

American History: Chapter 22

The “New Era”

Relevant Key Concepts

Key Concept 7.1

I. Growth expanded opportunity, while economic instability led to new efforts to reform US society and its economic system

- A) New technologies and manufacturing techniques helped focus the US economy on the production of consumer goods contributing to improved standards of living, greater personal mobility, and better communications systems.
- B) By 1920, a majority of the US population lived in urban centers, which offered new economic opportunities for women, international migrants, and internal migrants
- C) Episodes of credit and market instability in the early 20th century, in particular the Great Depression, led to calls for a stronger financial regulatory system

Key Concept 7.2

I. Innovations in communications and technology contributed to the growth of mass culture, while significant changes occurred in internal migration patterns

- A) New forms of mass media, such as radio and cinema, contributed to the spread of national culture as well as a greater awareness of regional cultures
- B) Migration gave rise to new forms of art and literature that expressed ethnic and regional identities, such as the Harlem Renaissance movement
- D) In the 1920's, cultural and political controversies merged as Americans debated gender roles, modernism, science, religion and issues related to race and immigration

The New Economy

- 1920 census: First time more people lived in urban areas
- New Technology:
 - Radio: by the end of 1920s, most families had one
 - Trains: diesel engine – faster
- Labor:
 - Standard of living rose for many workers
 - “Welfare Capitalism” (Henry Ford):
 - Shorter workweek, higher wages, paid vacations
 - The system ended after 1929 – Great Depression
 - Average income for workers was \$1,500 a year, \$1,800 was needed to “maintain a minimally decent standard of living.”
 - AFL: Still did not include unskilled labor

The New Economy Continued

- Women:
 - “Pink-collar” jobs:
 - Secretaries, salesclerks, phone operators
 - Lower paying positions
- African Americans
 - Janitors, dishwashers, garbage collectors, etc. (therefore, most were left out of AFL)
 - A. Philip Randolph:
 - Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
 - Increased wages, shorter working hours, etc.
 - Influential Civil Rights leader
- Japanese Americans
 - California passed laws making it difficult for Japanese to buy land

The New Economy Continued

- Businesses still associated unions with being subversive
 - 1921, The Supreme Court upheld that picketing was illegal, and courts could issue injunctions
- Farmers:
 - Production outweighed demand (WWI ended)
 - When in doubt, farmers NEVER decreased production of the crops (until the New Deal)
 - “Parity”:
 - Purpose was to ensure that farmers would get back their production costs
 - Passed by Congress, vetoed by Coolidge

The New Culture

- Consumer Culture:
 - Increase in spending on new appliances:
 - Refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners
- Automobiles – 30 million by the end of the 1920s
 - Development of suburbs
 - Increase in travel and vacations
- Charles Lindbergh:
 - First solo flight w/o radio from America to Europe
 - Becomes overnight sensation
- Advertising:
 - New, booming industry, influenced by WWI propaganda
 - *The Man Nobody Knows* – Jesus was the first salesman
 - Newspapers increased in circulation
 - New magazines:
 - *Time, Reader's Digest*
- *The Jazz Singer*:
 - First “talkie” movie

The New Culture Continued

- Women in the 1920s
 - Professional jobs included: fashion, education, social work, and nursing
 - Most middle-class women did not work outside the home
- Motherhood in the 1920s:
 - John B. Watson – believed mothers should rely on experts for raising children
- Margaret Sanger:
 - Advocated birth control, contraceptives
 - Birth control was illegal in many places
 - Upset many fundamentalists
- Flappers:
 - More of an image than reality
 - Shorter dresses and short hair
 - Smoked, drank, and danced
- National Woman's Party
 - Alice Paul - proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

The New Culture Continued

- Education:
 - High school and college attendance increased drastically
 - Schools played a large role in social development
- Lost Generation
 - Resented middle-class ideals, felt betrayed by society
 - Ernest Hemingway – *A Farewell to Arms*
 - H.L. Mencken – *Smart Set, American Mercury*
 - Magazines that criticized middle-class values
 - Similar to the Beat Generation of the 1950s
- Harlem Renaissance:
 - Promoted African American culture through poetry, music – jazz, literature, and art
 - Focused on discrimination that African Americans faced
 - Langston Hughes – “I am a Negro – and beautiful”

A Conflict of Cultures

- Prohibition, The “Noble Experiment”:
 - Popular in South and West
 - Problems with prohibition
 - People liked to drink, weak enforcement, many people hostile to law
 - Many government officials were bribed -> Increase in organized crime
- Huge demand for illegal alcohol.
 - Large cities, such as Chicago, flourished with crime
 - Al Capone, notorious gangster, was very popular
 - St. Valentine’s Day Massacre: 7 gang members killed
- Nativism:
 - Emergency Quota Act of 1921:
 - Restricted number of immigrants from a country to 3% of total people from that country living in US in 1910
 - Favored Southern and Eastern Europe
 - Immigration Act of 1924:
 - Quotas for foreigners was cut from 3% to 2%, used 1890 census instead, hurt “New Immigrants”
 - Shut out Japanese immigrants:
 - Marked an end of era of unrestricted immigration

A Conflict of Cultures Continued

- The Ku Klux Klan
 - Re-emerged in the 1920s
 - *Birth of a Nation* – full-length film that glorified the KKK
 - By mid-1920s, 5 million Americans paid dues as members
 - Scandals, including embezzlement, helped lead to the decline of the clan
- “Monkey Trial”
 - John Scopes, biology teacher from Dayton Tennessee, violated a law by teaching evolution
 - Prosecutor: William Jennings Bryan, Defense Attorney: Clarence Darrow
 - Scopes found guilty, paid \$100 fine
 - Helped fuel religion vs. secularism for many more years
- Democrats in the 1920s
 - Democrats: Alfred Smith -> Roman Catholic

Republican Government

- 1920s sees an end to Progressive legislation, including the Supreme Court
 - “Return to Normalcy” with Warren G.....
- Teapot Dome Scandal:
 - Secretary of Interior Fall transferred land to his department, leased land to oil companies, and took \$100,000s in bribes
 - Just like President Grant, Harding was associated with Corruption and Scandal
- Calvin Coolidge:
 - Warren G.....’s VP, becomes president when Warren G..... dies
 - Advocated “Laissez-faire” government
- Secretary of Treasury Andrew Mellon
 - Tax cuts for the wealthy, “Trickle-down economics”
 - Later advocated by Ronald Reagan