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# The Jazz Age

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Unit 5: Lesson 1

The Politics of the 1920s

watching



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# American Troops Come Home

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- The 151st Field Artillery unit was composed of National Guard troops from 26 states. Nicknamed the "Rainbow Division" for its variety of units, the 151st served in combat in France from 1917-1918.
- In this photo, spectators line the streets of Minneapolis to welcome the troops home.



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# American Troops Come Home

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Upon their return, African American members of the Rainbow Division, they were greeted by thousands of supporters and honored by city officials for their contributions to the Allied forces.



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# American Troops Come Home

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A wounded soldier of the 369th Infantry Division greets supporters during a welcoming parade.

The 369th Infantry became one of the most highly decorated regiments of World War I. They earned the nickname the "Harlem Hellfighters" for their bravery and courage during battle.

# Treaty of Versailles: US Senate Rejects



Senate rejects the Treaty, focused on the League of Nations.



Called it an entangling alliance.



WWI ends without a sustainable mechanism to deal with aggression on a world stage.



Together, with Germany's punishments, we see in hindsight that WWI only sets the stage for WWII.



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## Politics of the 1920s

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How was Harding's effort to return to "normalcy" prevented by political scandals



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# The Harding Administration

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## **Warren G. Harding (Republican/1920)**

- "Restoring economic growth and prosperity by getting government out of the business of business."
  - Removing regulations and safeguards put in place during WWI
- **"Return to Normalcy."**
- Easy going atmosphere, maybe too easy-going





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# The Harding Administration

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- Harding made some very good cabinet appointments, some were disastrous:
- He gave high level posts to friends and political allies.
- Some of these people used their new political power for personal gain.
  - ***The Ohio Gang***

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# The Harding Administration: Scandals

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## **Teapot Dome Scandal**

- Albert B. Fall, Secretary of the Interior
- Accepts bribes of over \$300k to allow private companies to drill on these reserves.
- The Wall Street Journal ("*The Journal*") *breaks the story*.



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## The Harding Administration: Scandals

### **Col. Charles R. Forbes**

Forbes sold scarce medical supplies from veterans hospitals and kept the money for himself – costs the public \$250 million.

### **Harry Daugherty, Atty. General**

Accepts bribes from a German agent seeking to buy a German business that was seized by the US government during WWI.

# Calvin "Silent Cal" Coolidge (Rep.)



Harding dies of a heart attack on August 2, 1923 and his VP, Coolidge, takes over as president.



Coolidge was very different from Harding: quiet, releases several of Harding's scandalous appointments.



Believes in little to no government interference in business.



Easily reelected in 1924

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# Policies of Prosperity

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## **Andrew Mellon** (Sec. of the Treasury) and Supply Side Economics

Mellon was a successful banker/industrialist.

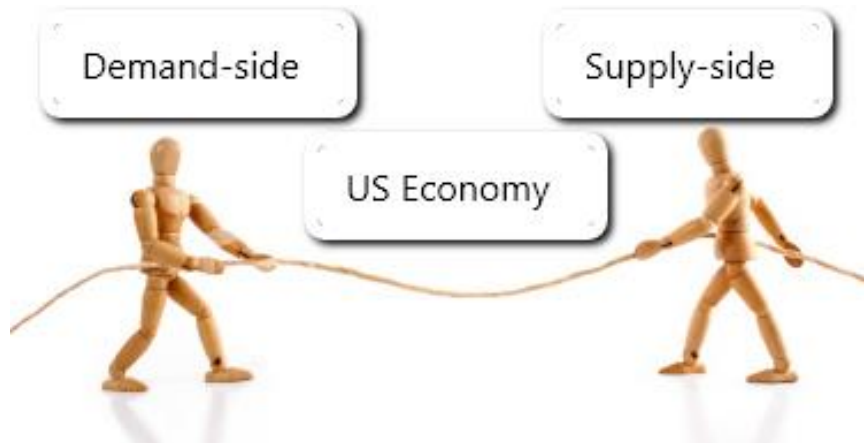
His Goals:

1. Balance the budget
2. Reduce the government's debt
3. Cut taxes



# Policies of Prosperity

Supply Side Economics: an economic theory that lower taxes will boost the economy as businesses and individuals invest their money, thereby creating higher tax revenue.



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## Problems?

# Cut Taxes

- Income tax cut to 0.5%.
  - Wealthiest people's tax rate cut from 75% to 25%.
  - Federal budget fell from \$6.4 billion to \$3 billion in 7 years.
- **What happens when you cut the Federal budget?**

**Problems?**

# Cooperative Individualism

- Under then Secretary of Commerce (hold up, this guy is gonna be President) Herbert Hoover.
- Encouraging manufacturers and distributors to form their own organizations and volunteer information to the Federal government in an effort to stimulate the economy.

**Problems?**



# US Peace through Economics and Arms Control

**Isolationism: a national policy of avoiding involvement in world affairs.**

- Prior to WWI, US was a debtor nation.
- By the 1920s, it was an economic world power.
- Most Americans favored isolationism
  - Didn't sign Treaty of Versailles
  - Did not join the League of Nations
- Not matter, it's too late, US already too powerful and interconnected to not be involved in world affairs.

# Trade and Arms Control

**The Dawes Plan:** (Charles G. Dawes) US banks would loan money to Germany to help it make reparations payments. In exchange, Britain and France would accept less in reparations.

NOTE:

- Britain and France have large war debts.
- Germany economy in shambles post-war. (Hyperinflation)

# Trade and Arms Control

**The Washington Conference:** Eight major countries meet to discuss disarmament.

- There was a huge naval arms race after WWI.
- Britain, France, Italy, China, Japan, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Portugal.
- What do they all decide?

# Trade and Arms Control: **Washington Conference**

1. **The Five-Power Naval Limitation Treaty** (Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and US) 10-year halt on naval warship construction.
2. **The Four-Power Treaty** (US, Japan, France, and Britain) recognizes each country's island possessions in the Pacific.
3. **The Nine-Powers Treaty**: all signed, guaranteeing China's independence.

**Problems?**

# Trade and Arms Control: **Washington Conference**

Problems:

No limitations on land forces.

Angered Japanese because their navy was limited to smaller size than US or GB.

Made Americans feel safe.....IS THAT GOOD OR BAD?

# Trade and Arms Control

## **Kellogg-Briand Act:**

US Secretary of State Kellogg and French foreign minister Briand got together to outlaw war.

8/27/1928: US and 14 other nations signed the Pact; all agreeing to abandon war and settle all disputes by peaceful means.

**Problems?**

# Trade and Arms Control

## London Naval Treaties

January to April 1930: Five nations meet to extend the Washington Conference.

US, GB, France, Italy, and Japan agree on ratios for war ships, halting the arms race through 1936.

Japan announces in 12/1935 that it won't extend the treaty.

Italy and Japan refuse to sign the extended treaty. **Problems?**