

THE ROARING TWENTIES

in the USA

INTRODUCTION

-The Americans are back from WWI. It gave them prestige

-It was a period of economic prosperity

-New way of life appeared but also new issues

KEY QUESTION: Why were the Roaring twenties also nicknamed the "crazies"?

1- The political background: The USA rescued the "old continent"

2-the consumer society was born

3-it was a time full of paradox

I/ America rescued the "old continent"

A/ Some specific values

-MESSIANISM and MANIFEST DESTINY

- 1823: James Monroe's doctrine

- Very early the USA tried to stay out from diplomacy when it was not directly concerned:

ISOLATIONISM

BUT:

-The USA entered WWI in 1917 and It helped with the final victory of the "Triple Entente"

-The American President WOODROW WILSON proposed a plan(The 14 points) for a long lasting peace.

USA – Woodrow Wilson's famous 14 Points (January 1918) were:

- (1) abolition of secret diplomacy;
- (2) free navigation at sea for all nations in war and peace;
- (3) removal of economic barriers between states;
- (4) all-round reduction of armaments;
- (5) impartial adjustment of colonial claims in the interests of the populations concerned;
- (6) evacuation of Russian territory;
- (7) restoration of Belgium;
- (8) liberation of France and restoration of Alsace and Lorraine;
- (9) readjustment of Italian frontiers along the lines of nationality;
- (10) self-government for the peoples of Austria-Hungary;
- (11) Romania, Serbia and Montenegro to be evacuated and Serbia given access to the sea;
- (12) self-government for the non-Turkish peoples of the Turkish Empire and permanent opening of the Dardanelles;
- (13) an independent Poland with secure access to the sea;
- (14) a general association of nations to preserve peace.

These points achieved publicity when the Germans later claimed that they had expected the peace terms to be based on them and that, since this was not the case, they had been cheated.

Extracted from: Stuart Miller, "European history", Mac Millan Press 1998.

Most of his propositions were rejected by France and the UK

The last one is the most famous as it created the LEAGUE OF NATIONS to preserve peace.

But the American Congress refused to be part of it when it was created in 1920.

The USA went back into isolationism until 1941

TRANSITION:

Isolation from Europe was not at all a handicap.

Indeed, from 1919 to 1929, the USA went through a prosperous time: the Roaring Twenties also known as the “crazies”...

II/ The Roaring twenties and the birth of the consumer society FILM

Definition:

it is a society in which the consumption of mass-produced goods is encouraged through mass communication

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJeN6RSqbOc&list=PL7Qlijn-dI8Dq8gS78p3Vgdq_wI8WM8Ui

A/ Mass production:

It was obtained thanks to a new productive system known as TAYLORISM.

Frederick W. Taylor was an American engineer.

His system consisted in breaking down production into specialized repetitive tasks

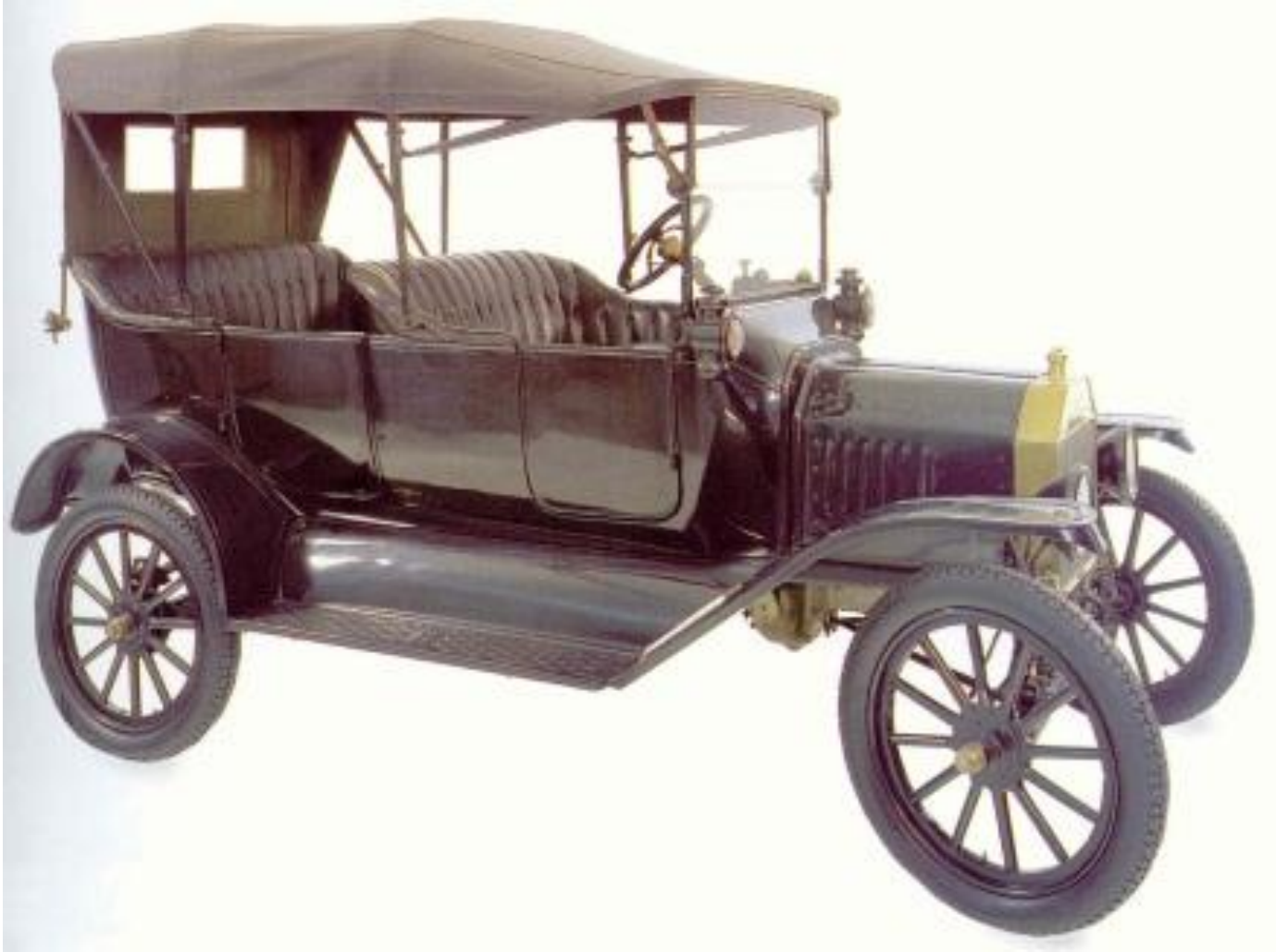
He invented WORK ON ASSEMBLY LINES.

HENRY FORD (1863-1947) an automobile manufacturer, was the first to put Taylor's principle into practise.

But he also added the moving assembly line, and gave his workers excellent wages for that time :five dollars a day.

His T Ford model was the first produced using this system.

One car was produced every three minutes and its price lowered from \$800 to \$250



This scene from Chaplin's "Modern Times" show the dark side of work on assembly lines.

Describe this "dark side".

But what were the good sides of it?

Pace: la cadence

To punch a time clock: pointer

A repetitive task

Boring

A robot

Productivity

To be skilled/ Unskilled

Yield: le rendement

A standard production

To lower a price

To be exploited

To be enslaved

To drive someone crazy

To put pressure on

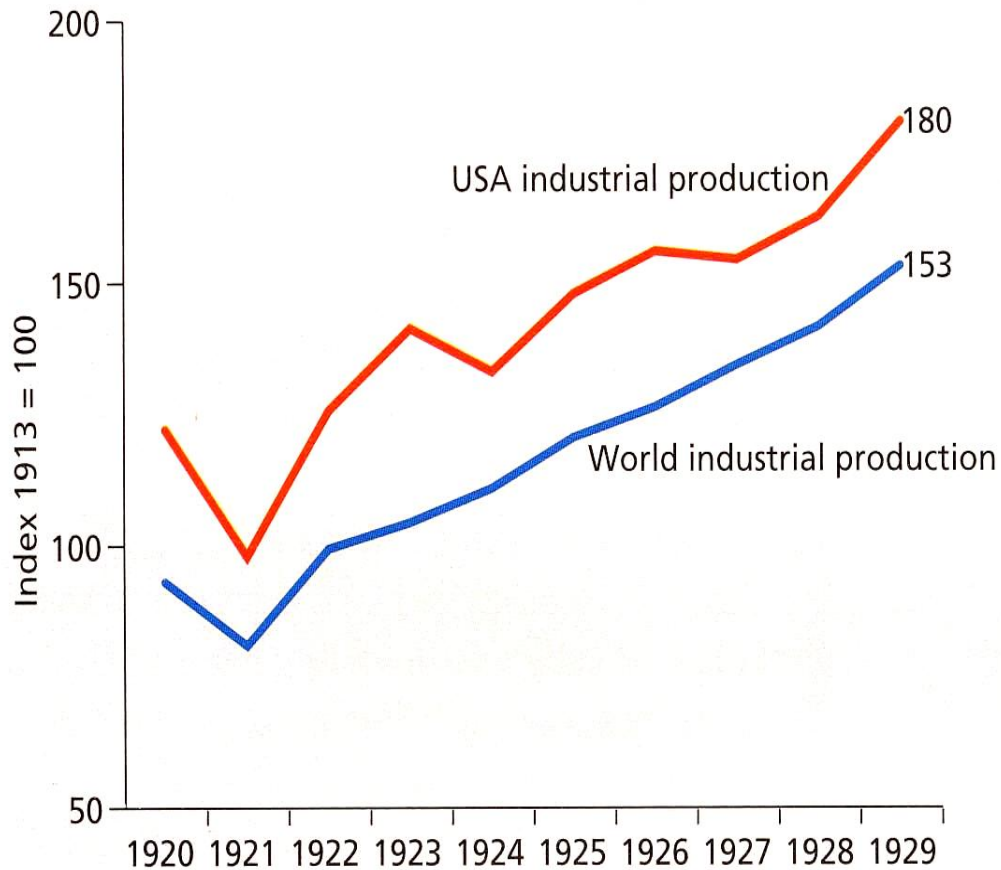
To be stressful

To deshumanize

To zombify

WORK ON ASSEMBLY LINES: PROS AND CONS

Graph



Annual average for the period (\$ millions)

PROS

Productivity was higher

Production was standard so it was cheaper and faster

Prices were a lot lower

Unskilled workers could be employed

CONS film

Pace was very fast: it was hard to keep the pace

Workers were like robots doing the same repetitive task

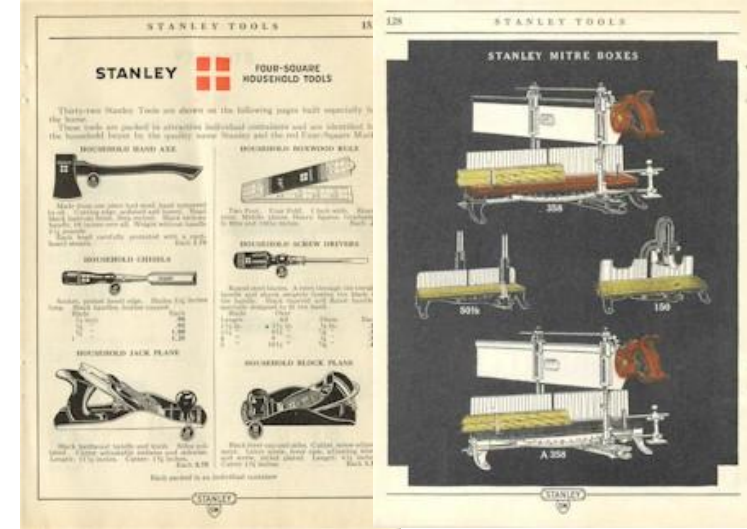
It was a very stressful job

Workers were dehumanized

B/ Mass consumption:

It was mainly the result of :

- efficient advertising campaigns
- large credit facilities.



Huge departments stores were created

(film 43,10)

But people could also use mail-order catalogs which appeared at this time

People could buy everything on credit : cars as well as a new medium: the radio



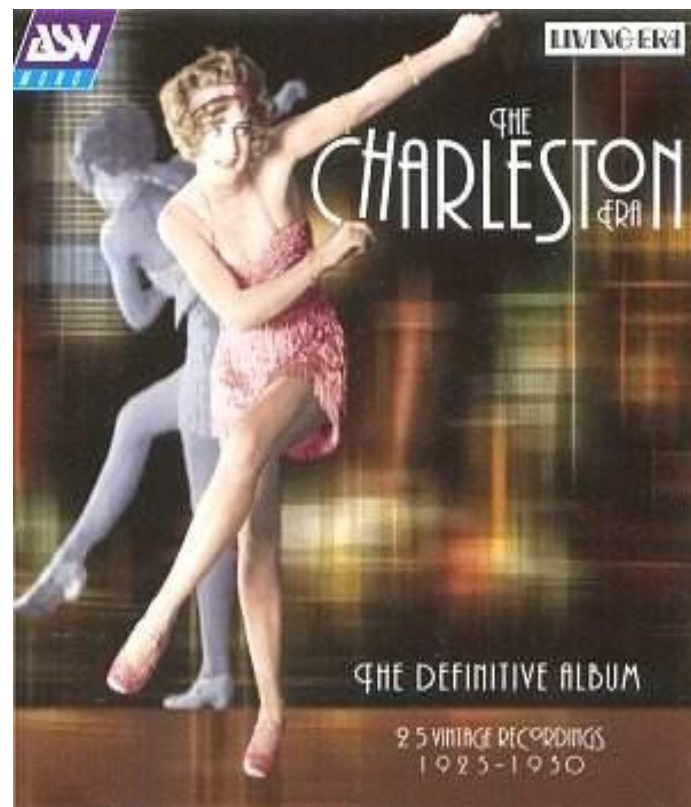
This period was very prosperous and the American society transformed totally.

But were all the changes good ones?

II/ Good changes

A/ The Jazz age:

- Jazz made its appearance in the 1920's
- It was considered risky and too fast paced
- Very non-traditional
- It led to new dances like Charleston



B/ Women

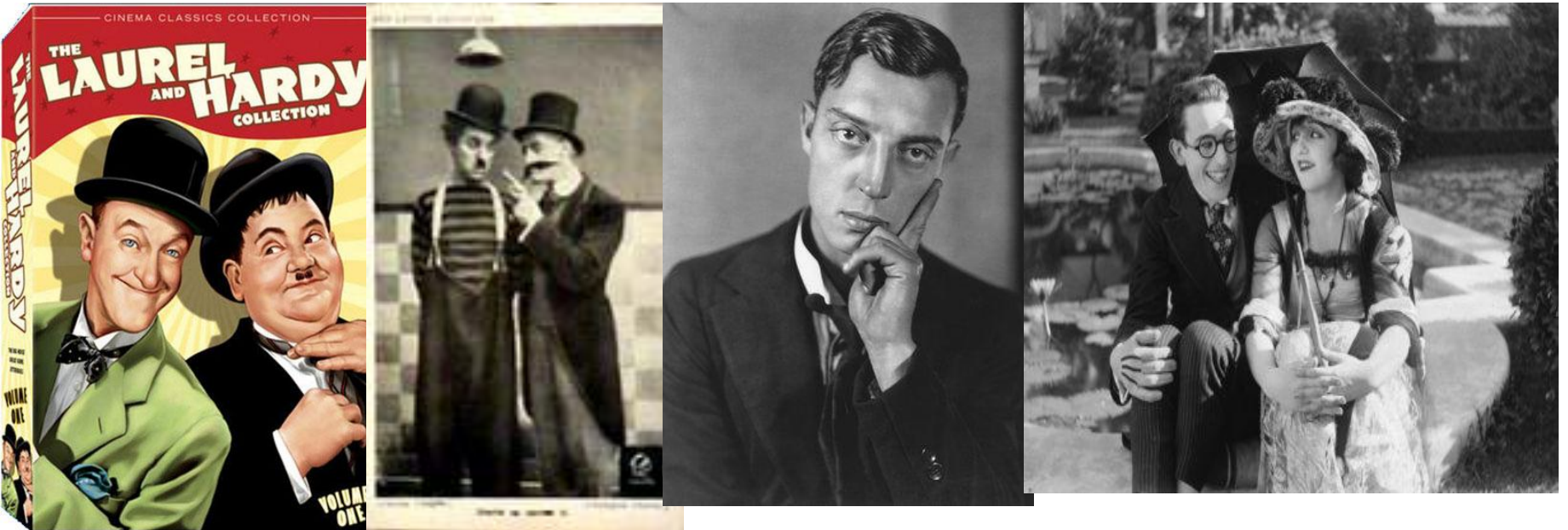
1-Flappers



- Flappers were scantily dressed, with very short skirts for this time
- They wore their hair in a bob-cut/ they had bob-cut hair
- They were seen as rebellious and far away from the traditional girl
- They were considered as 'sex symbols' and had a bad reputation sometimes

2- Women's emancipation: video

C/ It was the golden age of silent movies



D/ It's not surprising that prosperity attracted lots of immigrants...

1-Evolution of Immigration in the USA

110 610 in 1919
430 000 in 1920
805 228 in 1921
706 896 in 1924
335 175 in 1927
241 700 in 1930
23 068 in 1933

Why did
Europeans want
to come to the
USA?

Extracted from: «USA 1917-1941»,
Cambridge University Press, 1995

III/ Some negative aspects

A/ Immigrants were not always welcome



SACCO AND VANZETTI

They were two Italian immigrants

They were sentenced to the electric chair in may 1920 for robbery and men slaughter.

They were scapegoats

III/ Some negative aspects

A/ Immigrants were not always welcome



They were scapegoats
Indeed, they belonged
to a communist group

THE PROSPERITY BROUGHT LOTS OF GREAT CHANGES AND BENEFITED TO MANY AMERICANS. BUT, THERE WERE SOME NEGATIVE SIDES SHOWING THIS PERIOD WAS NOT AS « HAPPY » AS PEOPLE THINK

3-Quickly laws restricting immigration were passed:

-1921

-1924

-1927

And there was also...

B/ The Rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan



From the Greek: KYKLOS

- Organized in Georgia by Nathan Bedford in 1865 and re organized in 1915 by William Simmons
- The Klan was and still is anti-foreign, anti-semitic, and anti-Catholic, pro white supremacists
- It had 4 million members in 1920: this was the golden age of the Klan

B/ The Rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan



From the Greek: KYKLOS

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5D10Y_35p98&t=177
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C/ Prohibition



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1T8NlbZ71s>

- It was the 18th amendment by W. HARDING to get women's votes
 - It led to the creation of illegal bars called speakeasies or drinking clubs
 - Illegal alcohol was sold by Bootleggers and gangsters
- EX: Al "Scarface" Capone in Chicago

The "Intouchable" led by Elliott Ness was an uncorrupt police team who tracked gangsters down

C/ Prohibition



- Prohibition was given a nickname:
- “ The noble experiment”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1T8NlbZ71s>

D/ THIS PROHIBITION ERA CORRESPONDS TO A PERIOD OF HIGH RELIGIOUS REVIVAL IN THE USA

After WW1 many Americans turned to religion, particularly evangelism, a traditional branch of the Protestant religion

For them religion could help them live a better life

But they went very extreme sometimes like the Scopes trial shows !

The scopes monkey trial

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzp3n51phHg>

Bill in favour of creationism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdTchkQT7XE>

Homeschooling

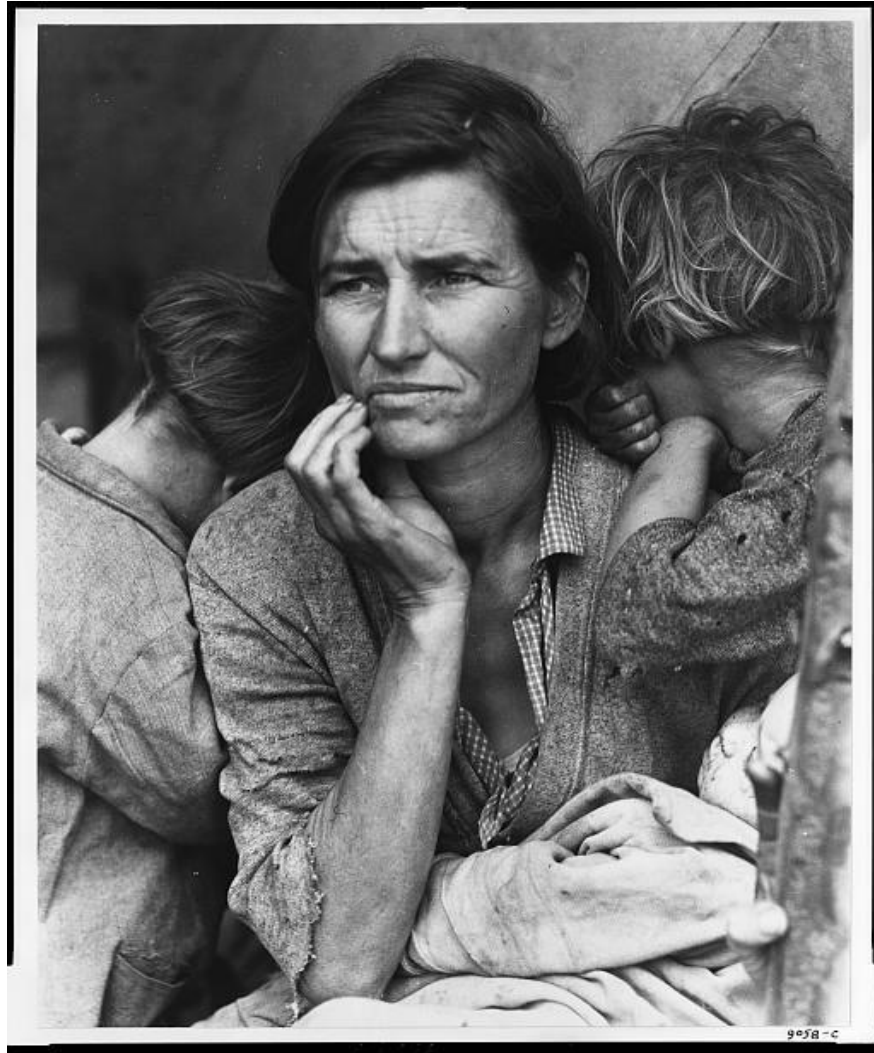
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DH_wPUVIJ38

But not the whole American population benefited from this prosperity.

There were some signs that this prosperity would not last forever...

III/ But there were dangerous signs...

A/ Agricultural overproduction



- Europe no longer needed American food exports when it rebuilt from WWI
- At the same time, mechanisation increased yield and productivity
- So there was an overproduction and prices went down
- Lower prices meant lower profit so many farmers went bankrupt
- They could not pay the rent for their land so they were evicted
- Many became hobboes
- Added to this, in the South of the country drought led to sand storms and destroyed all the harvests: IT'S CALLED THE DUST BOWL

The Dust Bowl

This map depicts the wide extent of damage caused by high winds and drought, the worst in the history of the country, according to the U.S. Weather Bureau.





SOME EVICTED FARMERS...

B/ Speculation

Stocks and shares are part of the capital of a company

When you buy stocks you expect some part of the company's profit called a dividend.

But you can also make money if stock prices increase and you sell your stocks. THIS IS CALLED SPECULATION

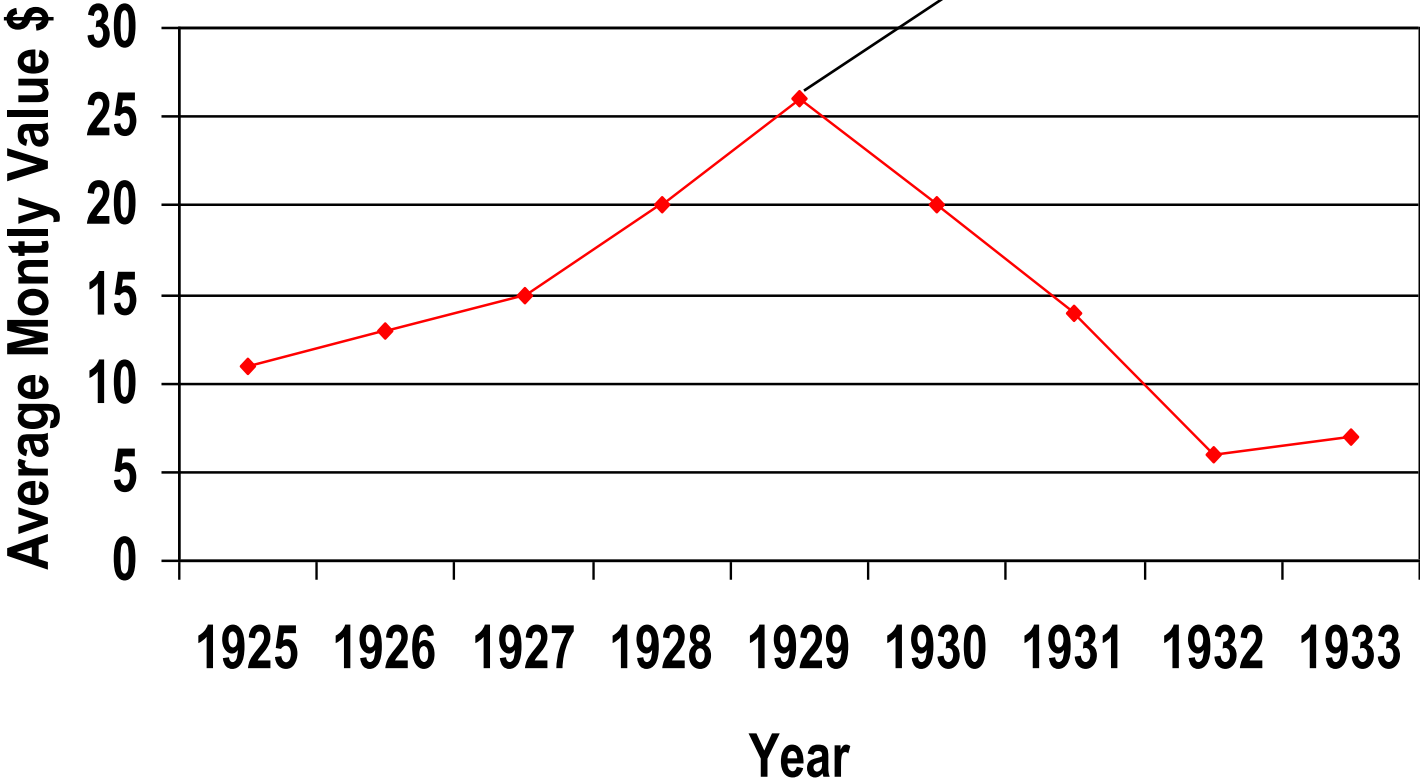
In the 20's many people bought stocks to make easy money.

But some bought stocks on credit

CONSEQUENCE OF SPECULATION:

Stock Prices 1925-1933

Great Crash
OCTOBER 24th 1929
Black Thursday



C/ The stock market crash

- Stock prices collapsed when people all sold their stocks almost at the same time
- Many wealthy families lost everything
- Some even committed suicide
- Some banks went bankrupt
- Millions of people who never owned a single stock lost their jobs, farms and homes
- The crash caused the GREAT DEPRESSION and the end of the Roaring 20's

**THE ROARING
TWENTIES WERE OVER!**

**(They used to tell me I was building a dream, and so I followed the mob,
When there was earth to plow, or guns to bear, I was always there right on the job.
They used to tell me I was building a dream, with peace and glory ahead,
Why should I be standing in line, just waiting for bread?)**

**Once I built a railroad, I made it run, made it race against time.
Once I built a railroad; now it's done. Brother, can you spare a dime?
Once I built a tower, up to the sun, brick, and rivet, and lime;
Once I built a tower, now it's done. Brother, can you spare a dime?**

**Once in khaki suits, gee we looked swell,
Full of that Yankee Doodly Dum,
Half a million boots went slogging through Hell,
And I was the kid with the drum!**

**Say, don't you remember, they called me Al; it was Al all the time.
Why don't you remember, I'm your pal? Buddy, can you spare a dime?**

**Once in khaki suits, gee we looked swell,
Full of that Yankee Doodly Dum,
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