

The Red Scare

Part One: 1917-1920

SSUSH16a. Explain how rising communism and socialism in the United States led to the Red Scare and immigrant restriction

Fear of Communism

- A fear in the United States that *Communists*, or “reds,” as they were called, might seize power led to a nationwide panic known as the *Red Scare*.
- Historian Levin B. Murray described the First Red Scare as "a nation-wide anti-radical hysteria provoked by a mounting fear and anxiety that a Bolshevik revolution in America was imminent--a revolution that would destroy property, church, home, marriage, civility, and the American way of Life."

Bolshevik Revolution

- ❑ Russian Revolution began in 1917
- ❑ Russians unhappy with the way the czar & his gov't were running the country, & were very unhappy with Russia's involvement in WWI.
- ❑ Economic hardships kept people revolting & eventually the *Bolsheviks*, led by *Vladimir Lenin*, took over the government.
- ❑ Lenin studied *Karl Marx*'s theories on communism, which advocated the overthrow of a capitalist system by the *proletariat*, or the workers.



Americans' Fears

- ❑ Americans in the 1920s felt a lot of *nativism*, or the belief that individuals who are native born are superior to immigrants or have more rights.
- ❑ Following WWI, many Americans feared:
 - Socialism
 - Communist ideas
 - *Anarchists*, those who oppose the rule of the state.



Striking leads to Communism?

- ❑ The number of Labor Unions rose during WW I
- ❑ Unions began using strikes as a means of trying to gain better working conditions
- ❑ Strikes were associated with Communist led protests in Europe
- This worried many Americans that Communism would spread to the U.S.



The mayor of Seattle felt that strikers wanted to “take possession of our American government and try to duplicate the anarchy of Russia”

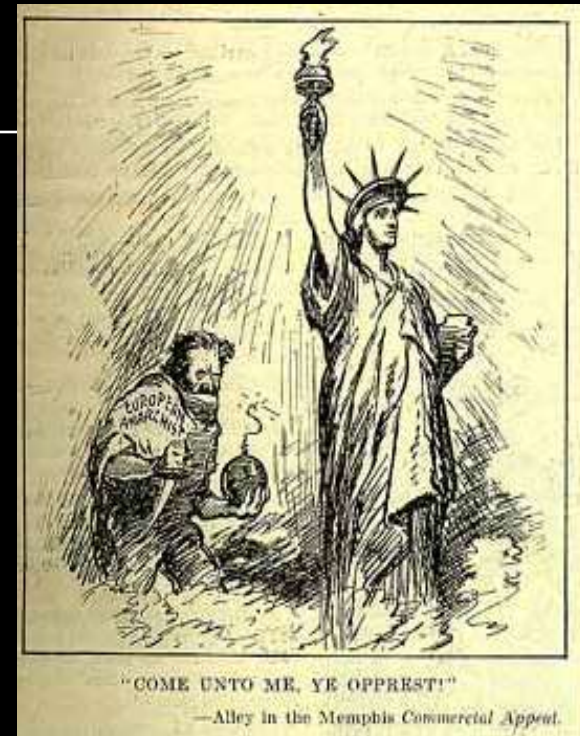
20th Century Strikes

- ❑ 350,000 steel workers went on strike in 1919
- ❑ The head of U.S. Steel blamed the unrest on foreign radicals
- ❑ Broke the strike by hiring African Americans and Mexicans to work
- ❑ Numerous strikes in 1919 led many Americans to believe that the Communists were trying to start a revolution in the U.S.



The Red Scare

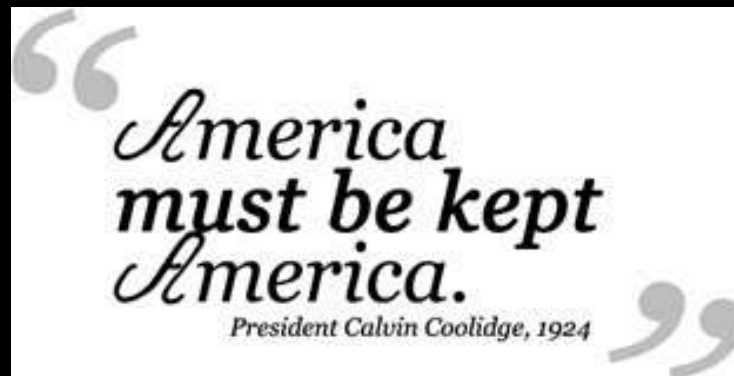
- ❑ Fear of communism & anarchy led to a widespread *Red Scare*.
- ❑ Between 1919 and 1920, the federal government raided the homes and businesses of suspected communists and anarchists.
 - The Palmer Raids
 - Sacco and Vanzetti
- ❑ Many Americans had beliefs in isolationism, a policy of pulling away from involvement in world affairs.



The Communists were blamed for sending bombs through the postal system as a way of disrupting the American way of life

National Origins Act of 1924

- ❑ Labor leaders called for restrictions on immigration.
- ❑ As a way of limiting “radicals” Congress responded with the *National Origins Act of 1924*, which limited immigration from southern and eastern Europe.



Practice Questions

- Why was the National Origins Act of 1924 passed?
 - A. to provide a database for immigrants
 - B. to promote immigration for all parts of the world
 - C. to create a means of tracking immigrants from Europe
 - D. to limit immigration from southern and eastern Europe

Practice Questions

- ☐ The Red Scare was prompted by
 - A. westward expansion due to the increased immigration
 - B. the rise of communism and socialism in the U.S.
 - C. the annexation of Hawaii following military action by the U.S. Navy
 - D. U.S. involvement in Latin America

Practice Questions

- ☐ In the 1920s, labor unions were wary of Eastern European immigrants in part because of
 - A. Black Thursday
 - B. the Jazz Age
 - C. the Red Scare
 - D. the Great Depression