

Chapter 24 Outline - The New Era, 1920–1929

- I. Introduction

The 1920s witnessed a boom in consumerism, an explosion in artistic expression, and a growth in leisure time. This change came at the expense of many people and without regard for future problems.

- II. Big Business Triumphant

- A. New Economic Expansion

Economic recovery began in 1922 and continued unevenly until 1929.

- B. Associations and “New Lobbying”

The consolidation movement begun in the late nineteenth century continued into the 1920s. Business and professional associations began to engage in “the new lobbying.”

Government policies helped further business expansion. Pro-business Supreme Court rulings sheltered business from government regulation and hindered organized labor.

- C. Setbacks for Organized Labor

Public opinion continued to be generally hostile toward unions. Some large corporations attempted to counter the appeal of union through what is known as welfare capitalism.

- D. Languishing Agriculture

American farmers fell ever more deeply into debt during the 1920s.

- III. Politics and Government

- A. Scandals of the Harding Administration

Harding began his presidency as a reformer. Ultimately, his administration was plagued by corruption and scandals.

- B. Coolidge Prosperity

Calvin Coolidge, aided by Andrew Mellon, helped private enterprise, a stance that helped him win election in 1924.

- C. Extensions of Progressive Reform

Interest in reform faded in the 1920s, but some innovations occurred on the state and local levels.

- D. Indian Affairs and Politics

During the 1920s, the government conferred citizenship on all Indians and restructured the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

- E. Women and Politics

After attaining suffrage, many women continued to maintain their own organizations through which they engaged in pressure-group politics. Most women, like most men, did not vote.

- IV. A Consumer Society

- A. Effects of the Automobile

Mass production and competition forced automobile prices down. Cars brought more independence, spurred road building, and increased oil consumption.

- B. Advertising

Advertising expenditures rose dramatically in the 1920s.

- C. Radio

As most Americans acquired a radio, it became an influential advertising and entertainment medium.

- V. Cities, Migrants, and Suburbs

- A. African American Migration

African Americans made up a significant percentage of those moving to urban areas.

- B. Marcus Garvey

A Jamaican immigrant, Marcus Garvey headed the Universal Negro Improvement Association, which called for black separatism, racial pride, and equal rights.

- C. Newcomers from Mexico and Puerto Rico

During the 1920s, large numbers of immigrants from Mexico and Puerto Rico entered the United States.

- D. Suburbanization

Advances in transportation allowed many people to flock to the suburbs to escape the crowded cities.

- VI. New Rhythms of Everyday Life

- A. Household Management

The availability of modern conveniences changed the way in which American women used their time. Since housewives were no longer the primary producers of food and clothes for the family, they became the chief shopper within the family and assumed more responsibility

for the budgeting of the family's income.

- B. Health and Life Expectancy

An emphasis on nutrition led to better diets. That fact coupled with improved sanitation led to increased life expectancy.

- C. Older Americans and Retirement

Americans enjoyed improved health in the 1920s, leading to increased numbers of retirees and the need for some minimal assistance for poor elderly people. By 1933, almost every state provided at least minimal support to needy elderly people.

- D. Social Values

A loosening of social values in the 1920s occurred as traditional ideas of proper behavior came under criticism.

Because of child-labor laws and compulsory-school-attendance laws, the peer group played a more influential role in socializing young people.

- E. Women in the Work Force

Millions of women continued to move into the work force after World War I, despite gender discrimination.

- F. Employment of Minority Women

The percentage of minority women who worked for pay was double that of white women.

- G. Alternative Images of Femininity

Women experimented with new images of femininity, such as the "flapper" look. These changes marked a sharp break with the restraint

of the nineteenth century.

- H. Gay and Lesbian Culture

An underground homosexual culture began to expand in some cities, despite general intolerance from the rest of society.

- VII. Lines of Defense

- A. Ku Klux Klan

The Ku Klux Klan revived in 1915 to ensure the survival of “Native, white, Protestant supremacy.”

Antiforeign sentiment characterized the arrest, trial, and execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti.

- B. Immigration Quotas

Congress responded to nativist pressure and set quotas that prevented large numbers of eastern and southern European immigrants from entering the country. The National Origins Act of 1924 banned Asian immigration completely.

- C. Fundamentalism

Many Americans turned to fundamentalist religious beliefs in reaction to what they perceived to be the skepticism and materialism of American society.

- D. Scopes Trial

In 1925, fundamentalism clashed with science when John Scopes stood trial for teaching evolution.

- E. Religious Revivalism

Through the use of modern advertising techniques, revivalist

preachers attracted more followers.

- VIII. The Age of Play

- A. Movies and Sports

Movies became a premier American medium, and many films, especially comedies, included social commentary.

Spectator sports boomed.

- B. Sports Heroes

People began to elevate sports personalities to heroic status.

- C. Movie Stars and Public Heroes

Movie stars satisfied Americans' yearning for romance and adventure.

Charles Lindbergh became the most celebrated public hero of the era.

- D. Prohibition

Prohibition proved successful at first, but bootleggers soon made the illicit liquor industry into a thriving business in the 1920s.

Al Capone met the demand for liquor, gambling, and prostitutes, becoming the best-known gangster of the era.

- IX. Cultural Currents

- A. Literature of Alienation

Disillusioned writers of the 1920s, known as the "Lost Generation," indicted modern American society.

- B. Harlem Renaissance

African American artists asserted pride in their African heritage. Harlem became the mecca for many African Americans.

- C. Jazz

Jazz, which grew out of the urban experience of African Americans and which blurred the line between composer and performer, influenced a generation of artists.

- X. The Election of 1928 and the End of the New Era

- A. Herbert Hoover

Hoover advocated the old values of hard work along with the new ideas of associationalism.

- B. Al Smith

The Democrats nominated New York Governor Al Smith in 1928. A Catholic and a second-generation immigrant, he appealed to urban ethnic groups.

- C. Hoover's Administration

Having won the election, Hoover began his term with high hopes and with an emphasis on personal responsibility.

- D. Stock Market Crash

The stock market crash in 1929 led to further dumping of stock. Hoover believed the economy would stabilize, but the crash instead helped begin a devastating depression.

- E. Declining Demand

Declining demand for new housing and for consumer products led to a cutback in production and in the labor force.

The gap between rich and poor widened during the 1920s. This was one reason for underconsumption, which exacerbated existing economic problems.

- F. Corporate Debt and Stock Market Speculation

Corporations were burdened with debt. Once the corporate pyramids started to fail, corporate structures collapsed.

Widespread speculation based on margin buying characterized the bull market. When the market crashed, brokers called in loans, adding to the panic.

- G. Economic Troubles Abroad; Federal Failures at Home

International economic conditions affected Americans. When American bank loans to the German government stopped due to the stock market crash, Germans could not pay their war reparations to the Allies. This meant the Allies could not pay their war debts to the United States, and the western economy collapsed.