens were deported. Palmer's extreme actions and statements soon turned the public against him. However, the Red Scare had lingering effects, discouraging many Americans from speaking their minds freely in open debate, thus squelching their constitutional right to freedom of speech.

**SACCO AND VANZETTI** Closely linked to the Red Scare was the case of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. These two Italian immigrants—admitted anarchists—were convicted of murder in 1921 in connection with a Massachusetts robbery. Many people questioned the evidence against Sacco and Vanzetti, concluding that the two men were convicted more for their beliefs and their Italian origin than for a crime. In spite of mass demonstrations and appeals, the two men were executed in 1927. The governor of Massachusetts eventually cleared the two men in 1977, some 50 years later.

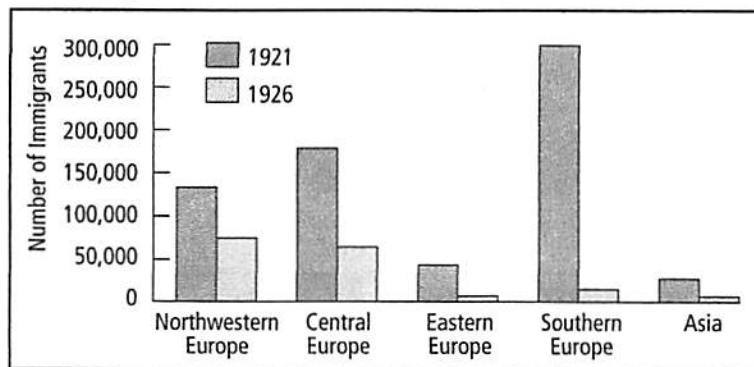
**THE KU KLUX KLAN** Antiforeign attitudes encouraged a revival of the Ku Klux Klan. The first organization, active during Reconstruction, had died out in the late 1800s. A reorganized Klan, formed in 1915, grew slowly until 1920. In that year, it added 100,000 members. The Klan of the 1920s targeted not only African American but also Catholics, Jews, and immigrants. To the Klan, the only true Americans were white, Protestant, and American-born.

**Restrictions on Immigration**

The nativism expressed in the Red Scare, the Sacco-Vanzetti case, and the new Klan was also evident in 1920s immigration legislation. Immigrants were seen by many as somehow threatening to American values. The nativist climate led to the Immigration Act of 1924. This act established a system of national **quotas**, which limited the number of immigrants from each country. These quotas deliberately kept the totals for eastern and southern Europe low and excluded all immigration from Asia.



## Immigration to the United States, 1921 and 1926



## KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

## Immigration and Migration

During the 1920s, immigration from the western hemisphere was not limited. Large numbers of Mexicans moved into southwestern cities and Puerto Ricans into New York City, most in search of economic opportunities.

- What are the most dramatic changes pictured on the chart at left?
- What changes were made in immigration laws in the 1920s? Why?

**Prohibition**

Both the rebirth of the Klan and the movement to restrict immigration reflected the struggle in the 1920s between what some saw as old, rural American values and the new values of a changing urban, industrialized culture. However, the clash between these two sets of values did not divide on the basis of where one lived.

For example, the movement for Prohibition, a ban on the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages, was not confined to rural America, though it received much support there. The Eighteenth Amendment, allowing Prohibition, became part of the Constitution in 1919. Congress passed the Volstead Act to implement Prohibition, but the law turned out to be unenforceable. Most Americans were simply unwilling to accept a total ban on alcohol. Furthermore, it stimulated crime, encouraging smuggling and **bootlegging**, the illegal manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. In 1933, the Twenty-first Amendment ending Prohibition was ratified.

**The Scopes Trial**

The 1925 **Scopes Trial**, held in Dayton, Tennessee, received nationwide attention because it pitted the scientific ideas of Darwinian evolution against the Protestant fundamentalist view of biblical creationism. John Scopes, a biology teacher, had deliberately violated a state law forbidding anyone to teach the theory of evolution. Scopes was represented by a famous trial lawyer, Clarence Darrow. The prosecution relied on the assistance of William Jennings Bryan, three-time presidential candidate and a firm believer in fundamentalist Christianity. Although Scopes was convicted and fined \$100, Bryan's confused testimony weakened fundamentalist arguments.

## PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

Prohibition turned out to be unenforceable because too many Americans were unwilling to accept it. The massive evasion of this law is often compared to the reaction to the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. In 1933, the 21st Amendment repealed the 18th Amendment.