



Unit 8: Question 2

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"While many Americans were enjoying economic prosperity during the 1920s, there was also increasing social conflict." Assess the validity of this statement with reference to THREE of the following.

Fundamentalism

Ku Klux Klan

Prohibition

Nativism

Sacco and Vanzetti Case

THESIS

With an increase in economic prosperity in America in the 1920s, many social conflicts including organized crime due to prohibition laws, the revival of the Ku Klux Klan and their terroristic actions, and the unlawful execution of two Italians, Sacco and Vanzetti, who were believed to have been wrongfully convicted due to their radical ways, arose simultaneously, making the statement valid.

Prohibition



Prohibition

- Prohibition began on January 16th, 1920, when the Eighteenth amendment went into effect, banning the manufacture, sale, transport, import, and export of alcoholic beverages. However, the consumption of alcoholic beverages was not restricted.



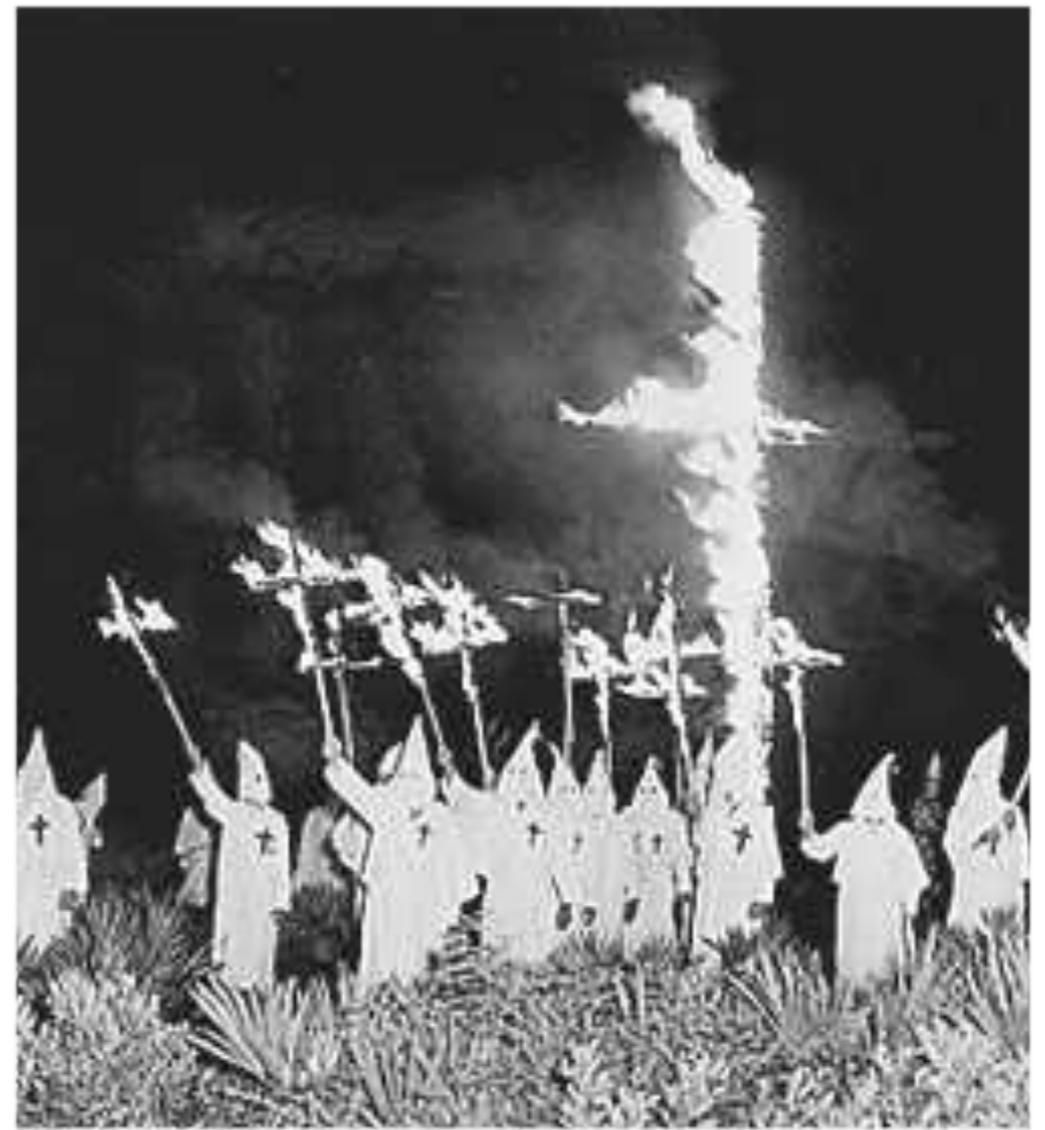
Prohibition Results in Crime

- Prohibition was supposed to lower crime and corruption, but resulted in the birth of organized crime. For example, Al Capone led the Chicago Outfit, later known as the "Caponese", which was a crime syndicate dedicated to smuggling and bootlegging liquor. In result, prohibition led to the overloading of courts and systems and the corruption of public and police officials.



Ku Klux Klan

- The Ku Klux Klan started after the Civil War in Tennessee in 1866, and quickly escalated into an anti-negro group. The Ku Klux Klan's terrorism was designed to intimidate black voters and white supporters of the Republican Party.
- The Klan's first demise resulted after aggressive federal intervention in 1871-1872.



Ku Klux Klan: Revival in the 1920s

- In the 1920s, the Klan broadened its hatred to include Catholics, Jews, and foreigners. The Klan promoted fundamentalism and patriotism along with advocating white supremacy. The Klan appealed to people uncomfortable with the transition of the nation from rural to urban and attacked the elite, urbanites, and intellectuals.
- Known as the "Invisible Empire", the KKK's presence was felt across the nation as the amount of Klansmen grew, ranging from three to eight million. Membership included doctors, lawyers, ministers, and mainstream middle-class Americans.

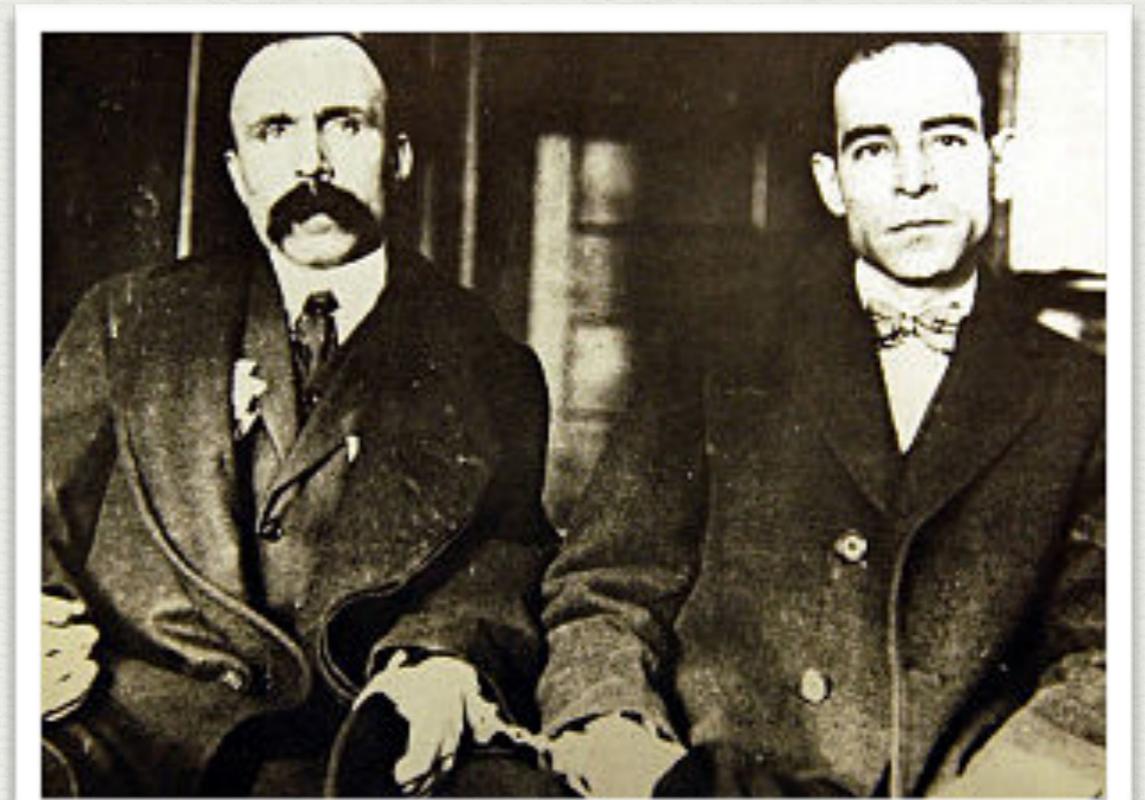


- The Klan's March on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington in 1925, demonstrated the powerful influence of the Klan.



Sacco and Vanzetti Case

- Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti allegedly killed the paymaster and a guard of a Massachusetts shoe company, escaping with over \$15,000.
- Both men were anarchists, evaded the army draft for WWI, and made false statements on their arrest.



Results of the Trial

- The trial took place in July, 1921, located in Dedham, Massachusetts, and was conducted by Judge Webster Thayer who found Sacco and Vanzetti guilty and sentenced them to death.
- Later on, however, many people believed that the conviction was unwarranted and the fact that both Italian men were anarchists influenced the trial because anti-radical sentiment was running high at the time.
- The execution of Sacco and Vanzetti on August 22, 1927, was preceded by worldwide sympathy demonstrations. The men were and continue to be considered martyrs.

Conclusion

- Despite the booming fiscal prosperity of the United States during the "Roaring 20s", many social conflicts developed. Organized crime, such as gangs led by Al Capone, was created in response to the 18th amendment, the Ku Klux Klan's hatred and terrorizing of foreigners, Jews and Catholics spread immensely across the United States, and wrongful convictions were made due to the political views of the convicted, creating social unrest across the nation.