



# SCHOOL HISTORY

## **Part one: American People and the 'Boom'**

Paper 1: Understanding the Modern World

Section A: Period Studies

[AD America, 1920-1973: Opportunity and inequality](#)



## Learning Objectives

**At the end of the lesson, students should be able to:**

- understand the cause and effect of the economic boom in the United States;
- assess the social and cultural developments of American society in the 1920s; and
- evaluate how America was divided by the challenges of immigration.



## Important Keywords

**Economic Boom**

**Prohibition**

**Laissez-faire**

**Xenophobia**

**Protectionism**

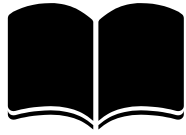
**Individualism**

This module covers the development of the USA during the economic boom era. It specifically tackles the following areas:

- ❑ the economic boom and its contributors;
- ❑ the social and cultural developments in the 1920s; and
- ❑ the division of American society at the time of Prohibition and immigration.



Image showing America's economic boom



# The 'Boom': benefits, advertising and the consumer society

After World War I, many parts of Europe were under reconstruction due to the losses of lives, infrastructure, economy, and morale. The United States, by contrast, seemed to benefit from the devastation experienced by the conflict in Europe. This module will explore the causes of the economic boom in the U.S. in the 1920s.

**CAUSES of ECONOMIC**

- L**aissez-Faire
- A**ssembly Line
- C**redit
- K**nowledge
- P**osition in the world arena
- A**dvertising
- N**ew consumer goods
- T**ariffs
- S**hare Confidence

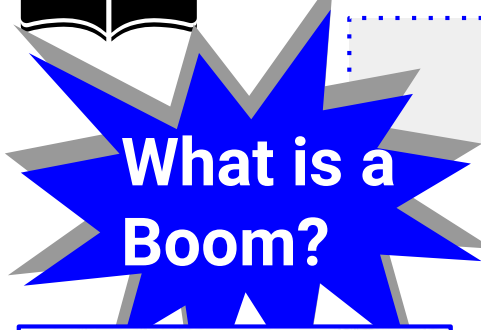
**BENEFITS FROM WWI.** Between 1914 and 1918, manufacturing and production techniques in American factories developed to meet the demands of war.



**Map of the Great Migration during WWI**

After WWI, the Allies owed \$10 billion to the U.S. for armament and food supplies. Between 300,000 to 500,000 American rural workers migrated to urban cities up north to work in munition and manufacturing factories.

# The 'Boom': benefits, advertising and the consumer society; Hire purchase



Example of an advertisement in the 1920s

A **boom** in economics refers to a period of financial prosperity, rapid progress, and growth in stocks.

During and after WWI, an increase in the demand for American goods led to Consumerism. Thrifty Americans now began to buy the new goods available. Pro-business policies and mass-production techniques developed during WWI led to an industrial revolution in consumer goods. Moreover, industrial growth led to higher wages for workers and cheaper products for Americans to buy.

The 1920s saw an explosion of personal prosperity and consumer spending. Companies offered new ways for consumers to buy on credit through monthly instalment plans.

<b>Vacuum Cleaner \$28.95</b> \$2 down, \$4 a month	<b>Sofa \$74.50</b> \$5 down, \$8 a month
<b>Refrigerator \$87.50</b> \$5 down, \$10 a month	<b>Piano \$445.00</b> \$15 down, \$12 a month
<b>Washing Machine \$97.50</b> \$5 down, \$8 a month	<b>Phonograph \$43.50</b> \$5 down, \$5 a month
<b>Bedroom Suite \$228.00</b> \$15 down, \$15 a month	<b>Large Rug \$148.50</b> \$10 down, \$15 a month
<b>Easy Chair \$38.50</b> \$5 down, \$5 a month	<b>Corner Cabinet \$37.95</b> \$5 down, \$5 a month

Examples of items that Americans could buy through a credit scheme



## The 'Boom': Hire purchase; mass production, including Ford and the motor industry

The concept of hire purchase and credit was then introduced to Americans. This new scheme made luxury items affordable to average Americans. Moreover, advertisements persuaded Americans effectively.

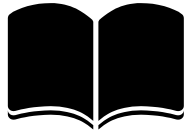
The appetite for consumer goods and availability of cheap credit led to a decade of spending called the Roaring Twenties.

Brought about by the war, American manufacturers developed new techniques to further enhance production to meet the growing demands. **Mass production** led to a huge number of new products: Cars, electric appliances, and new fashion.

Moreover, advances in technology led to the **age of steel and electricity**. Homes and industries shifted from coal to electricity. As a result, all industrialised cities became powered by electricity. The Industrial Revolution in the United States led to electrified inventions.



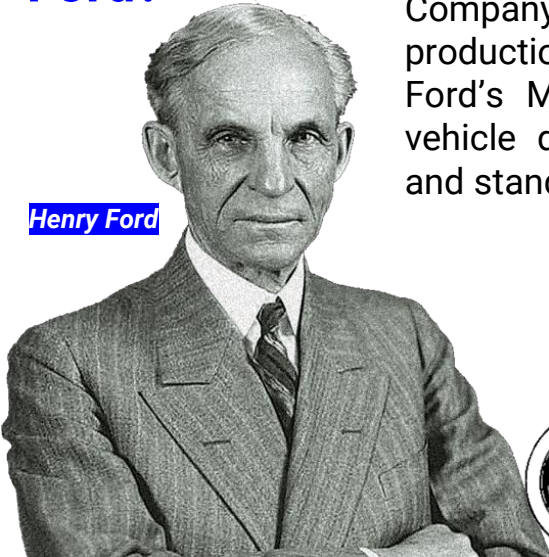
**Example of mass production in the 1920s**



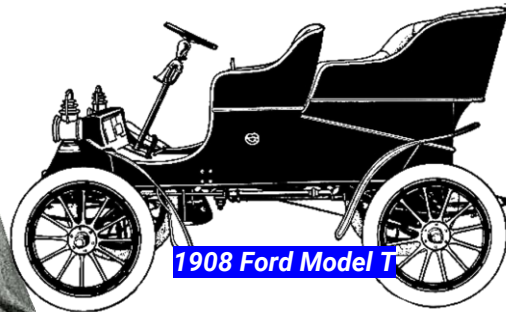
## The 'Boom': Hire purchase; mass production, including Ford and the motor industry

In order to facilitate mass production, Henry Ford, a wealthy and influential industrialist introduced the **Assembly Line**. With this mechanism, products were produced in a shorter time, at a cheaper cost, and in massive quantities, which resulted in lower consumer cost.

**Who was Henry Ford?** Born in Michigan on July 30, 1863, Henry Ford was the founder of the Ford Motor Company, which enabled cheap mass production of cars through assembly lines. Ford's Model T became a revolutionary vehicle due to its interchangeable parts and standardized production plants.



Henry Ford



1908 Ford Model T

Ford's Model T, also known as Tin Lizzie, set the standard for the car industry. With Ford's mass production, cheap cost and fast manufacturing, it allowed for efficient automobile assembly and a reduction in cost, which made it affordable to average Americans. Ford also increased the daily wage of workers from \$2.34 for nine hours to \$5 for eight-hour work days in 1914. By 1918, about half of American cars were Model T. Ford Motor Company became the largest automobile manufacturer in the world.



## The 'Boom': Hire purchase; mass production, including Ford and the motor industry

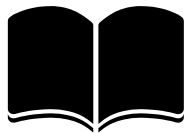
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Watch the video  
documentary on Ford's  
Model T Assembly Line

Access using this link:  
[https://www.youtube.com  
/watch?v=cTZ3rJHHSik](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTZ3rJHHSik)





## The 'Boom': inequalities of wealth

With the availability of hire purchase, consumers were able to buy common and luxury goods through credit as long as they could afford the repayments. Despite the economic boom, however, there was inequality of wealth for some Americans.



### FARMERS

Introduction of machinery led to overproduction of agricultural products. As a result, the income of farmers decreased by 40% in 1929. Moreover, many rural areas did not have electricity, which excluded them from the economic boom.



### OLD INDUSTRIES

Overproduction of coal, which was also being replaced by oil and gas, resulted in coal mine closures.



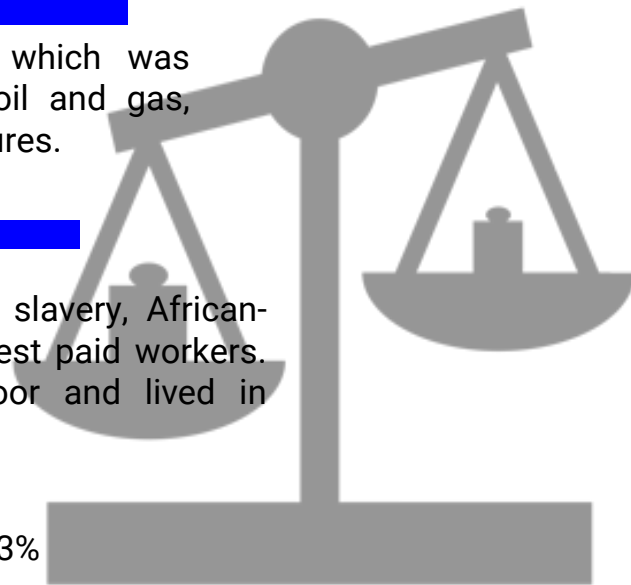
### POOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS

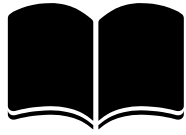
Despite the abolition of slavery, African-Americans were the lowest paid workers. Most of them were poor and lived in overcrowded areas.



### LOW WAGE EARNERS

Those who were unemployed, unskilled and casual workers did not experience prosperity. Only 5% of the American population earned 33% of the income, while 60% earned no higher than \$2000 annually, meaning about 40% of the American population was considered poor.





## The 'Boom': Republican Government policies

From 1921 until 1932, the United States was led by three Republican presidents who employed *laissez-faire* or free-market policies. This mechanism allowed for the expansion of big business without government interference.

Harding reduced the tax burden on businesses so they could pay workers higher wages. In addition, he introduced the Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act (1922), which imposed taxes on foreign goods. As a result, prices of foreign goods increased, which encouraged Americans to buy local goods.



Warren G. Harding,  
US President from  
1921-1923

His policy came  
to be known as  
**Protectionism**

Silent Cal was known for uniting the business world in the U.S. for adhering to the policy of *laissez-faire*. He continued Harding's economic policies by giving businessmen the freedom to expand and make a profit.

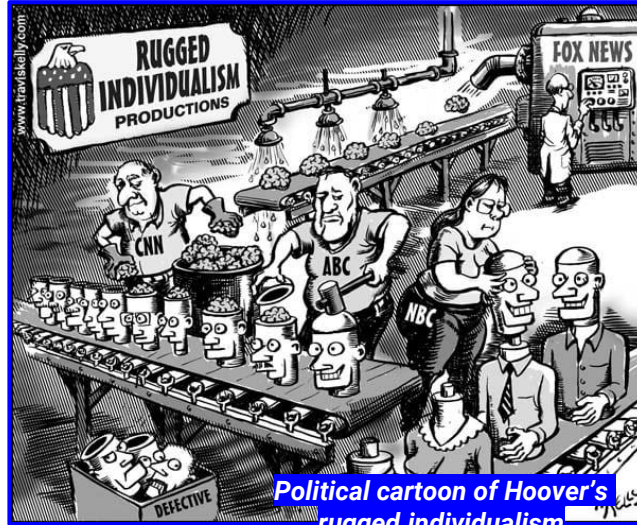


Calvin Coolidge,  
US President from  
1923 - 1929

## The 'Boom': Republican Government policies



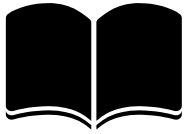
Herbert Hoover, US  
President from 1929 -1932



Political cartoon of Hoover's  
rugged individualism

Similar to Harding and Coolidge, President Hoover believed in the 'Let Alone' policy of business regulation. However, he also promoted rugged **individualism**, which encouraged people to not depend heavily on the government for support and to rather work harder to solve their problems. No welfare was provided.

The 1920s in the United States was led by three Republican presidents who sought to improve the lives of the American people after the war. President Harding began economic recovery efforts by supporting a pro-free market agenda. After Harding's death, Coolidge followed in his footsteps and saw a booming economy. Hoover, on the other hand, oversaw the final years of prosperity and the beginning of an economic recession.



## The 'Boom': stock market boom

Also known as the Roaring Twenties, this period in American history saw general economic prosperity in the U.S. Many saw this time as the fulfilment of the 'American Dream' under a consumerist society.

**REASONS.** The boom in the stock market was brought about by a number of factors, including:

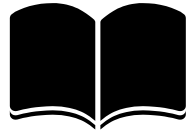
- ❑ American industries boosted by WWI;
- ❑ the policy of laissez-faire;
- ❑ policies and practices of Protectionism employed in 1922;
- ❑ mass production of goods such as televisions, cars, radios, appliances, etc; and
- ❑ The availability of hire purchase and easy credit.



A newspaper headline in the 1920s as the stock market value increased

**IMPACT.** As a result of the economic boom in the U.S., many Americans had confidence in the economy. Many invested in the stock market, given the growing prices of shares. Most investors bought shares in the margin and speculated that prices would continue to rise. Some people enjoyed huge gains in profit, making them wealthy.

Buying on margin means that investors purchased stocks from loaned money.



## Social and cultural developments: entertainment, including cinema and jazz



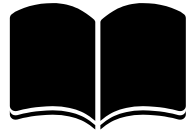
A cinema in the 1920s

At the beginning of the 20th century, moving pictures, also known as **movies**, were invented in Europe. From then, filmmaking proliferated in many countries, all contributing to the development of the film industry.

In the early 1920s, many Americans entertained themselves by going to the cinema several times a week. Cinemas were a cheap form of escapism especially for Americans challenged with larger social-economic problems. Cinemas were also social hubs that allowed people to socialise and network with others in town.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF MOVIES IN THE U.S.

During WWI, movie-making in Europe was disrupted. By contrast, Americans continued to make films and moviegoers enjoyed the perceived luxury of this cheap entertainment. By having a lot of open space available for film sets and studios, Hollywood, California, became the hub of American cinema.



## Social and cultural developments: entertainment, including cinema and jazz

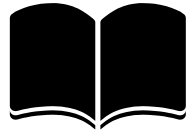
In the early 1920s, films were silent. Local cinemas used live musicians to accompany the film being screened. For two decades (1910-1930) the number of local cinemas grew from 8,000 to 303,000, from small nickelodeons (admission was a nickel) to the red carpet of the Roxy Theatre in New York.

Early colour experiments in movies included an excerpt of *Ben Hur* released in 1925, followed by Walt Disney's first animated cartoon *Steamboat Willie* in 1928, which introduced the iconic character of Mickey Mouse to the world. Come 1929 an estimated 110 million Americans went to the cinema on a weekly basis compared to 60 million in 1927. Films held the interest of moviegoers by introducing audio in 1927.



A Jazz band during the Roaring Twenties

Along with the economic boom and the introduction of new technologies like radio and film-making, African-American culture, which included Jazz music, was also brought to white middle-class America in the 1920s.



## Social and cultural developments: entertainment, including cinema and jazz

**Jazz** originated from the blues and ragtime musical genres of African-Americans from the former slave-owning states in the South.



The rhythm was influenced by the music of West African slaves. It consisted of much improvisation given that these musicians had no formal training in music, and most were illiterate. Many jazz musicians utilised cheap instruments including the guitar, harmonica, and banjo.

After WWI, Jazz music travelled north during the Great Migration. African-American Jazz musicians performed in brothels in New Orleans and crossed into Chicago via the Mississippi River. Jazz music was more lively compared to the existing genres of the 1920s. Young people found it easy to dance to compared to the waltz of their parents. According to conservatives of the time, Jazz music was believed to lead young people to drink, smoke, and misbehave to its loose and fast rhythm.

Louis Armstrong, a trumpet player and vocalist, is an icon of Jazz music. He made his first record in 1925 and performed live with the King Oliver Band.





## Social and cultural developments: the position of women in society, including Flappers

Prior to World War I, American women were expected to fulfil the domestic responsibilities of the family. They were seen as the weaker sex, only capable of doing lighter chores and child-rearing. When the U.S. officially joined the war in 1917, American women played a significant role in keeping the nation running while men served in the war. After the war, many women rejected the idea of going back to their old life.



Image showing the Victorian influence on women in the early 1900s before the Great War

During the pre-war years, about 50% of the American population was composed of women. They were expected to live a restricted, modest life that encompassed their lives, fashion and behaviour.

In most states, American women were not allowed to vote. Moreover, very few high-paying jobs were open to them. Some women worked as teachers and nurses, while many were dressmakers, cleaners, and secretaries.

Unmarried women lived by their fathers' rules, while married women were restricted by their husbands. White American women generally kept to the domestic world.





## Social and cultural developments: the position of women in society, including Flappers

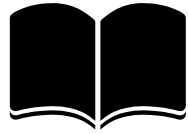
Aside from restrictions on fashion and wearing makeup, women during the pre-war years were also prohibited from smoking and playing sports in public. Moreover, sex before marriage was severely frowned upon as it was immodest. When the United States officially joined the war in 1917, about 90,000 American women enlisted in the U.S. military as support personnel.



American women filled the job vacancies left by men who joined the military to keep the economy running. They worked as clerks, telegraphers, operators, electricians, nurses, mail deliverers, farmers, factory workers, and police officers. Women were able to shift from domestic services to industrial jobs. Moreover, they also entered the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and Women's Land Army.

After the war, American women were expected to give up their new-found jobs and return to their domestic responsibilities. But many did not want things to go back to the way they were.

Due to their war efforts and support of the Prohibition, women were more politically recognised by Congress. By 1919, the **19th Amendment**, giving women the right to vote, was passed by Congress. Also known as the Anthony Amendment, women were granted the right to suffrage in the national election.



## Social and cultural developments: the position of women in society, including Flappers



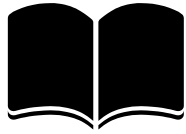
Aside from the political right to vote, American women also began to demand better and equal wages.

Working women were able to independently sustain their standard of living. As a result, advertising campaigns began targeting women to buy consumer goods.

After the war, women were seen smoking in public, driving cars, and engaging in energetic sports. They wore skirts above the knee and rebelled against wearing old-fashioned clothes.

In 1921, Margaret Sanger established the American Birth Control League, which promoted the use of birth control.

By 1929, the number of divorces had doubled compared to 1914 due to the increasing independence of women enabling them to leave unhappy marriages.



## Social and cultural developments: the position of women in society, including Flappers

In the 1920s, the bob cut hairstyle became popular, as well as wearing makeup and jewellery. Young girls influenced by Jazz culture were known as Flappers.

**Flappers** were middle-class women who had the means to spend on luxuries in line with consumerism.

The word Flapper emerged from British slang used in the 1600s to refer to prostitutes. In addition, the term was used to describe a young bird whose wings were not yet fully developed to be able to fly.

Compared to women before the war, Flappers enjoyed much more freedom and expressed themselves with daring fashion, smoking in public, going out without chaperones, and dancing and drinking in speakeasies. While conservatives frowned upon Flappers, others argued that they were not rebellious women, rather independent young women.



Image showing Flappers in the 1920s



# Social and cultural developments: the position of women in society, including Flappers

## Famous Flappers



**LOUISE BROOKS**



**CLARA BOW**



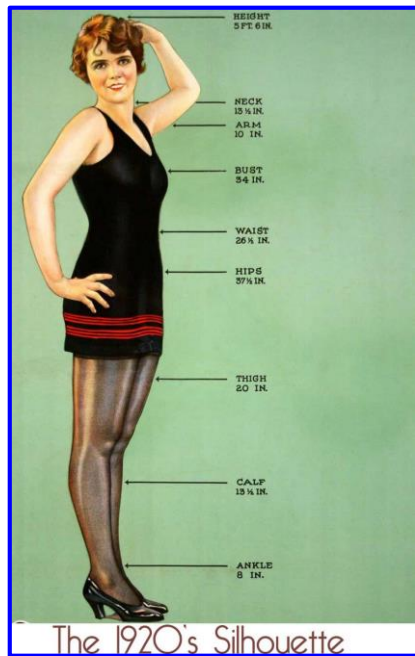
**JOAN CRAWFORD**

Brooks, Bow, and Crawford were all actresses and popular flappers idolised by many young women in the 1920s.



## Social and cultural developments: the position of women in society, including Flappers

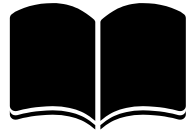
### Flapper Fashion



The Flappers of the 1920s is arguably one of the most misrepresented and misunderstood groups in history. Their fashion was a mixture of responses to the war and the Jazz Age. They were known for their opposition of conformity and supporters of free spirit. In fashion, they were distinguished by the following:

- Garconne, or 'little boy', look
- Wearing black dresses
- Boxy, flapper dresses
- Bob cut hairstyle, more makeup, and dark lipstick

Historians suggest that Flappers challenged the Victorian values of women in the United States and began the **feminist movement** with the rise of independent young girls.



## Divided society: organised crime, Prohibition and their impact on society

A century before the Roaring Twenties, perfectionist movements emerged in the United States calling for religious revivalism, banning the sale of spirits, and the abolition of slavery. These ideas materialised in the 1920s, which eventually characterised the time as a decade of organised crime and corruption.

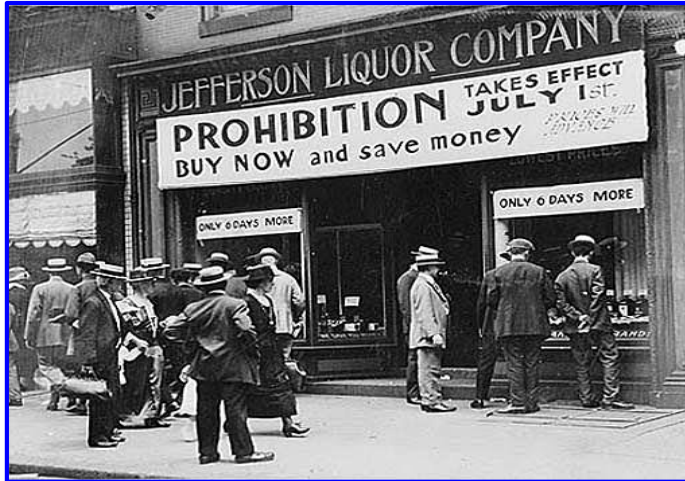


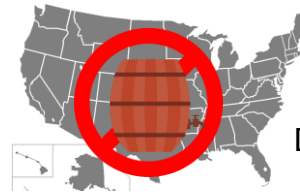
Image of a Prohibition Sale on June 24, 1920

### Why was Prohibition introduced?

Belief that alcohol damaged family life

Belief that alcohol made people less reliable at work

It was claimed that alcohol helped spread Communism



Belief that alcohol led to lawlessness and immorality

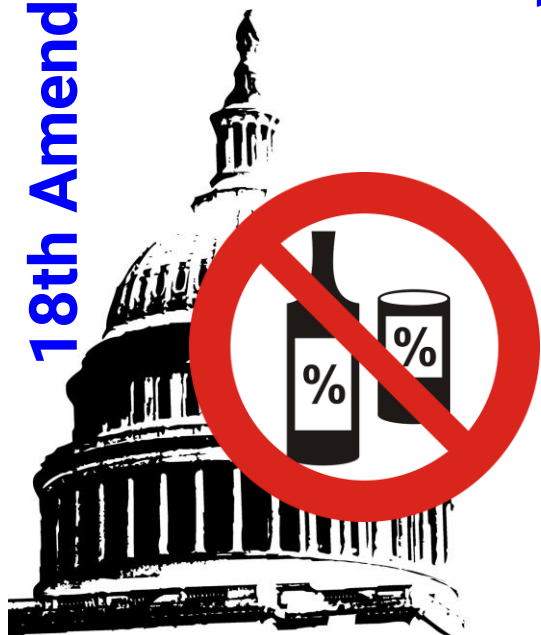
Many of the big breweries were German-owned. Drinkers were portrayed as unpatriotic

It was claimed that alcohol led to child deaths through smothering

The strength of **'temperance'** movements in some parts of America made people support Prohibition due to the above beliefs of what alcohol was believed to do.

## Divided society: Prohibition, organised crime and their impact on society

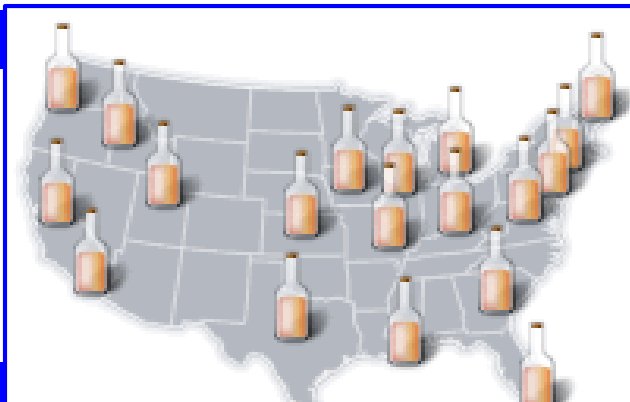
### 18th Amendment



In 1919, the **18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution** identified Prohibition as the complete ban on manufacturing, selling, and transporting liquor in the United States.

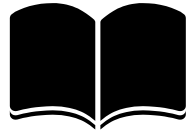
## 1851

Maine was the first state to pass Prohibition. By 1917, about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of states in the south and west followed suit. As a result, districts were divided into wet and dry.



## 1893

The Anti-Saloon League was established condemning the ungodly practice of alcoholism. By 1906, the movement was revived attacking the sale of liquor.



# Divided society: Prohibition, organised crime and their impact on society

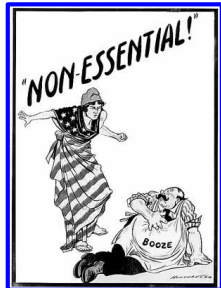


Image of a newspaper with the headline "U.S. is voted dry"

## The Volstead Act, 1920

The Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution reads:

*Section 1.* After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.



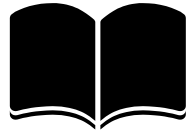
Propaganda in favour of Prohibition

For better visual understanding, watch the video *America Goes Dry- Prohibition in the 1920s* available at <https://schoolhistory.co.uk/eduqas-gcse/the-usa-a-nation-of-contrasts-1910-1929/>

On 16 January 1920, the **Age of Prohibition** began in the United States. The 18th Amendment was enforced, which made the sale of alcohol in America illegal.

The National Prohibition Act came to be known as the **Volstead Act** as proposed by Representative Andrew Volstead of Mississippi, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. The initial enforcement was assigned to the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) and later transferred to the Department of Justice.





## Divided society: Prohibition, organised crime and their impact on society

Image of Women's  
Christian Temperance  
Union supporting  
Prohibition

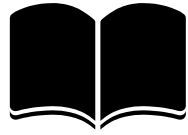
Among the influential anti-alcohol campaigners were groups of women and wealthy businessmen of the view that the Volstead Act should be implemented on a national scale through the Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.



Among the known organisations was the **Women's Christian Temperance Union** that originally aimed to focus on women's suffrage and better working conditions. One of the WCTU's known members was Carrie Nation, also nicknamed the **Saloon Smasher**.

Nation became known as the woman who would burst into saloons and smash bars with her hammer and hatchet. She was arrested 30 times due to her aggressive actions.

Moreover, the **Anti-Saloon League** was supported by the Church, congressmen, and business tycoons who printed anti-drinking brochures.



## Divided society: Prohibition, organised crime and their impact on society

### BOOTLEGGERS

Were gangsters who illegally sold alcohol.

Al Capone is a famous example.

### RUM RUNNERS

Were those who smuggled alcohol from Canada and Mexico into the U.S.



Despite the 18th Amendment, the demand for alcohol remained high, especially with gangs and gambling dens. As a result, gangsters began selling alcohol illegally, turning it into **organised crime**.

### MOONSHINERS

Were private individuals who distilled their own alcohol called Moonshine at home.

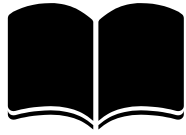
### SPEAKEASIES

Were illegal bars or nightclubs. By 1925, over 10,000 of them operated in New York alone.

In order to escape the law, gangsters were known to bribe police officers, politicians, and judges for protection.

In an attempt to solve the problem, John F. Kramer was appointed as Prohibition Commissioner in 1921 and given 3,000 agents.

Due to low salaries, however, the agents were easy to bribe. It was also challenging to persuade drinkers to give information.



# Divided society: the causes of racial tension, the experiences of immigrants and the impact of immigration

Between 1850 and 1914, the American population increased rapidly when millions of people migrated to the United States. Despite having different reasons for migration, immigrants shared the sentiment of achieving the *American Dream*. The U.S.A., being the land of opportunity, became a melting pot of different groups of people, even today.

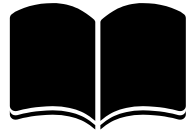


Image of Jewish immigration to the U.S. during the latter half of the 19th century.

What was the **Open Door Policy**?



In 1899 and 1900, trade with China initiated the **U.S. Open Door policy**. It was U.S. Secretary of State John Hay who designed this foreign policy, which was also issued to Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Russia.



## Divided society: the causes of racial tension, the experiences of immigrants and the impact of immigration

Among the functions of the Open Door policy was to make immigration to the United States easier.

Immigrants to the U.S. were driven by **push factors**, which made them leave their own country.

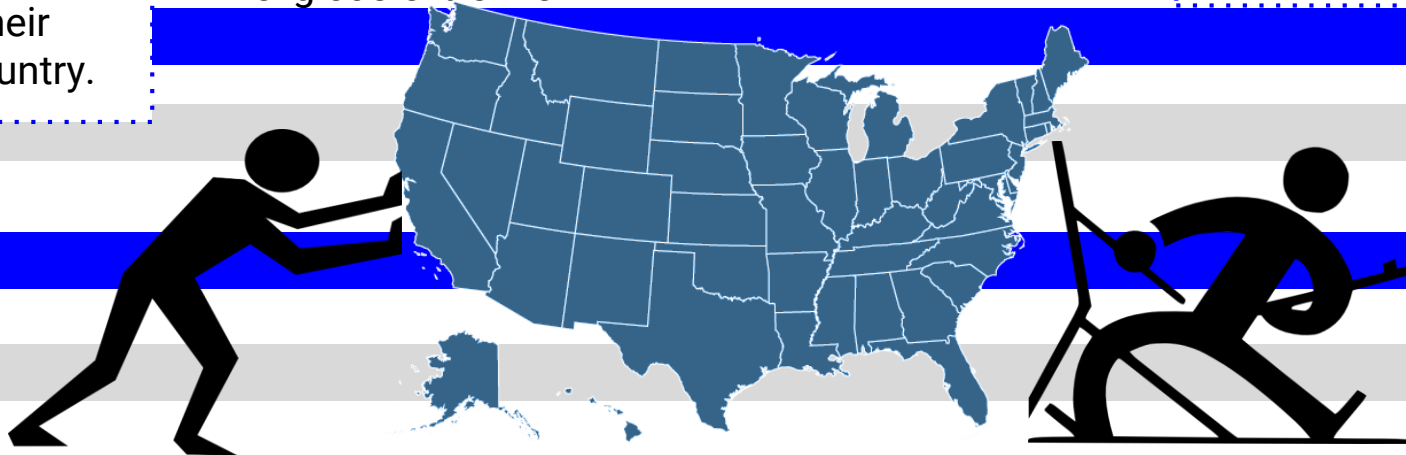


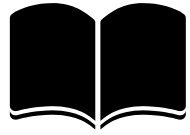
Poor economic activity, lack of job opportunities, famine, and political and religious extremism.

*American Dream*, job opportunities, and the promise of a new life.



**Pull factors** attracted people to the United States.





## Divided society: the causes of racial tension, the experiences of immigrants and the impact of immigration

### Effects of Immigration



Old immigrants began to fear that new people would threaten the American way of life.

Many Americans feared that increased immigrants would result in housing and job shortages.

New immigrants were used by employers to break strikes, resulting in lower wages and poor working conditions.

Furthermore, new immigrants were also blamed for spreading diseases and the proliferation of crime.

Immigrants were processed at **Ellis Island**, located in the city of New York. They called it the 'Island of Tears' due to the possibility of being accepted or rejected by America.

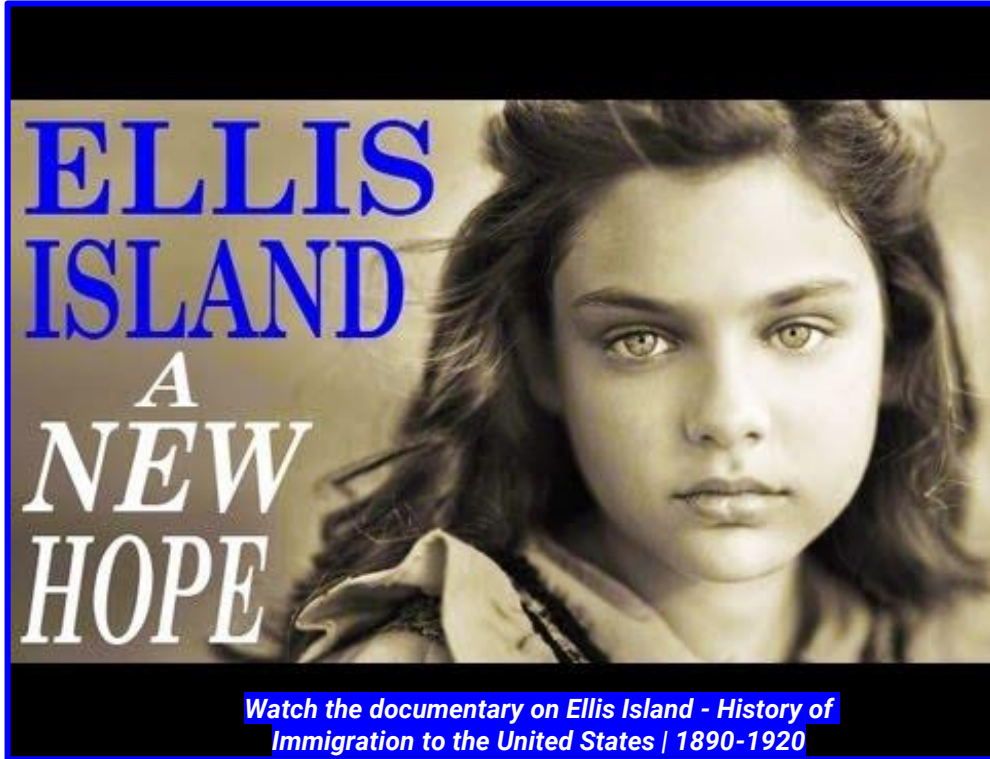
Language barriers created tension between old and new immigrants.

Religious beliefs divided old immigrants (mostly Protestant) and new immigrants (mostly Catholics and Jews).

**As a result, old immigrants and Americans demanded restrictions on processing and accepting new immigrants.**



## Divided society: the causes of racial tension, the experiences of immigrants and the impact of immigration



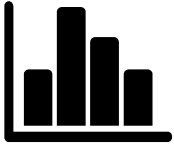
In 1907 alone, over 1.25 million people went through Ellis Island. From then, immigration to the U.S. became almost uncontrollable. By 1917, Congress passed laws to restrict immigration to America under the belief that immigrants would not enrich American culture.

The **1917 Literacy Test** also known as the **Immigration Act**, barred illiterate immigrants over the age of 16. Homosexual immigrants who admitted their orientation were also excluded.

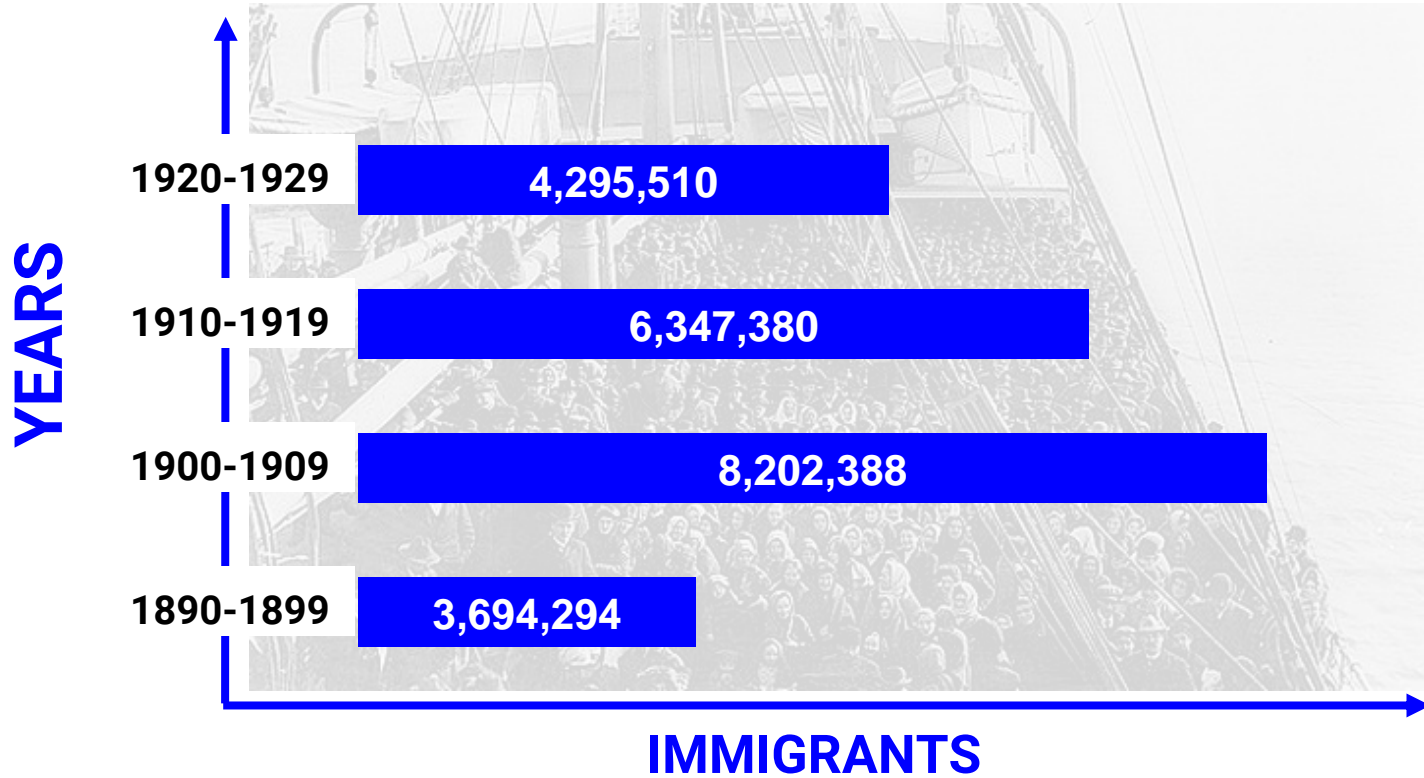
The **1921 Emergency Quota Act** or Immigration Restriction Act restricted the number of immigrants per country annually.

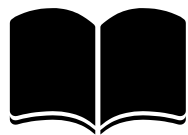
The **1924 National Origins Act** restricted immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. It stayed in effect until the 1960s.

In **1929**, the **Immigration Act** was reestablished by allowing a fixed quota of 150,000 people per country for the next 40 years.



# Chart of U.S. Immigration from 1890 to 1929





## Divided society: the Ku Klux Klan; the Red Scare and the significance of the Sacco and Vanzetti case

### Ku Klux Klan

The Ku Klux Klan was a secret racist organisation established to secure white supremacy over African-Americans. Established during the Civil War, Klan members were from southern states who opposed the abolition of slavery.



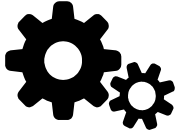
Image of Klansmen in the film, *Birth of a Nation* (1915)

In 1915, the Klan was reestablished by Dr William J. Simmons, a white Protestant who felt threatened by Catholic and Jewish immigrants.

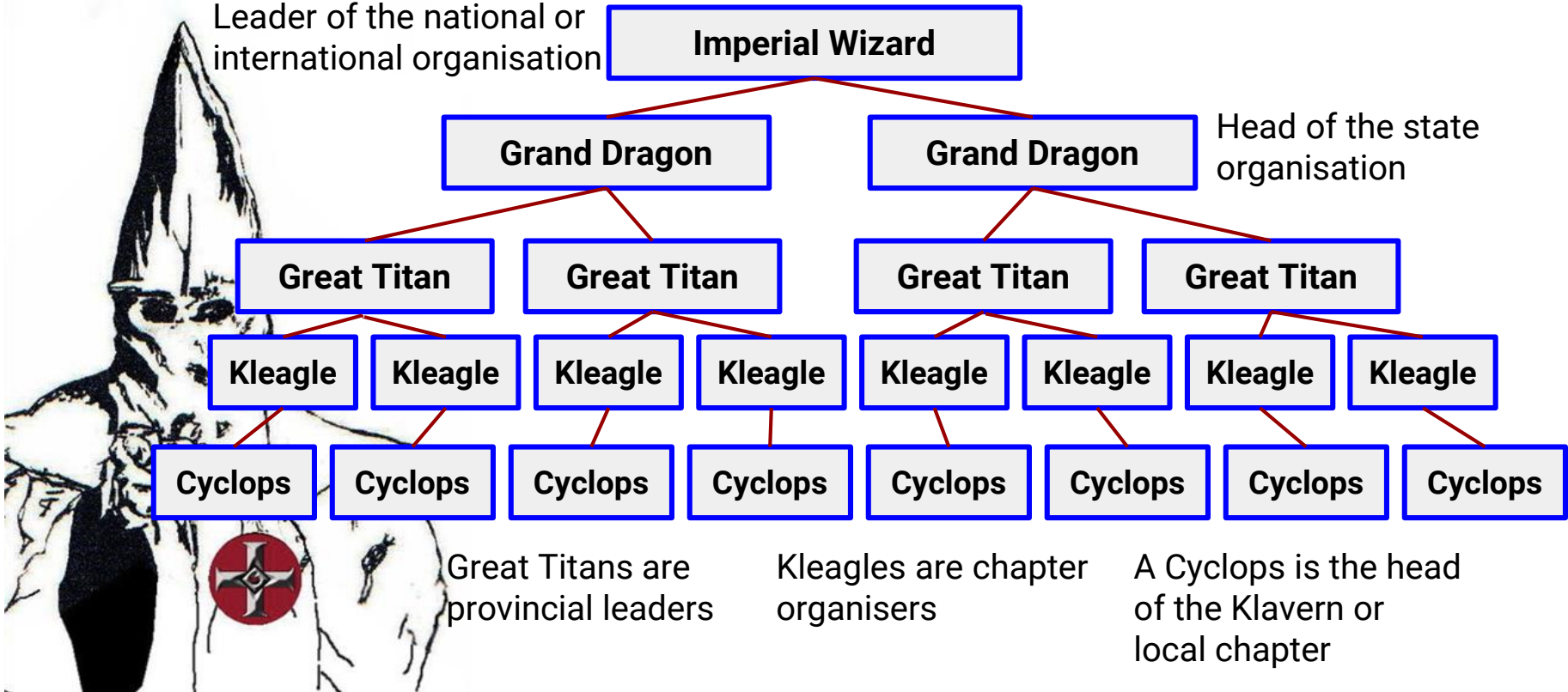
The 1915 film *Birth of a Nation* detailing the Civil War inspired the reestablishment of the Klan.

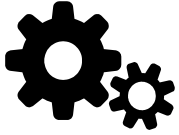
By the mid-1920s, the Klan had grown to 5 million members but gradually declined by the end of 1929. Only WASPS, or White Anglo Saxon Protestants, were allowed to be members.





# How the Ku Klux Klan Works





## How the Ku Klux Klan Works

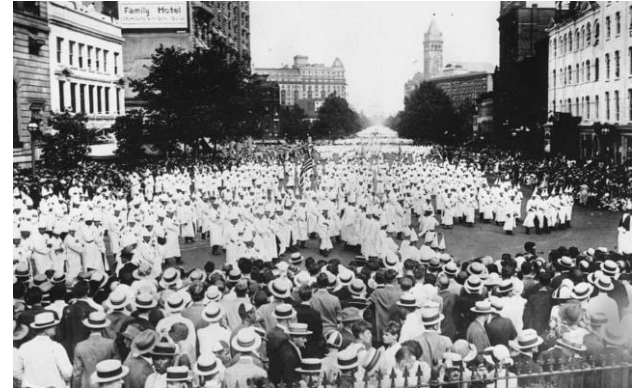
Members of the Klan in the '20s used a variety of ways to intimidate and persecute people of colour. The Ku Klux Klan was able to get away with such activities because many police officers and judges were members.

### Lynching ■■■ Boycotts ■■■ Bombings

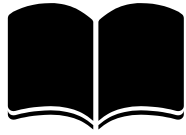
Members of the Klan would kill black people by beating and hanging them from trees without any trial nor compliance with the law. This method also became known as the Rope Law and allegations were often spurious.

The Ku Klux Klan encouraged boycotts of businesses that were sympathetic to African-Americans. They would put burning crosses outside the establishments to intimidate them.

Houses and churches of African-Americans were bombed or torched. Moreover, those who tried to help them experienced the same violence.



On 8 August 1925, over 50,000 Klan members marched to Washington to have the Attorney General of Maine removed from office and launch a hate campaign against Democrat candidate Alfred E. Smith. As a result, Republican Herbert Hoover was elected president.



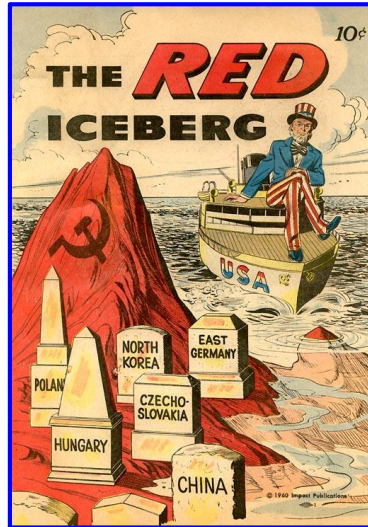
# Divided society: the Ku Klux Klan; the Red Scare and the significance of the Sacco and Vanzetti case

*“There can be nothing so dangerous as for us to allow the undesirable foreign element to poison our civilisation and thereby threaten the safety of the institutions that our forebears have established for us... Now is the time to keep from our shores forever those who are not in sympathy with the American ideals.”*

**Senator Thomas Heflin of Alabama, 1921**

## Rise of Xenophobia

With the massive influx of European and Asian immigrants to the U.S. in the 1920s, many Americans became xenophobic.



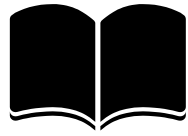
Political cartoon on the Red Scare

## The RED SCARE

After the Russian Revolution in 1917, southern and eastern European immigrants to the U.S. were accused of spreading revolutionary ideas.

**Xenophobia** is the fear of foreigners resulting in irrational judgment, treatment, and decisions.

The **Russian Revolution** was a series of political events, which ended the tsarist Romanov dynasty. The leftists known as the Bolsheviks were led by Vladimir Lenin.



## Divided society: the Ku Klux Klan; the Red Scare and the significance of the Sacco and Vanzetti case

### Anarchists

In contrast to the communist ideology, most Americans believed in capitalism, in which people have the freedom to do whatever they want with their money and there is no limit to how much wealth they can accumulate.

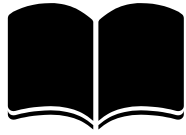
Most Communists were anarchists. They believed that a communist government should have no leader nor social classes in order to achieve an equal society. Such aims disregarded the idea of democratic rights and maintained that revolution through force and violence was acceptable and necessary.

The Red Scare or fear of Communism and anarchism brought about by the migration of people from Europe to the United States increased xenophobia among Americans.



Image of political radicals awaiting deportation at Ellis Island, 1920

The increase in the number of and pressure by xenophobes became the reasons behind the passage of laws restricting immigration to the U.S.

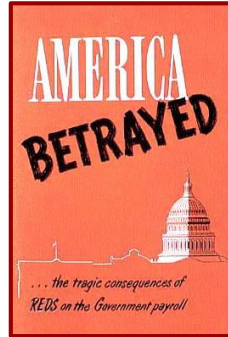


# Divided society: the Ku Klux Klan; the Red Scare and the significance of the Sacco and Vanzetti case

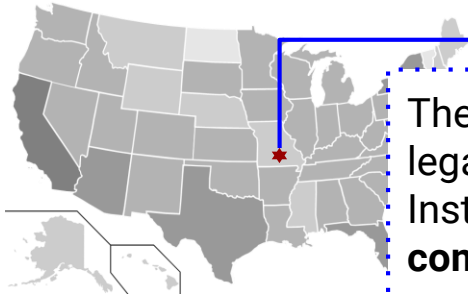
## Palmer Raids

In 1919, after the failed attempt to assassinate him, Attorney General Palmer launched an organised mission to hunt “Red” activity in the United States. The Attorney General instructed J. Edgar Hoover to lead the **Palmer Raids**. The same interstate organisation later became the FBI or Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Palmer raids happened in **33 cities**, wherein **6,000** suspected Reds were arrested.

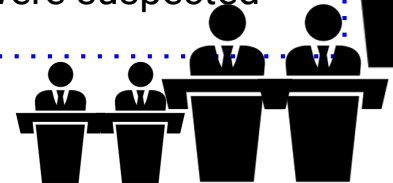
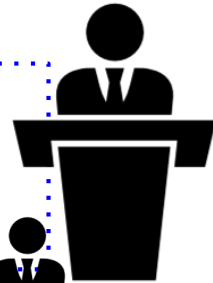


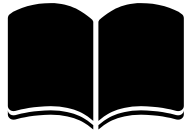
Private houses, public meetings, and headquarters were raided, including the May 1920 raid in New York.



The raids did not follow legal procedures. Instead, **anti-communists propaganda** was spread.

Five members of the New York Assembly were disqualified because they were suspected communists.





# Divided society: the Ku Klux Klan; the Red Scare and the significance of the Sacco and Vanzetti case

## Who were **Ferdinando Nicola Sacco** and **Bartolomeo Vanzetti**?



Image of Vanzetti (left) and Sacco (right)

Under Judge Thayer, they were found guilty and spent seven years in prison. On August 24, 1927, both were executed by electrocution despite a number of public protests and petitions.

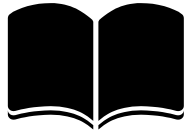
Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were both Italian-born immigrants who spoke little English. They were a shoemaker and fish peddler, respectively. On 5 May 1920, the two outspoken anarchists were arrested and charged with murder and robbery.

## Case Background

On April 15, 1920, F.A. Parmenter, a shoe factory paymaster, and Alessandro Berardelli, a guard, were murdered and robbed of more than \$15,000 in South Braintree, Massachusetts.

## DEFENCE led by attorney Fred H. Moore

- ❑ The two admitted their radical beliefs but denied involvement in the robbery and murder.
- ❑ Sacco argued that he was in Boston at the time of the murders.
- ❑ Celestino Madeiros admitted to the murder with the Joe Morelli gang.
- ❑ The money was never recovered.



# Divided society: the Ku Klux Klan; the Red Scare and the significance of the Sacco and Vanzetti case

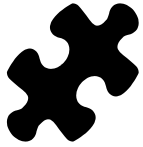
**PROSECUTION** led by attorney Frederick G. Katzmann

- ❑ Seven eyewitnesses confirmed that Sacco was near Braintree at the time of the murders. Four corroborated Vanzetti's presence.
- ❑ One of the recovered bullets allegedly matched Sacco's pistol. While Vanzetti was arrested with a 38 calibre.
- ❑ A witness testified that the cap found at the scene of the crime was that of Sacco.

Despite the number of protests and plea of innocence, Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted and sentenced to death by electrocution on 23 August 1927, in Charlestown State Prison.

**SIGNIFICANCE.** Many believed that Sacco and Vanzetti were unjustly treated and wrongly executed. The case became a classic example of tyranny and control of power over politically non-conforming individuals. Even after their execution, experts still investigated evidence through new methods of ballistic tests. In 1961 and 1983, tests proved that Sacco's revolver was the weapon used to kill the security guards, while Vanzetti was believed to be truly innocent.

On August 23, 1977, Governor Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts proclaimed that both Sacco and Vanzetti were never given a fair trial.



## Glossary of terms

### ECONOMIC BOOM

It refers to a period of financial prosperity, rapid progress, and growth in stocks.

### LAISSEZ-FAIRE

Also known as the free-market policy, which lessens government interference on businesses.

### PROTECTIONISM

A policy employed by Presidents Harding and Coolidge, which imposed tariffs on foreign goods. This made American goods cheaper and more appealing to buy.

### RUGGED INDIVIDUALISM

President Hoover believed that Americans should not rely heavily on the government, instead they should work harder to solve their own problems.

### PROHIBITION

The complete ban of the manufacture, sale, and transport of liquor in the United States.

### XENOPHOBIA

The fear of foreigners resulting in irrational judgment, treatment, and decisions.