

WWI: HOMEFRONT

WWI: A National Emergency

**-Committee on Public Information –
headed by George Creel**

- Created **propaganda media** aimed to weaken the Central Powers

- Encourage Americans to buy bonds to pay for the war (called “**Liberty Bonds**”)

- Encourage rationing and “Victory Gardens” so more food could go “over there”

-War Industries Board

- Mobilized the American economy for war

- Govt contracts made with private companies to produce war materiel

-Selective Service Act of 1917

- All men aged 21-30 must register

- 3.7m men drafted



Espionage and Sedition Acts of 1917 and 1918

- \$10,000 fine and up to 20 years in prison for interfering with recruitment of soldiers
- Illegal to speak against the U.S. govt, politicians, and policies

Schenck v. U.S.

- Charles Schenck distributes flyers against the draft and was arrested
- Argued his right to 1st Amendment freedoms
- Justice **Oliver Wendell Holmes** ruled that free speech is limited if it creates “**clear and present danger**” for the U.S.

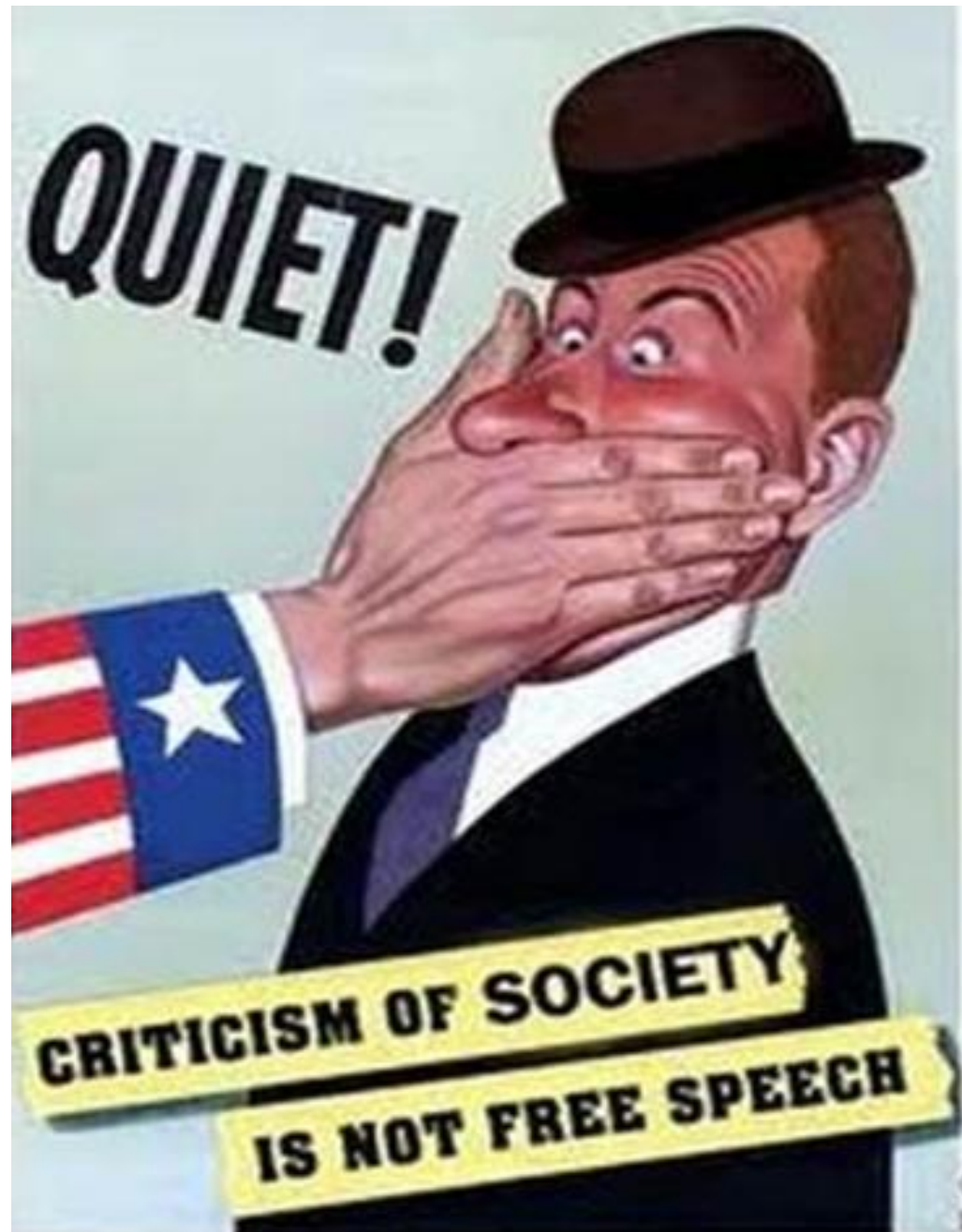
War Hysteria

- Germans were targets of violence and lynching
- Sauerkraut became “liberty cabbage”
- German measles became “liberty measles”



Government during WWI

- Used authority and power over civil liberties
- Effect: mood of fear and suspicion



INTERRUPTING THE CEREMONY

Opfer Project, The Ohio State University Cartoon Research Library



McCUTCHEON, CHICAGO TRIBUNE-NEW YORK NEWS SYNDICATE, INC.

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (R) – Senate Majority Leader

“Return to Isolation” – demands the acknowledgement of Congress to declare war & encourages a block of the Treaty of Versailles and League of Nations

Blacks

- 400,000 were drafted and/or volunteered to enlist
 - Served in segregated units
 - Treated with greater respect by French and British soldiers

-“Great Migration”

- 500,000 Southern blacks migrated North to work in wartime factories
- Race riots broke out in 26 cities, North and South, in 1917
 - Worst riots were in East St. Louis, Illinois

Great Migration → Harlem Renaissance, a movement promoting black culture



Remember

“Birth of a Nation” in 1915? Rise in KKK activity during these years – another factor in the Great Migration



Women

-Jeannette Rankin

- 1st woman elected to Congress (1916) from Montana

- Voted against the declaration of war

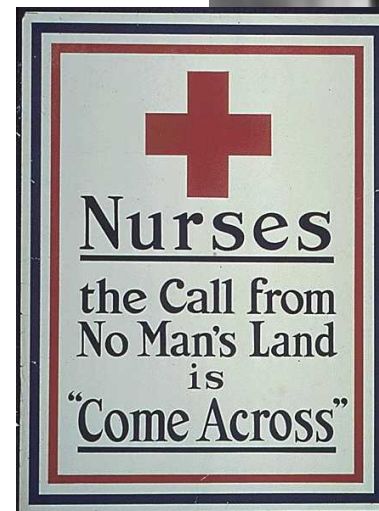
- 1m women worked in war industries

- Thousands served in the military in “non-combat” roles; nurses, secretaries, etc.

- Alice Paul** arrested during the war for protesting Wilson regarding women’s suffrage

- Hunger strike gained international attention and sympathy

- Wilson recognized women’s contributions to the war effort and eventually supported the 19th Amendment – (WWI was the best thing to happen to the women’s suffrage movement)



Pacifists:

- “Conscientious Objectors” (some either for philosophical or religious reasons) believed in peace over war in all circumstances

Socialists:

- Many anti-war socialists were the very ones the “Espionage and Sedition Acts” were designed to silence
- Eugene V. Debs (labor union activist) was prosecuted for an anti-war speech along with many other socialists
- Many lost citizenship or were imprisoned

Immigrants:

- Immigrants often sympathized with their native country
- Those who were publicly anti-war were often deported

Women:

- Some wanted men to live and contribute to society rather than supporting the bloodshed, starvation, and death that was occurring
- Women’s Peace Party actively opposed war

Blacks:

- Some did not support the war due to segregation and discrimination faced at home and in the military
- W.E.B. DuBois supported the war; believed Germany was a greater enemy than racism in the U.S.



Soldiers Return Home

Post-war production
decreases →
Unemployment soars
→
Wages fall →
Prices of goods
remain high →
Strikes erupt



WWI Ends 1918

- Death and destruction leads to a world “mood”
- Becomes violent and unsettled





All of you young people who served in the war.
You are a lost generation... You have no respect
for anything. You drink yourselves to death.

(Gertrude Stein)

Influenza Pandemic Hits America

1st wave: mild influenza in the late spring and summer of 1918

2nd wave: severe influenza in the fall of 1918

3rd wave: Spring of 1919

- WWI had left many communities with a shortage of trained medical personnel
- Local officials urgently requested the Public Health Service to send nurses and doctors
- Would leave about 20m dead across the world
 - In America alone, about 675,000 people in a population of 105 million would die



THE WAY THE GERMANS DID IT AT CHATEAU-THIERRY

During the recent war approximately 1000 men from North Carolina were killed in battle.



THE WAY NORTH CAROLINIANS DO IT AT HOME

During the epidemic last fall and winter 13,644 North Carolinians laid down their lives to a "spit-borne" disease—Influenza!

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917

-Civil war broke out in the USSR

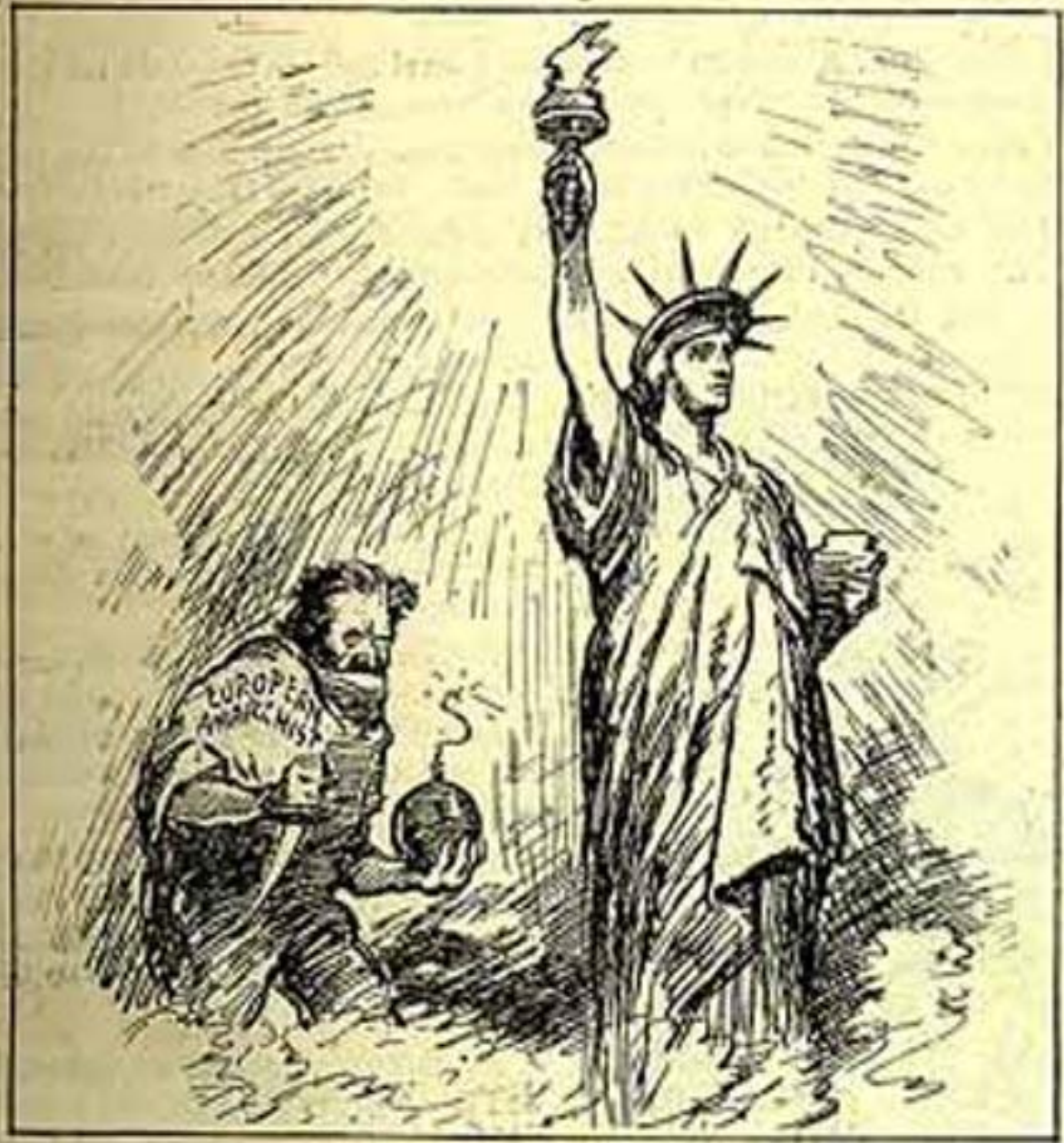
-The U.S. supported the anti-Communists

-The U.S. sent military aid and occupied Soviet ports



The First Red Scare

1918-1921



"COME UNTO ME, YE OPPREST!"

—Alley in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*.

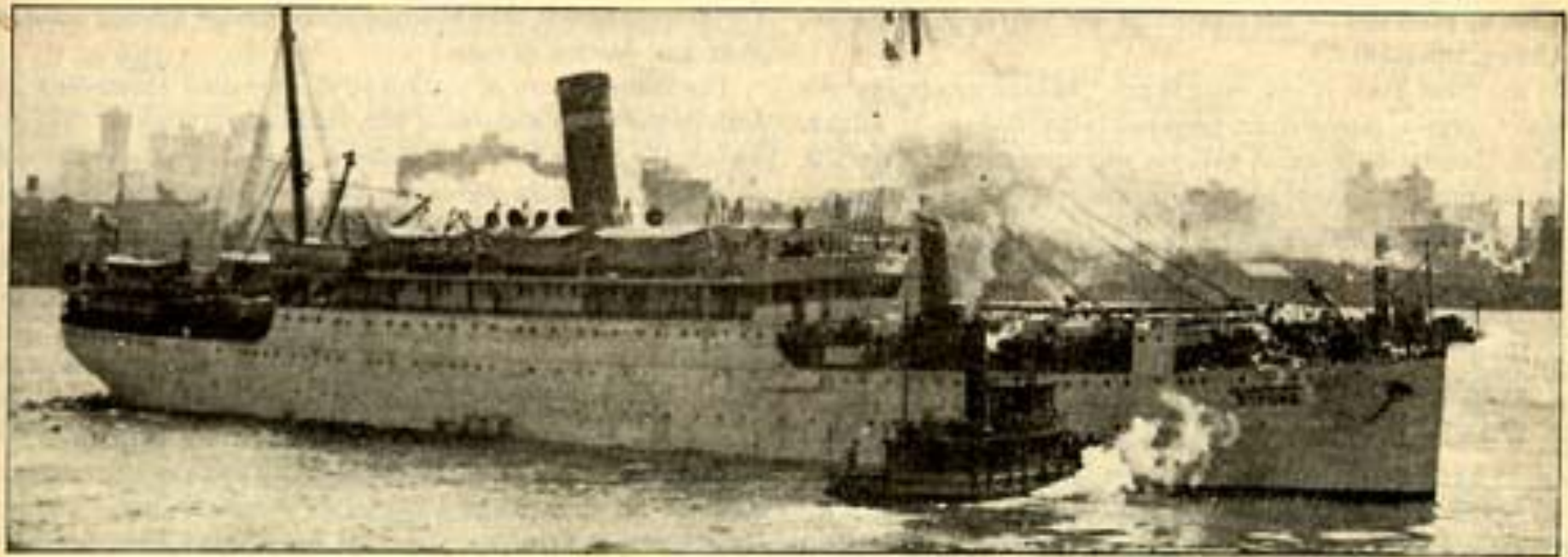
Unrest Begins in the U.S.

- Radicals in the West organize a U.S. Communist party
- Although powerless, caused chaos and terrified the nation



-Dec. 1919: 249 alien “radicals” deported to Russia on the ship *Buford*

-Sept. 1920: hysteria heightened by a bombing on Wall Street



“THE SOVIET ARK.”

The United States army transport *Buford*, carrying 249 Russian “Reds” as America’s Christmas present to Lenin and Trotsky.

Responses to the Red Scare

- Espionage Act (1917) and Sedition Act (1918) passed
- “Fighting Quaker” Attorney Gen. A. Mitchell Palmer led crusade against leftists with suspect allegiance, 6000 suspects held
- “Palmer Raids” arrested suspected radicals
 - Imprisoned and denied a lawyer

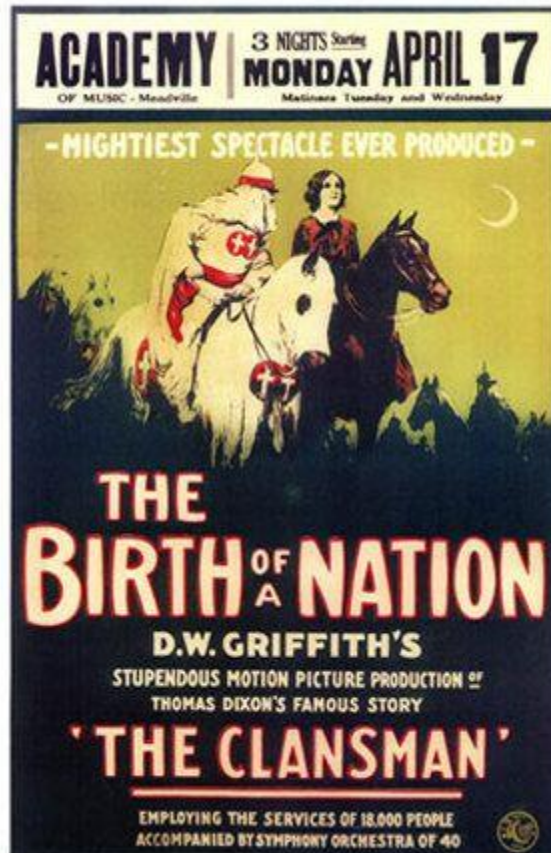


Immigration Restrictions

National Origins Act of 1924: severely restricted immigration by establishing a system of national quotas

-Blatantly discriminated against immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe and virtually excluded Asians

Rise in KKK activity to oppose both blacks as well as “radical” new immigrants, Jews, Catholics, etc. →



THE ONLY WAY TO HANDLE IT

-Several states passed “criminal syndicalism” laws: mere advocacy of violence for social change was criminalized

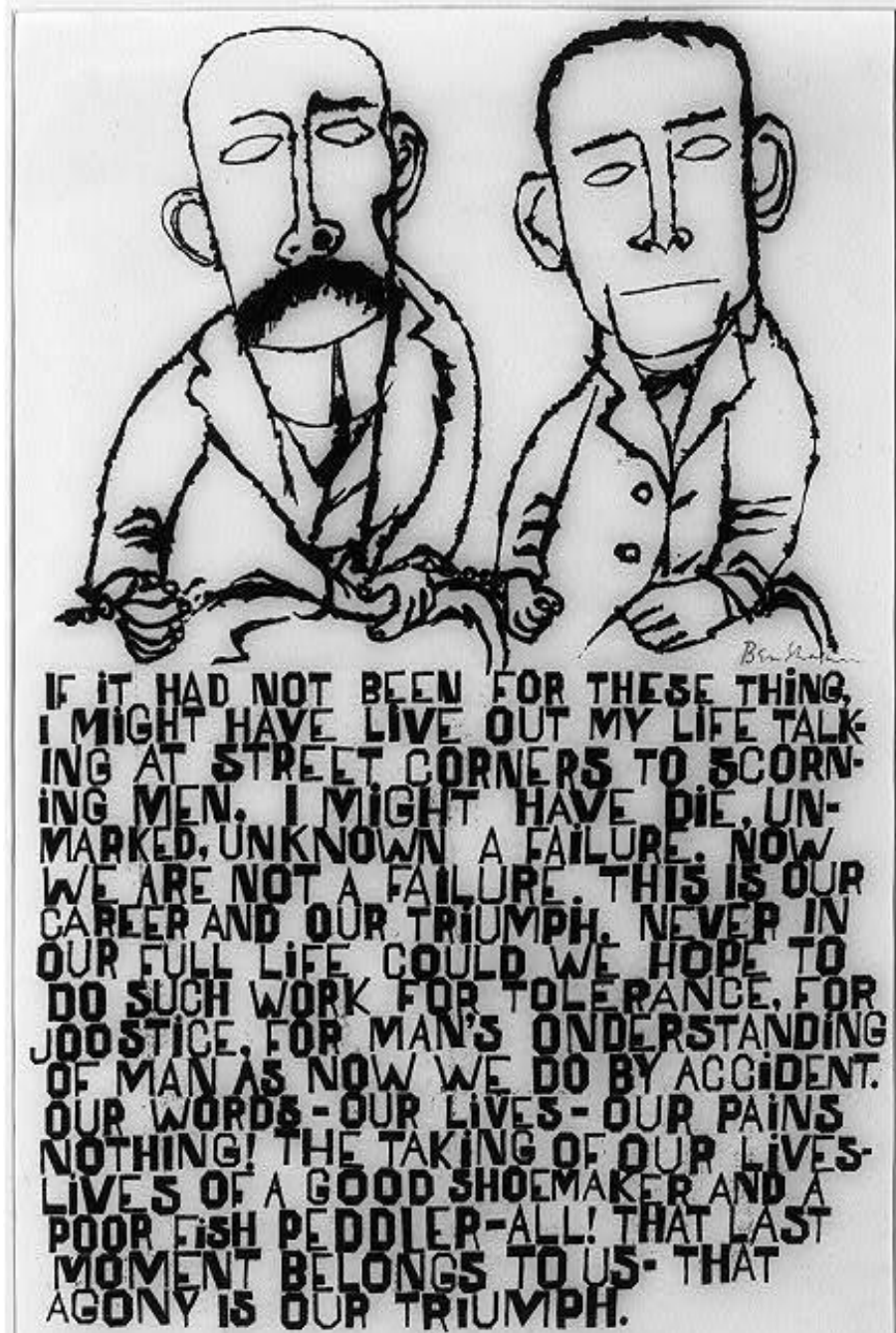
-1920: 5 NY legislators denied seats because they were socialists

-1921: many regarded the conviction of Sacco & Vanzetti as a “judicial lynching” because they were Italians, atheists, anarchists, and draft dodgers



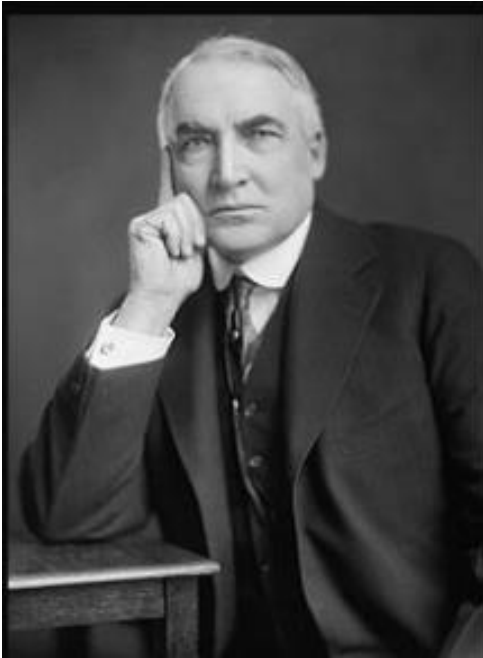
Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti

- 4 April 1920: a paymaster for a shoe factory & his guard shot and killed
- \$15,000 was stolen from the payroll; later used in trial to link with anarchist bombings
- “Getaway” car linked them to the crime where they found the “Smoking Gun” - convicted and sentenced to death by electrocution
- In 1925, another man confessed to his participation in the murders, but the MA Supreme Court wouldn’t allow an appeal
- Despite mass protests due to the wrongful convictions, Sacco and Vanzetti were put to death on 23 August 1927
- In 1961, ballistic evidence proved that the gun did belong to Sacco, but there was no physical proof of Vanzetti’s involvement
- Proved to be an example of the political and social environment of the Red Scare/Nativism/Anti-Radicalism



“Return to Normalcy”

- By May 1920 the U.S. political/cultural “climate” settles → public backlash to Palmer Raids and restrictions on protesting
- Warren G. Harding campaigns for a “Return to Normalcy” & pardons victims of Palmer Raids → 1920s becomes a decade of *laissez-faire* politics



America's present need is not heroics but healing;
not nostrums but normalcy; not revolution but
restoration;... not surgery but serenity.

(Warren G. Harding)