

Chapter 24, The New Era

The New Economy

- I. Technology and Economic Growth
 - A. The 1920s economy was at an all time high for years
 - B. United States became a key industrial producer for Europe after WWI
 - C. Demand for automobiles required a lot of raw materials, workers, oil, and roads
 - D. Radios were in demand creating new jobs
 - E. Aviation and associated industries prospered including plastics and synthetic fibers
 - F. Inventions like early computers and discoveries like Gregor Mendel's research in genetics
- II. Economic Organization
 - A. Many large industries were consolidating; however non-technological industries like textiles had a harder time doing so
 - B. Modern Administrative Systems—After William Durant of General Motors retired, Alfred P. Sloan applied Taylorism and created an easily manageable company ranking among the top 5 by size in the world
 - C. Trade Associations centralized while other industries cooperated
- III. Labor in the New Era
 - A. Although the economy was increasing, there was still an extensive lower class, 2/3 of society in some figures who lived in a minimum or less than minimum level
 - B. Instead of encouraging unions, executives encouraged “welfare capitalism” which promoted a shorter work week, better pay, vacations, etc., instead of allowing unions which gave real power
 - C. Although the 20s as a whole had relatively low unemployment, about 5-8 % of people were unemployed at a given time
 - D. Because the American Federation of Labor was interested only in craft unions it excluded many groups and was relatively peaceful and without any strikes in the 1920s
- IV. Women and Minorities in the Work Force
 - A. Pink-Collar Jobs—low paying service occupations held by women like telephone operator, secretary, etc.
 - B. Excluded by AFL
 - C. African Americans migrate to cities in Great Migration; many worked in unskilled jobs like garbage collectors, janitors, and most popular: car porters
 - D. A. Philip Randolph led the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and became an important figure in the civil rights movement later on
 - E. After Chinese immigration subsided in California, Japanese immigrants began to populate the state and took over the menial tasks once held by the Chinese
 - F. Filipino immigration caused so many riots that California excluded all immigration from the Philippines
 - G. Mexicans populated the southwest and although they experienced discrimination, they were rarely excluded
- V. The “American Plan”
 - A. The “American Plan” was endorsed by the National Association of Manufacturers as an anti-union idea that maintained the “open shop” or the idea that employees should not *have to* join a union
 - B. Supreme Court upheld a lower court decision to make picketing illegal and intervened in a few strikes
 - C. Anti-union sentiment flowed especially in Pennsylvania where coal mines and other industries were proliferating
- VI. Agricultural Technology and the Plight of the Farmer
 - A. New agricultural technology and mechanical farming caused 35 million acres of new farmland to open for cultivation
 - B. Technology included genetically engineered food and pesticides
 - C. A huge surplus of food created a panic for farmers in the 1920s and lands became owned by corporations; tenancy became popular

- D. Parity—the assurance that farmers would at least be reimbursed for their expenses by raising tariffs and requiring government to buy surplus goods at parity and sell them for profit for farmers
- E. McNary-Hangen Bill—vetoed twice by Coolidge, called for parity on crops like tobacco, cotton, grain, and rice

The New Culture

- I. Consumerism
 - A. Growing Mass Consumption—Middle-class families were able to afford more than they just needed but what they wanted; the precursor to the American “Affluent Society” of the 1950s
 - B. America had survived up till now without the automobile but in the 1920s 30 million cars were on American roads which required much development but expanded the geographical accessibility of anyone who owned it
 - C. Country dwellers were able to travel to cities while vacation became a popular pastime for the middle class as well as the extreme upper class; paid vacations became popular for corporations
 - D. The younger generation found a possibility of escape with the automobile, even more so than with railroads of the past; many created their own social lives far from their origin when they were old enough to drive
 - E. Youth culture proliferated for the first time in history
- II. Advertising
 - A. Advertising went hand in hand with consumerism and products were no longer just described in ads, but associated with a particular lifestyle
 - B. *The Man Nobody Knows*—by advertising executive Bruce Barton, the book identifies Jesus as the ideal advertiser who was able to market a religion that conquered the world through the simple tactics of making friends, pleasing others, and becoming popular
 - C. Newspapers and later radios became major methods of advertising
 - D. Mass-Circulation Magazines—*The Reader’s Digest* and *Time* became popular realist magazines that presented stories and news nationwide; making it disposable and accessible
- III. The Movies and Broadcasting
 - A. The number of movie watchers more than doubled from 1922 to 1930 and after a few scandals, producers banded into the Motion Picture Association to clean up Hollywood
 - B. Movies were reviews and censored or banded by the retired postmaster general who made films clean and family oriented
 - C. Radio—KDKA Pittsburg was considered the first broadcasting association and eventually the National Broadcasting Company was formed was the first network; controversial material was also banded but radio as decentralized so it remained diverse
- IV. Modernist Religion
 - A. With a society emphasizing modernism, theologians modernized evangelical Christianity to liberal Protestantism
 - B. Harry Emerson Fosdick—Riverside Church NYC pastor who published *Abundant Religion* that argued for a more spiritual social religion
 - C. Most Americans were not interested in religion as a vehicle to advance “abundant life” but religion was slowly taking a back seat compared to its once all-powerful self
 - D. American religion was finally transforming from its Old World identity to a pastime rather than a doctrine for living
- V. Professional Women
 - A. 25% of married women worked in the 1920s; women were frequently accepted to colleges and some were among the third generation of legacy at certain schools already
 - B. Beyond a few occasions where women excelled as executives, lawyers, etc., they usually were in “feminine” roles like fashion and nursing
 - C. Regardless, the “new professional woman” was a popular image of the 1920s
- VI. Changing Ideas of Motherhood
 - A. Behavioral psychologists suggested that child rearing combine maternal love with care from doctors and educators
 - B. Women also sought the “companionate marriage,” separating children from the marriage more and involving women more in the husband’s social life

- C. New Sex—Psychology of the time also encouraged sex as more than an act of procreation but as the culmination of romantic love, resulting in pleasure
 - D. Birth Control—By the influence of Emma Goldman, an earlier proponent, Margaret Sanger promoted birth control for women so that sex could be enjoyed without the association of childbirth; some products remained illegal and abortion was thoroughly illegal nationwide
- VII. The “Flapper”: Image and Reality
- A. Women believed that since they were in a “New Era” they were allowed to leave Victorian respectability and smoke, drink, and wear seductive clothes
 - B. “Flapper” was the modern liberated woman
 - C. The working class was the most common “flappers” and the upper class “Bohemian” women mimicked it
 - D. Women would go to clubs together
 - E. Most women, however, remained dependent on men
- VIII. Pressing for Women’s Rights
- A. National Women’s Party—led by Alice Paul, pressed for Equal Rights Amendment
 - B. League of Women Voters
 - C. Sheppard-Towner Act—Provided funds for prenatal and child healthcare programs; fought down by women who were against it for many reasons, showed the power of females
- IX. Education and Youth
- A. As expertise became important for the workplace, education became an emphasis for the lives of young children
 - B. High school attendance doubled in the 1920s
 - C. Colleges began to teach modern fields like econ and engineering
 - D. Schools allowed young people of the day to develop a society of their own including their own hobbies, interests, and trends
 - E. Schools allowed for clubs, fraternities, and accessible team sports as well as academics to define themselves in peer groups rather than families
- X. The Decline of the “Self-Made Man”
- A. As society advanced, the myth that hard work could make a person renown fell apart
 - B. Masculinity was questioned as an idea of independence disintegrated and men turned to sports , fraternities, and the army for reassurance
 - C. Charles Lindbergh and Henry Ford became idolized for different reasons but were considered masculine at the time
- XI. The Disenchanted
- A. Intellectuals of the time refused to try to change society and isolated themselves from it because they hated the way America was at the time
 - B. WWI Generation was considered the “Lost Generation”
 - C. After WWI, America went back to “business as usual” and dropped Wilsonian ideals only to look toward consumerism and started to shape itself as what many modern liberals consider the American selfish psyche
 - D. Ernest Hemingway supported the intellectuals and hailed the ideas in *A Farewell to Arms*
 - E. H.L. Mencken, a journalist, was known as a “debunker,” who criticized America in the 20s
 - F. Sinclair Lewis criticized the urban part of modern society
 - G. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote *The Great Gatsby* where the materialistic title character Jay Gatsby’s wealthy brings his demise
 - H. Some left society for Paris, others for the southwest, and many intellectuals adopted hedonism with wild drunken parties and rampant sex—most, however, believed that it was more fun to do art (?? lol)
 - I. Charles and Mary Beard—well known historians who emphasized conservative views that looked at the clash of economic interests in American History
- XII. The Harlem Renaissance
- A. Harlem went from being an affluent white suburb to a completely black community after WWI
 - B. Black artists, songwriters, and poets flourished in post-war Harlem including Duke Ellington, Jelly Roll Morton, and Fletcher Henderson
 - C. Black artists fought for the fact that their culture had a rich racial heritage, African-American pride
 - D. Most of Harlem writing was not racial politics like Claude McKay but was simply creativity

- E. Jazz became popular as well
- F. The Harlem renaissance had lasting effects on African-Americans
- XIII. The Southern Agrarians
 - A. Fugitives—White Southern intellectuals who discussed their ancient rural traditions in Vanderbilt University (TN) (and eventually elsewhere) through poetry and eventually essays, etc.
 - B. Argued that the South was able to maintain an agrarian way of life, away from the hustle and bustle of the Northern suburbia and cityscapes (replaced “Fugitives” with “Agrarians”)
 - C. *I’ll Take My Stand*—a series of southern essays; although the white supremacy ones were dismissed, the attacks on industrialization were often read
 - D. Some Agrarians still referred to the prehistoric Lost Cause as an ideal but it took on the new idea that the “backwardness” of the South was an anecdote to the excessive modernization of the North

A Conflict of Cultures

- I. Prohibition
 - A. Although prohibition was based in noble causes and decreased drinking dramatically; it increased crime and led to organized crime
 - B. Al Capone build a criminal empire in Chicago
 - C. Many old progressives began to protest prohibition but many rural Protestants defended it
 - D. Prohibition fell during the Great Depression in 1933 with repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment when the “wets” effectively challenged the “dries”
- II. Nativism and the Klan
 - A. Many old-stock Americans sought to repress immigrants with prohibition and other methods
 - B. Quota System of 1921—Congress passed emergency legislation to limit immigration
 - C. National Origins Act of 1924—Congress bans East Asia immigration
 - D. Nativism gave way to extremism in the form of the revived Ku Klux Klan
 - E. The New Klan—reestablished on Stone Mountain in Atlanta
 - F. As their first act, the lynched a Jewish factory manager
 - G. They were greeted with the premiere of *Birth of a Nation*, D.W. Griffith’s movie that glorified the first Klan
 - H. The Klan became a WASP society that spread throughout the North and West
 - I. Some terrorized non-WASPs, others were interested just in snobbery
 - J. Defending “Traditional Values”—fought for to old morals against modernity such as punishment for divorce and Bible reading at school
 - K. The Klan gained support with rituals, costumes, and a feel of excitement and cohesion
 - L. David Stephenson, head of the Indiana segment, brought the fall of the Klan’s popularity forever after he raped a young woman and let her die of swallowing poison rather than calling a doctor
- III. Religious Fundamentalism
 - A. Protestantism divided between two groups
 - 1. Modernists, urban middle-class people who adapted religion to society
 - 2. Fundamentalists, defenders of old religion; especially that the Bible should be taught rather than Darwinism in public schools
 - B. Tennessee made teaching any creation story other than the Bible in public school illegal in 1925
 - C. ACLU protested law and gave the free counsel of Clarence Darrow to Dayton teacher John T. Scopes against the prosecution of William Jennings Bryan
 - D. Scopes lost but Darrow got Bryan to admit that some religious dogma may be flawed
 - E. Scopes trial seemed too radical to most Protestants so Fundamentalists had to assemble together and were excluded by most mainstream religion
- IV. The Democrats’ Ordeal
 - A. Democrats were made up of interest groups like KKK members, Catholics, urban workers, and immigrants who were very diverse in views
 - B. Tensions between them brought devastation
 - C. Al Smith, the 1928 candidate managed to alienate many groups his anti-Catholic sentiment and lost miserably to Herbert Hoover in a Mondale-esque defeat; Democrats were already getting good at that way back in the 20s!

Republican Government

- I. Harding and Coolidge
 - A. In his *America the Book*, Jon Stewart introduces some supplementary material with “President Harding — The Worst President Ever”
 - B. Harding was from Ohio and the intellectually limited president is quoted, “I am a man of limited talents from a small town; I don’t seem to grasp that I am President”
 - C. The corrupt secretary of the interior under Harding, Albert B. Fall transferred oil reserves from the Navy to the Department of the Interior so he could sell them to rich businessmen; he went to prison; the Attorney General Harry Daugherty barely avoided prison for similar crimes
 - D. Harding escaped from the White House for a speaking tour after senate started investigating him and died of heart attacks
 - E. Coolidge came after Harding and was a silent stern man who took laissez-faire to a new level; he is known for his quietness and once went into a conference room, gave someone a paper that said “I do not choose to run for president in 1928” and left
- II. Government and Business
 - A. Government did have some major triumphs including Andrew Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury, and his “trickle-down” taxes which benefit the upper class with tax cuts who can invest their money to help the economy
 - B. Herbert Hoover was a Commerce Secretary who invented the cooperation method for entrepreneurs known as associationalism that he believed could stabilize industries for greater efficiency with cooperation
 - C. Progressives favored Herbert Hoover for president and he was elected over Al Smith
 - D. He was never able to prove himself because the nation’s economy plunged into the Great Depression; optimism of the 20s led to reform for the 30s

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