



American Society in the 1920s

Introduction: political philosophies

A. **Radical** (socialist, communist or anarchist in this era): refers to advocating drastic revolutionary changes in society and in government

- **Anarchists** were the most radical and resorted to political assassinations, bombings, and other radical activities in Europe and the U.S.; they sought absolute direct democracy and local control—some saw them as the most extreme form of communism
- **Socialists** sought a government sympathetic to workers and government ownership of basic industries (such as railroads, telephone, and steel).
- **Communists** were often inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and believed that the government should control all means of production and redistribute wealth evenly among the people.

B. **Conservative** -- refers to preserving the existing order, rather than changing it (it often was pro-business in this era)

C. **Reactionary** -- desire to move society back to a past society; usually idealized

- Included Mugwumps and some Progressives who wanted to impose traditional WASP ideals on a changing society; the KKK was the most reactionary of these groups.

D. **Liberal (Progressive)** -- advocates changes in society's institutions to reflect changing conditions (e.g., Robert LaFollette, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson)

- The progressive movement embodied liberalism

E. These terms refer to means as well as ends; one can pursue radical goals by conservative means, e.g., socialists running for political office in a democratic political system (e.g. Eugene Debs)

Why?



I. "Americanism" in the 1920s

A. The "Red Scare" and the "Great Unrest"

- Largest number of strikes in US history: inflation from the war and difficulties facing unions
- Palmer raids

B. Sacco and Vanzetti case

C. Ku Klux Klan

D. Nativism led to Anti-Immigration Laws

- * 1921 immigration act, 1924 national origins act(Quotas)

E. Scopes Trial, 1925 ("Monkey Trial")

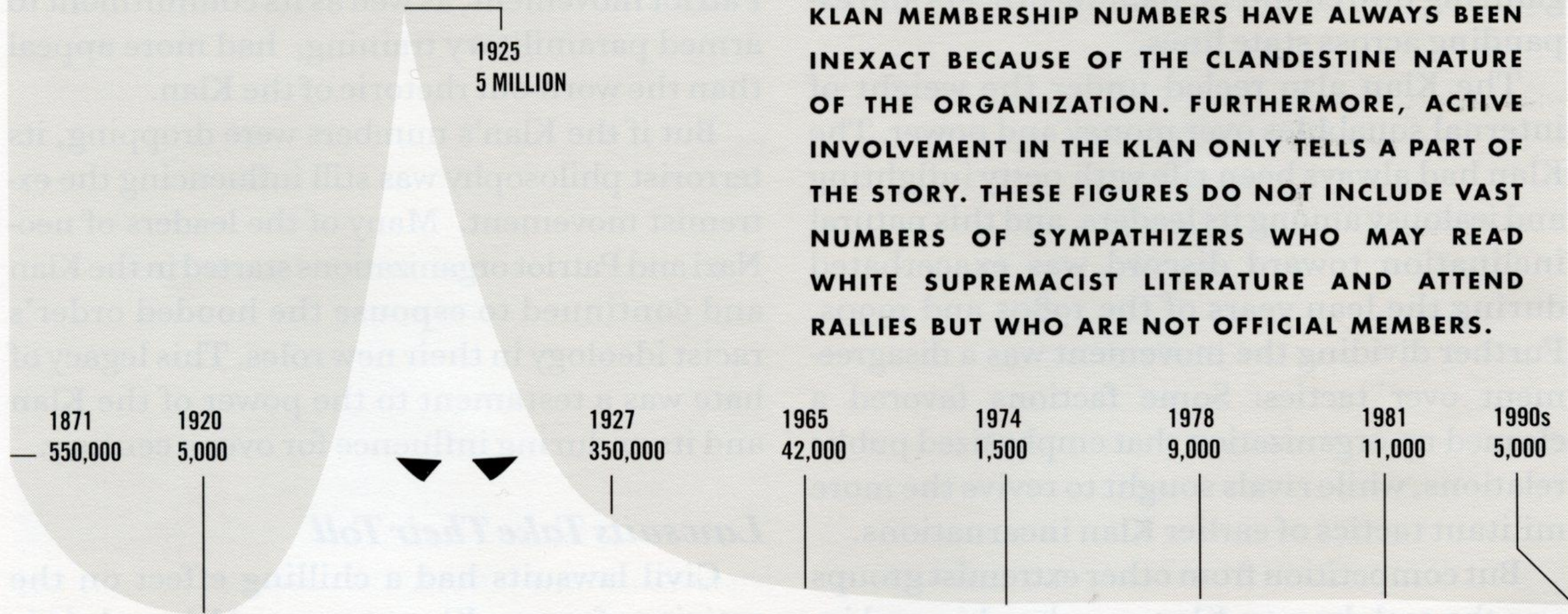
- * Clarence Darrow V. William Jennings Bryan

F. Prohibition

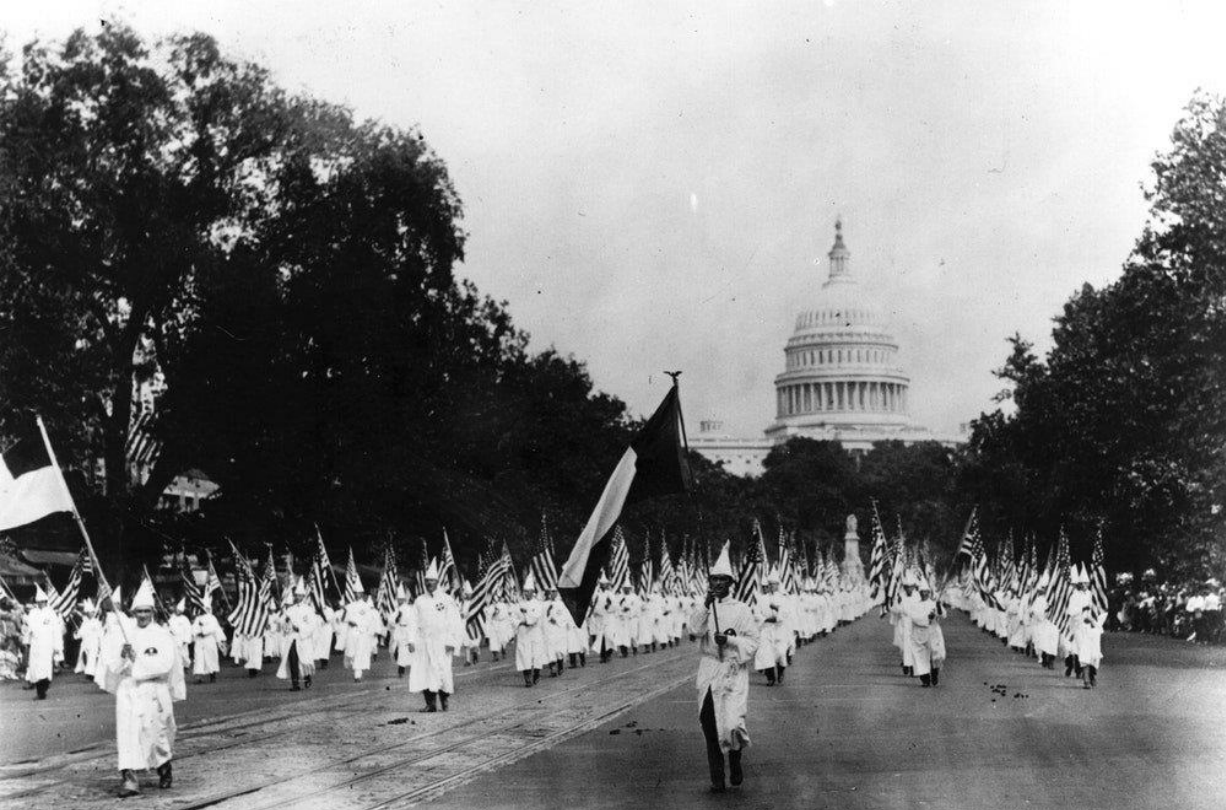
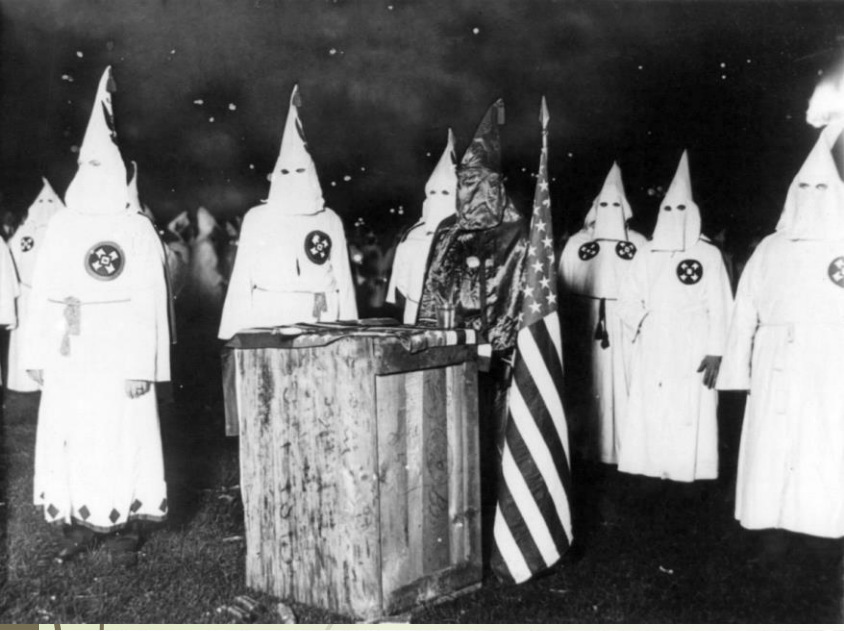
- **18th amendment**, Volstead act
- Bootlegging, al capone, speakeasies



The Rise and Fall of the Hooded Order



KLAN MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INEXACT BECAUSE OF THE CLANDESTINE NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATION. FURTHERMORE, ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE KLAN ONLY TELLS A PART OF THE STORY. THESE FIGURES DO NOT INCLUDE VAST NUMBERS OF SYMPATHIZERS WHO MAY READ WHITE SUPREMACIST LITERATURE AND ATTEND RALLIES BUT WHO ARE NOT OFFICIAL MEMBERS.



IMMIGRATION BILL IS SIGNED BY PRESIDENT; JAPANESE BAN BECOMES EFFECTIVE ON JULY 1

OSTRICHES WILL RACE WITH HORSES
 BOSTON, May 25.—Horses are generally not fast enough for the sporting public. Therefore, as an extra thrill, an ostrich race will be held at the new track, with horses in which a distance of 1,000 meters per mile, the horses are to be on 1,000 meters handicap. The race will be held on the fashionable Greenwood race course.

READY FOR BONUS PAYMENT



President, However, Issues Statement in Which He Expresses Disapproval of Action of Congress

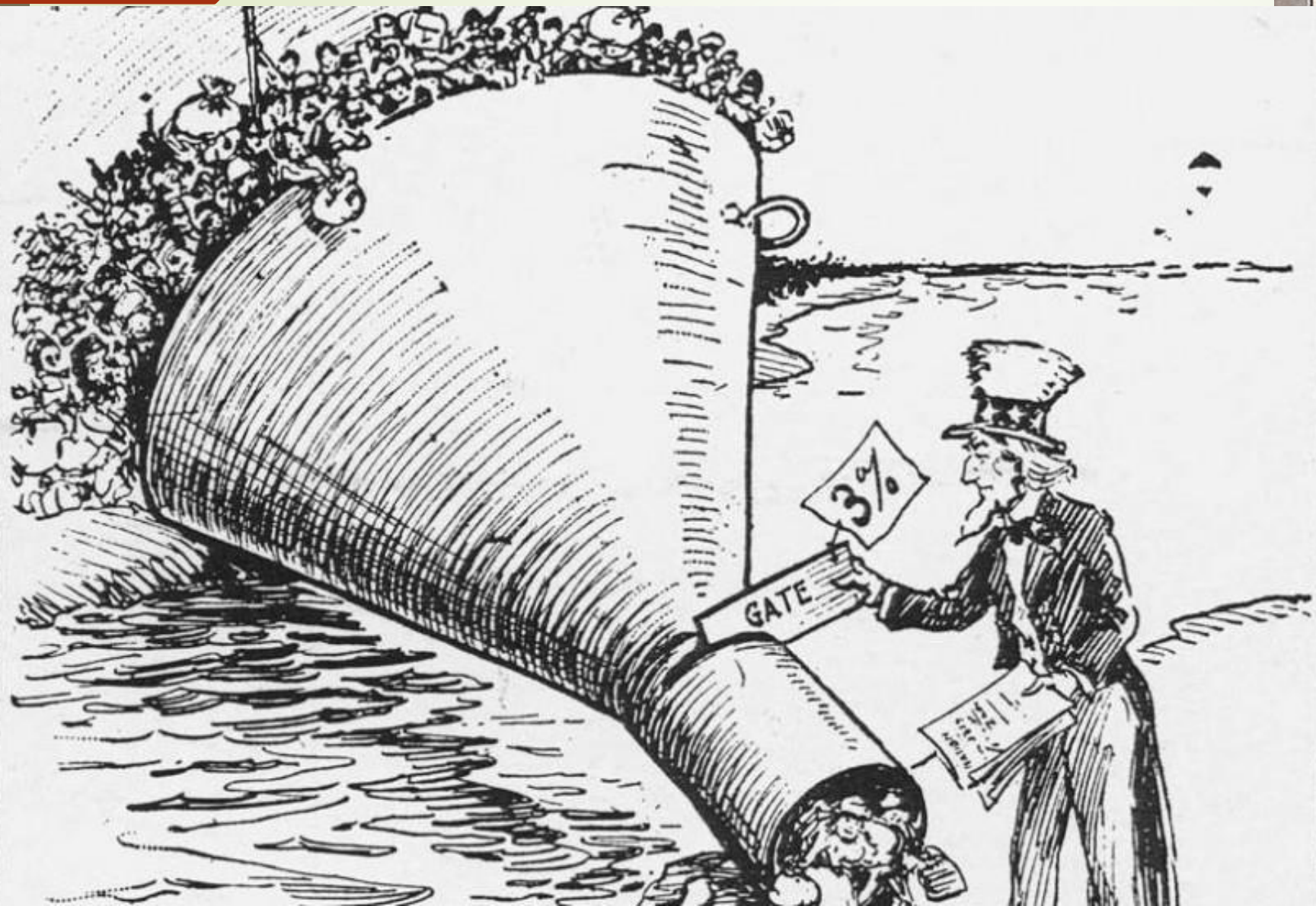
REASONS FOR SIGNING THE BILL

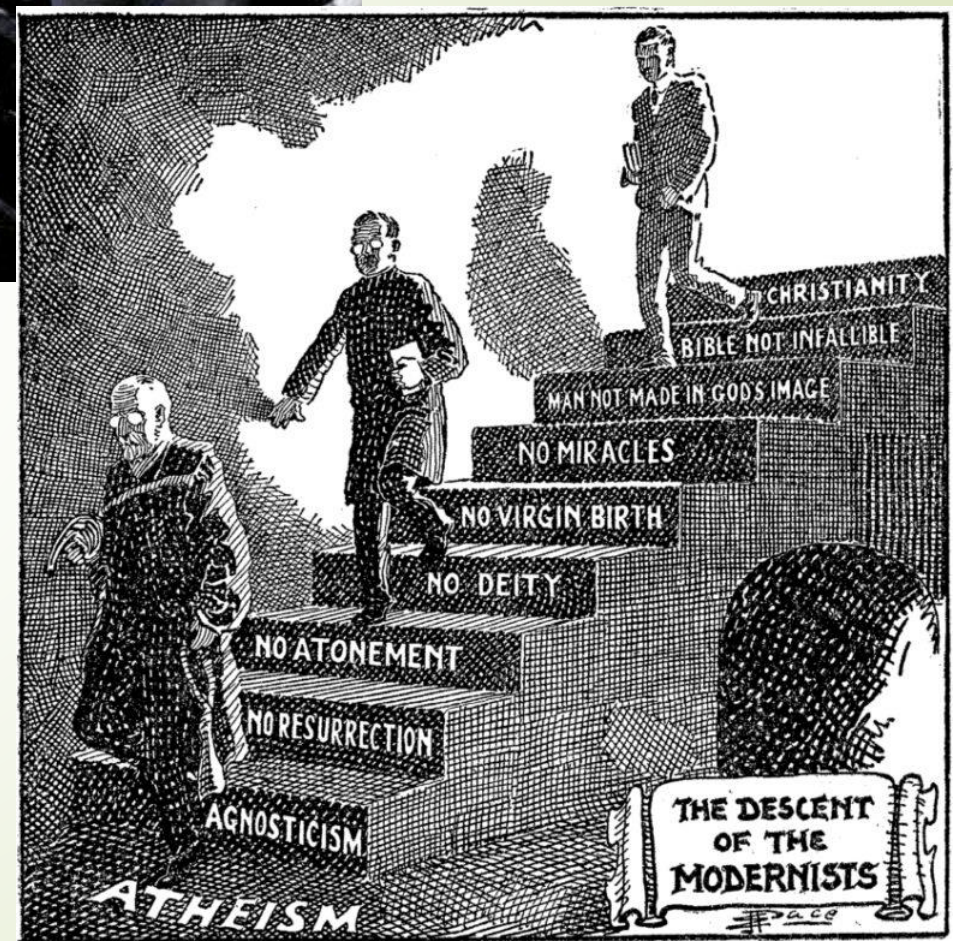
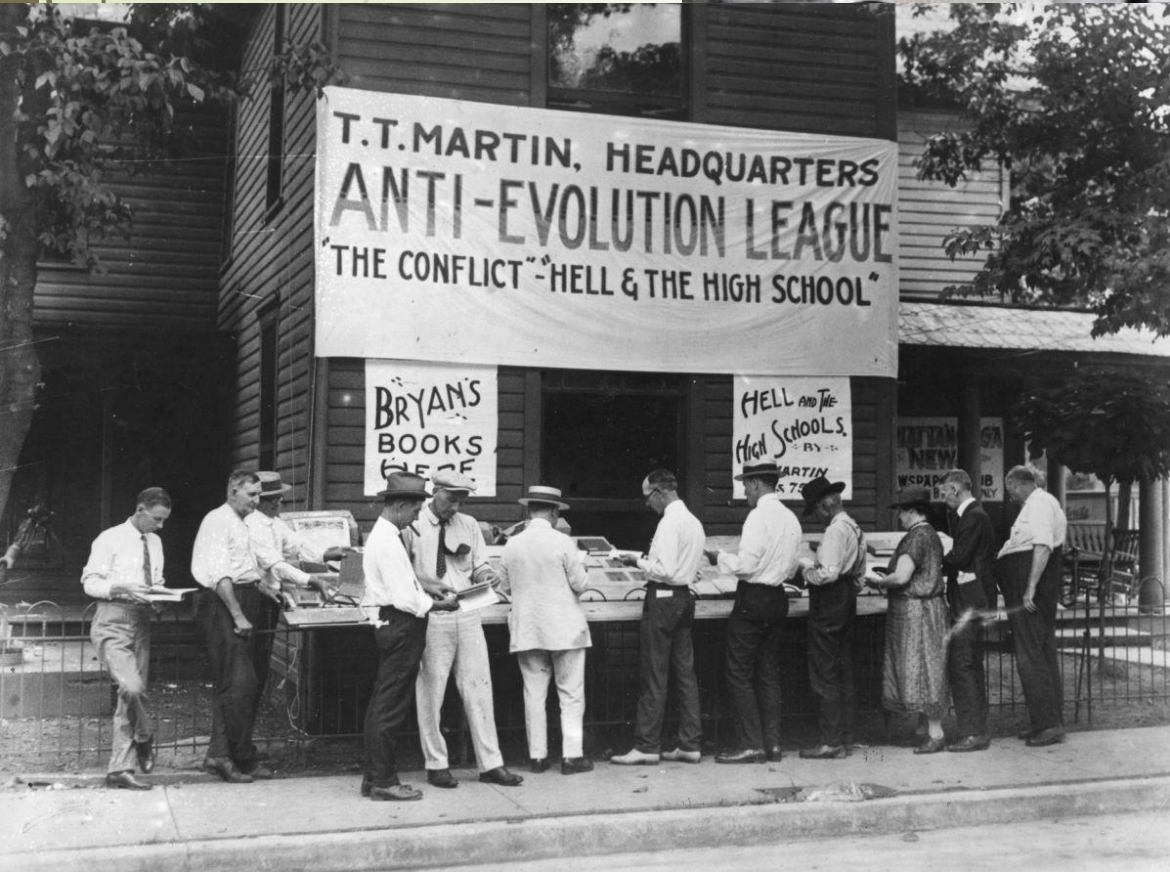
If Exclusion Provision Stood Alone, Says the President, He Would Have Disapproved It

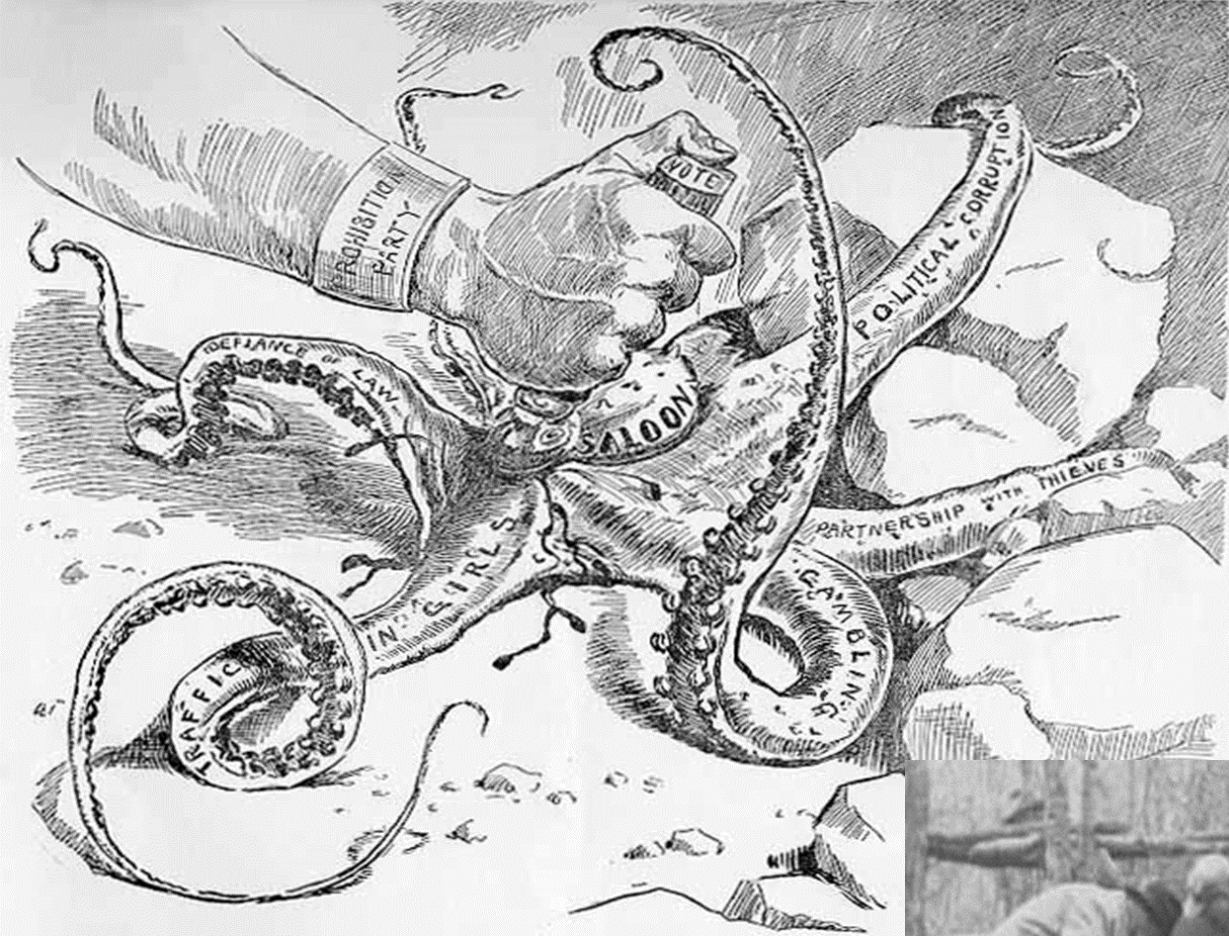
WASHINGTON, May 25.—The immigration bill was signed today by President Coolidge. Through the operation of the Japanese exclusion statute passed July 2, 1917, and the measure now has become law. The president decided to approve the bill because of the exclusion provision. It was pointed out that because of the present immigration law, even if a veto were made it necessary to pass through the emergency measure in the coming hours of the session. Such a step, the president felt, would not be profitable in view of the fact that the exclusion provision and

ENDING MONEY ECKLESSLY; SON SKS FOR RELIEF

Woman Raises







The Modern Devil Fish

The tentacles of the Devil Fish cannot be destroyed unless the HEAD, the source of their sustaining power, is destroyed.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAAsQV8cRaU>

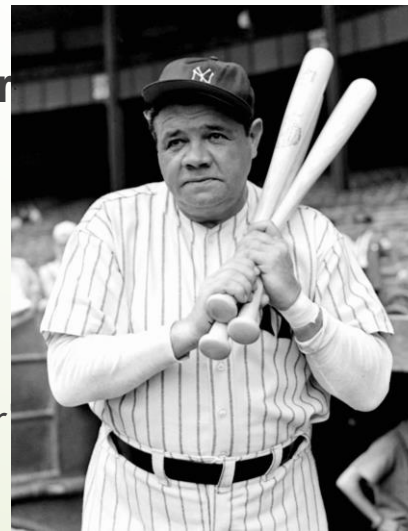


Why so much conservatism?



III. America's Mass-Consumption Economy in the 1920s

- A. Business was glorified in the 1920s
- B. The booming U.S. economy
- C. Consolidation of trusts continued at a fast pace in the 1920s
- D. **White Collar Workers**
- E. Changes in Working Conditions
- F. **Advertising** emerged as a new industry.
- G. **Scientific Management: Frederick W. Taylor**
- H. **Henry Ford** and the assembly line
- I. The **Airplane**: Wright's, Lindbergh, Earhart
- J. **Radio**
- K. **Motion Pictures**: Hollywood, "the jazz singer"





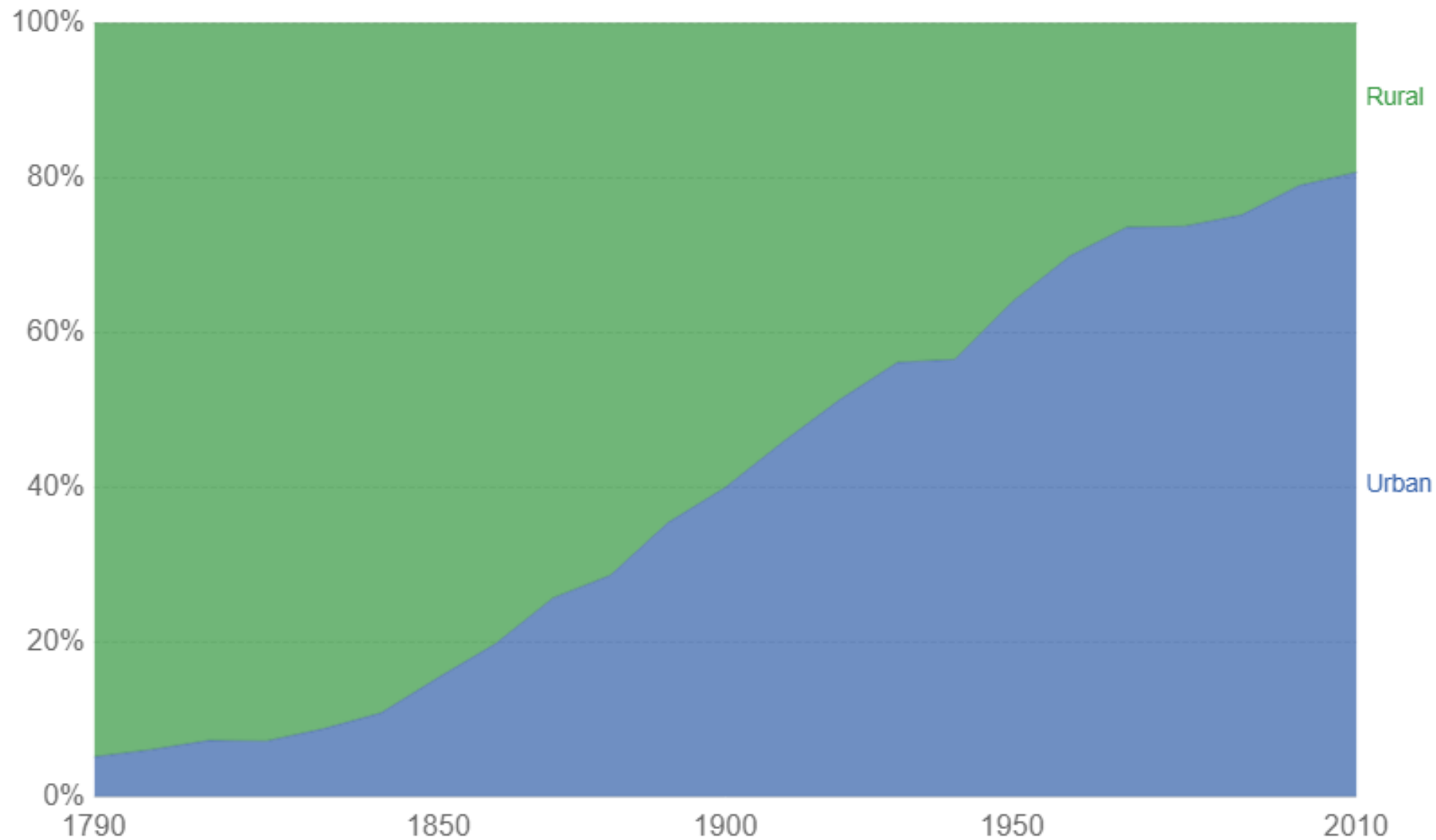
What is the social impact of radio and film on the US?

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frYlj2FGmMA>
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=va0L9uEQFfA>



Urban and rural populations in the United States

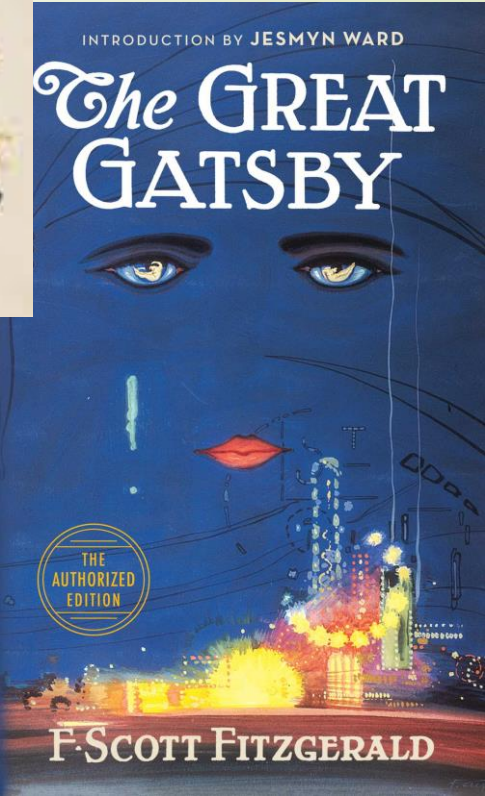
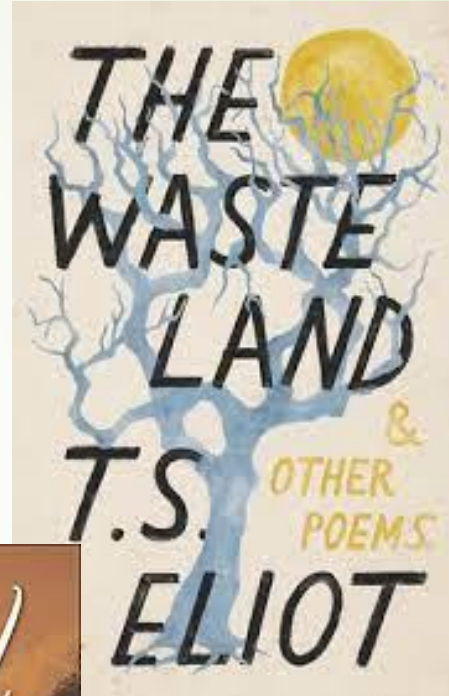
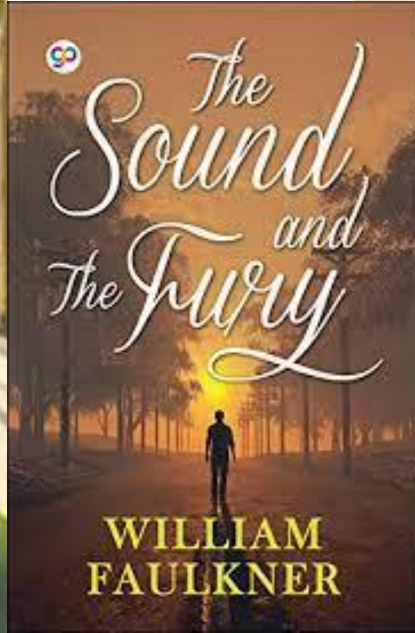
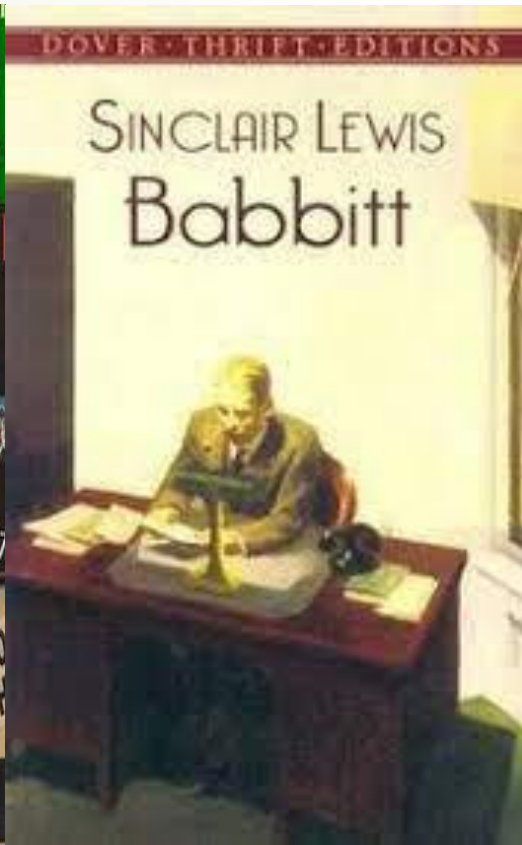
Figure illustrates the size of the rural and urban populations in the United States over time. The US Census Bureau's population threshold of an urban place changes over time. The rural population is defined as any population outside urban areas. See the source tab for further information.



Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

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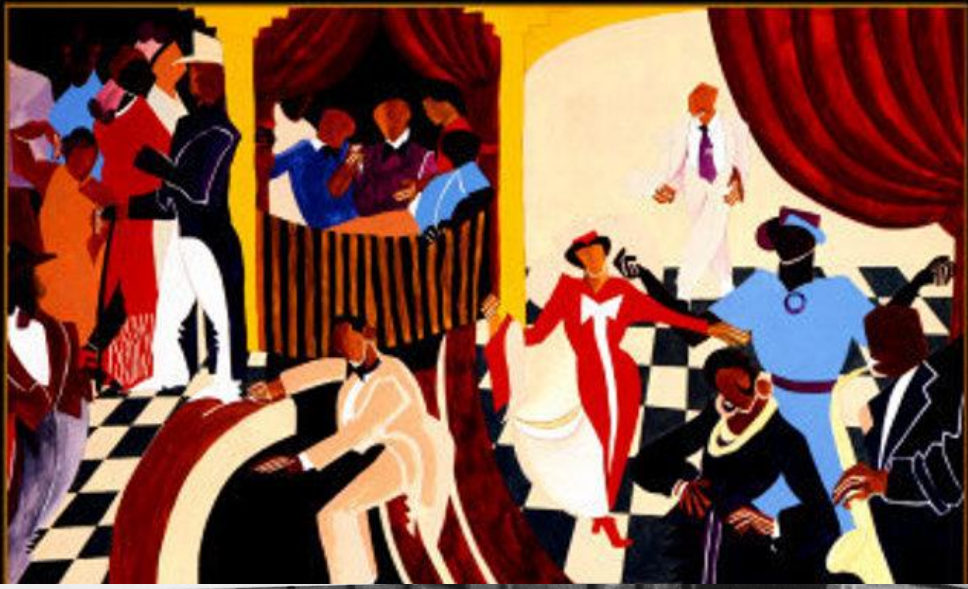
What do these works of literature have in common?



IV. Social life and culture during the "Roaring 20s"

- A. The census of 1920 revealed for the first time that a majority of Americans lived in cities rather than the countryside.
- B. A sexual revolution?
- C. Jazz: new Orleans, Louis Armstrong, Chicago/ New York
- D. The Harlem Renaissance
 - Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Zora Neale Hurst
 - Duke Ellington and the Cotton Club
 - Marcus Garvey and the United Negro Improvement Association
- E. The "Lost Generation"
 - F Scott Fitzgerald
 - Ernest Hemingway
 - TS Eliot
 - Sinclair Lewis
 - William Faulkner





I, Too

Langston Hughes, 1902 - 1967

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

50-50

*I'm all alone in this world, she said,
Ain't got nobody to share my bed,
Ain't got nobody to hold my hand—
The truth of the matter's
I ain't got no man.*

*Big Boy opened his mouth and said,
Trouble with you is
You ain't got no head!
If you had a head and used your mind
You could have me with you
All the time.*

She answered, Babe, what must I do?

*He said, Share your bed—
And your money, too.*

Langston Hughes



Duke Ellington

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDQpZT3GhDg>

Louis Armstrong

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2p-bcfGj4A>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWzrABouyeE>