



UNITED STATES HISTORY

1917-1921

Red Scare! The Palmer Raids and Civil Liberties

PLEASE SEE
NOTES ON THE
PDF, PAGE 8.



LESSONS IN U.S. HISTORY

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THE UCI HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE PROJECT

The California History-Social Science Project (CH-SSP) of the University of California, Irvine, is dedicated to working with history teachers in Orange County to develop innovative approaches to engaging students in the study of the past. Founded in 2000, the CH-SSP draws on the resources of the UCI Department of History and works closely with the UCI Department of Education. We believe that the history classroom can be a crucial arena not only for instruction in history but also for the improvement of student literacy and writing skills. Working together with the teachers of Orange County, it is our goal to develop history curricula that will convince students that history matters.

HUMANITIES OUT THERE

Humanities Out There was founded in 1997 as an educational partnership between the School of Humanities at the University of California, Irvine and the Santa Ana Unified School District. HOT runs workshops in humanities classrooms in Santa Ana schools. Advanced graduate students in history and literature design curricular units in collaboration with host teachers, and conduct workshops that engage UCI undergraduates in classroom work. In the area of history, HOT works closely with the UCI History-Social Science Project in order to improve student literacy and writing skills in the history classroom, and to integrate the teaching of history, literature, and writing across the humanities. The K-12 classroom becomes a laboratory for developing innovative units that adapt university materials to the real needs and interests of California schools. By involving scholars, teachers, students, and staff from several institutions in collaborative teaching and research, we aim to transform educational practices, expectations, and horizons for all participants.

THE SANTA ANA PARTNERSHIP

The Santa Ana Partnership was formed in 1983 as part of the Student and Teacher Educational Partnership (STEP) initiative at UC Irvine. Today it has evolved into a multi-faceted collaborative that brings institutions and organizations together in the greater Santa Ana area to advance the educational achievement of all students, and to help them enter and complete college. Co-directed at UC Irvine by the Center for Educational Partnerships, the collaborative is also strongly supported by Santa Ana College, the Santa Ana Unified School District, California State University, Fullerton and a number of community-based organizations. Since 2003-2004, HOT has contributed to the academic mission of the Santa Ana Partnership by placing its workshops in GEAR UP schools. This unit, *Red Scare! The Palmer Raids and Civil Liberties*, reflects the innovative collaboration among these institutions and programs.

CONTENT COUNTS: A SPECIAL PROJECT OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

This is one in a series of publications under the series title Content Counts: Reading and Writing Across the Humanities, supported by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Content Counts units are designed by and for educators committed to promoting a deep, content-rich and knowledge-driven literacy in language arts and social studies classrooms. The units provide examples of “content reading”—primary and secondary sources, as well as charts, data, and visual documents—designed to supplement and integrate the study of history and literature.



A publication of Humanities Out There and the Santa Ana Partnership
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Red Scare! The Palmer Raids and Civil Liberties

LESSON INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS

Teacher's Guide

The “Red Scare” that followed in the wake of America’s 1918 victory in Europe is not nearly as well-remembered as the Cold War anti-communist crusade that followed the Second World War, when suspected communists were baited by people like Senator Joseph McCarthy and the young Richard M. Nixon of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). Though largely forgotten, the “Red Scare” that followed the First World War had a profound effect on the history of labor organizing, radical politics, and immigration policy in the United States.

This lesson addresses Content Standards 11.4.5. and 11.5.2 by rooting the events of 1919-1920 in the disruptions generated by the First World War. The rise of Soviet Russia after 1917, as well as the wave of labor strikes that reverberated across the United States following the Armistice, serve as an entry point for this lesson’s analysis of attacks on civil liberties during this period. This lesson examines the American state’s suppression of dissent in the name of domestic security. It introduces students to the popular discourse that framed social critics like Emma Goldman as dangerous agitators. It also discusses legislation (such as the Sedition Act of 1918) and statements by American govern-

ment officials (A. Mitchell Palmer’s “The Case Against the Reds”) that justified the arrest and deportation of individuals whom the United States deemed “un-

Historical Background

The United States government’s undemocratic crusade to rid the nation of alien “subversives” and suppress expression of their “un-American” ideas was rooted, ironically, in a war fought to “make the world safe for democracy” (a system of government contingent upon the free exchange of ideas). When it entered the First World War in 1917, the United States faced the multiple challenges of generating consensus for the war effort, successfully drafting millions of men into the armed forces, and raising approximately thirty billion dollars to finance the conflict. To achieve these goals, the government criminalized dissent; it passed federal legislation in 1917 and 1918 (the Espionage Act and a later amendment known as the Sedition Act), which gave the government sweeping power to punish opinion it deemed disloyal. During the course of the war, over 1,500 people were arrested for sedition, even though the vast majority did nothing beyond expressing opinions critical of the war effort. These laws remained

desirable.” *Red Scare!* encourages students to analyze and debate the often tenuous nature of constitutionally-protected freedoms in times of civil distress.

in effect after the Armistice of November 1918, and continued to be employed even though the struggle in Europe was over.

Though the Armistice brought peace to Europe, the rapid and largely unplanned demobilization of U.S. forces led to conflict at home. American workers had benefited from the conflict in Europe, replacing the jobs of millions of American men who had been drafted into the military. Because of the wartime labor shortage, and the military’s demand for war materials, these workers found themselves in a good position to make demands of management during the war. After the Armistice, however, more than three million veterans came streaming homeward in search of work. Simultaneously, the government summarily cancelled its orders for millions of dollars worth of war materials, rapidly transforming the labor shortage into a surplus. Workers lost much of their leverage at the bargaining table and employ-

*Historical Background
continues on page 3*

CALIFORNIA HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS COVERED IN THIS LESSON

Content Standards: Grade Eleven

- **11.4 Students trace the rise of the United States to its role as a world power in the twentieth century.**
 - **11.4.5** Analyze the political, economic, and social ramifications of World War I on the home front.
- **11.5 Students analyze the major political, social, economic, technological, and cultural developments of the 1920s.**
 - **11.5.2** Analyze the international and domestic events, interests, and philosophies that prompted attacks on civil liberties, including the Palmer Raids, Marcus Garvey's "back-to-Africa" movement, the Ku Klux Klan, and immigration quotas and the responses of organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Anti-Defamation League to those attacks.

Skills: Grades Nine through Twelve

- **Chronological and Spatial Thinking Skills**
 - Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.
- **Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View Skills**
 - Students distinguish valid arguments from fallacious arguments in historical interpretations.
 - Students identify bias and prejudice in historical interpretations.
 - Students evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past, including an analysis of authors' use of evidence and the distinctions between sound generalizations and misleading oversimplifications.
 - Students construct and test hypotheses; collect, evaluate, and employ information from multiple primary and secondary sources; and apply it in oral and written presentations.
- **Historical Interpretation Skills**
 - Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.
 - Students recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitations on determining cause and effect.
 - Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.
 - Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions.

Historical Background continued from page 1

ers were determined to roll back the gains labor had made during the war. In essence, management sought to restore the pre-war status quo while labor defended the higher wages and more secure employment it had achieved during the war. The result was a wave of strikes that roiled the nation in 1919 and early 1920.

As employers and their allies struggled to resist the labor uprisings (sometimes employing African Americans as strike-breakers and intensifying racial conflict in the process), they often claimed that “Bolshevik” labor agitators were directing the strikes and attempting to foment revolution in America. While there was little to no chance of a communist revolution breaking out in the United States, these charges resonated widely with the public; this was not only because Americans’ distrust of outsiders had been aroused to fever pitch during the war, but also because the Russian Bolsheviks were successfully consolidating their revolution in newly Soviet Russia.

In such an environment, few had much sympathy for alien radicals. When a series of bombs was mailed to prominent individuals such as J. P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller, this pushed

Americans towards the verge of paranoia. Even though the perpetrators were never definitively identified, some Americans readily connected these acts of violence with the labor movement. Conflating labor activism for better wages and working conditions with isolated incidents of violence, many Americans were convinced that the striking workers were attempting to overthrow the existing order. Their exaggerated fears led them to imagine that Communist masterminds in the Kremlin were directing strikes aimed at destroying the American economy and precipitating revolution. In response, Attorney General (and Presidential hopeful) A. Mitchell Palmer, whose front yard had been bombed in the summer of 1919, coordinated a series of raids that swept up thousands of individuals he suspected of harboring dangerous ideas. While the raids failed to produce any of the weapons Palmer claimed subversives were stockpiling for their reign of revolutionary terror, the raids did succeed in breaking the back of America’s radical labor movement. In December 1919, the most famous activist of them all, Emma Goldman, was deported, along with 249 other resident aliens, to So-

viet Russia. These deportations were ordered by J. Edgar Hoover, the fervent young director of the “Radical Division” of the Justice Department. It is also fairly clear that the climate engendered by the Red Scare contributed to the 1924 decision to drastically reduce immigration into the United States, essentially closing the door to outsiders for more than half a century.

In 1924, Congress passed the Immigration Act, also known as the National Origins Quota Act. This law limited the number of immigrants who could be admitted to the United States to two percent of the number recorded as living here by the 1890 census. The 1890 census was used because its census count predated the arrival of most Central and Eastern Europeans; this way, the government was able to claim that the act was ethnically neutral, when in fact it was expressly designed to exclude certain groups of Europeans.

KEY TERMS (*highlighted in gray throughout the text*)

Red Scare! The Palmer Raids and Civil Liberties

Agitator: someone who stirs up public feeling on controversial issues.

Alien: someone from another country.

Anarchist: someone who rebels against any authority, established order, or ruling power.

Paranoia: excessive or irrational suspiciousness and distrustfulness of others.

Radical: someone who wants to make extreme changes in existing views, conditions, or institutions.

Sedition: conduct or language inciting rebellion against the authority of a state.

Subversive: someone attempting to overthrow the government.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Red Scare! The Palmer Raids and Civil Liberties

Books

- Coben, Stanley. *A. Mitchell Palmer: Politician (Civil Liberties in American History)*. Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1972. Coben focuses on the contradictory career of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, architect of the “greatest executive restriction of personal liberty in the history of the country.” Palmer is best remembered for his crusade against aliens and labor radicals in the famous Palmer Raids of 1919-1920, and for his sensational accusations that major postwar strikes were part of a world wide communist conspiracy. Ironically, however, Palmer had been a pacifistic Congressman prior to the war who vigorously supported advanced progressive legislation. Coben argues that Palmer was a curious paradox of American politics, a “liberal demagogue.”
- Murray, Robert K. *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1980. Though dated, many consider this to be the definitive treatment of the Red Scare of 1919-1920. Murray frames the Red Scare as an example of what happens to a democratic nation when faith and reason are supplanted by fear. He convincingly demonstrates how easily the seeds of hate and intolerance, which for the most part have remained dormant in modern American society, can suddenly take root and spread throughout the whole social system.
- Preston, William. *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963. Preston argues that the Red Scare of 1919-1920, rather than an aberration resulting primarily from the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution, represented the federal government's tradition of antidemocratic treatment of aliens and radicals since at least the 1890s. According to Preston, the U.S. government's postwar concern with internal security was inextricable from its history of nativism and its antipathy towards all things foreign and subversive.
- Schmidt, Regin. *Red Scare: The FBI and the Origins of Anticommunism in the United States*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2000. This book focuses on the origins and development of the Federal Bureau of Investigation during its formative years (1919-1943), with considerable emphasis on the Bureau's role during the Red Scare. Schmidt argues that the FBI was, at bottom, part of the federalization of social control in the form of political surveillance, rather than a reaction to public hysteria (as some have argued).

Films

- Emma Goldman* (2004). This PBS American Experience documentary covers the life of the Russian immigrant Emma Goldman, whose activism in the name of free speech and anarchism prompted the U.S. government to deport her in late 1919. PBS maintains an excellent website to accompany the film (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/goldman/>); the website includes a Teacher's Guide with lessons to accompany the film, links to primary-source materials about Emma Goldman, anarchism, immigration, and deportation, and a list of useful websites about the period.
- The Rockefellers* (2000). This PBS American Experience documentary narrates the saga of four generations of the Rockefellers, one of America's richest families; the accompanying website (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/rockefellers/>) is useful for its links to primary sources about the Rockefellers' wealth and power in the U.S., a map and timeline, and a Teacher's Guide with lesson plans for the film.

Bibliography continues on the next page

Electronic Resources

Anarchist Emma Goldman recalls the Red Scare

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/hist409/goldman.html>

This site offers an excerpt from Goldman's autobiography, *Living My Life*, in which she comments on political deportations during the Red Scare.

Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer's "The Case Against the 'Reds'"

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/hist409/palmer.html>

This site contains the text of Palmer's 1920 essay explaining his opposition to Bolshevism and his methods for fighting it.

The Emma Goldman Papers

<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/>

This excellent website includes a history of Emma Goldman's life with accompanying photographs; selections from Goldman's writing; the text of some of Goldman's speeches, including her comments to the jury following her 1917 anti-conscription trial; and a rich, primary-source-based curriculum for middle and high school students.

Red Scare Image Database

<http://newman.baruch.cuny.edu/digital/redscare/default.htm>

This website features a visual record of U.S. politics and culture from the period immediately following the First World War, with images culled primarily from the *Literary Digest*, a weekly compendium of national and international news. Because the *Literary Digest* was not particularly sympathetic to leftist politics, the 300 images in this database primarily document popular, anti-communist sentiments of the era.

The Red Scare of 1919-1920 in Political Cartoons

<http://www.boondocksnet.com/gallery/cartoons/reds/>

This database of archival political cartoons about the Red Scare allows students to see how the popular media portrayed radicalism to the American people during the period covered by this lesson. As the site explains, the cartoons "provide insights into the beliefs, attitudes, and fears that climaxed in the Palmer raids and deportations of 1919-1920."

NOTES ON THE PDF:

1) Please note that in this pdf document the page numbers are two off from the printed curriculum. For example, page 2 in the printed curriculum is now page 4 in this pdf document.

2) We apologize if some of the hyperlinks are no longer accurate. They were correct at the time of printing.

3) Full-page versions of the images in this unit—some in color—can be found at the back of this pdf.

4) You can easily navigate through the different parts of this document by using the "Bookmark" tab on the left side of your Acrobat window.

Red Scare! The Palmer Raids and Civil Liberties

Essential Question:

How did a war fought to 'save the world for democracy' end up threatening civil rights in America?

VOCABULARY EXERCISE AND PREPARATION

- 1) Working in small groups, do your best to define the key terms below without using a reference aid such as a dictionary.
- 2) Sort the terms into categories and be prepared to explain how the terms within these categories are related.
- 3) Share your group's definitions and categorizations with the class. Your teacher will record each group's main ideas about each term on the board.
- 4) As a class, use the best ideas from each group to create a final definition for each of the terms. You may use a dictionary now to double-check the accuracy of your definitions or if you are stuck and need help.
- 5) Lastly, write a sentence correctly using each of these words.

Agitator	Radical
Alien	Sediton
Anarchist	Subversive
Communism	
Deport	
Paranoia	

Timeline

April 6, 1917: The U.S.A. enters World War I by declaring war on Germany.

October 1917: The Bolshevik Revolution brings a Communist government to power in Russia.

May 1918: The U.S. Congress passes the Sedition Act (an amendment to the Espionage Act of 1917)

November 1918: Germany signs the Armistice ending World War I.

Summer 1919: A series of bombs is mailed to prominent Americans.

1919-1920: A massive wave of strikes agitates the nation.

November 1919-January 1920: Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and his special assistant J. Edgar Hoover direct the largest mass arrests in U.S. history. The "Palmer Raids" result in the incarceration of thousands of suspected "subversives."

May 1 (May Day), 1920: The communist uprising predicted by Attorney General Palmer fails to occur. Later, he is accused of helping to create a climate of fear for political advantage.

INTRODUCTION: A RED REVOLUTION

In April 1917, American President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed that the United States had to join Great Britain, France, and Russia in their war against the Central Powers (Germany, Austro-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire) in order to “make the world safe for democracy.” Wilson wanted to use the power of the United States to change the world into a place that looked and acted more like America. Change is complicated, however, and the same year that the United States entered World War I (which had been going on in Europe since 1914), the people of Russia rose up and revolted against their king (or Czar), Nicolas II.

The Russian people had suffered terrible hardships during the war, and many of them were increasingly attracted to a small group of revolutionaries called the *Bolsheviks*, led by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky. The Bolsheviks, better known as the communists or “reds” (after the color of the communist flag), promised to give up the war against Germany. The Bolsheviks kept their promise, and this helped them gain the support of many Russians who were sick of the war. The Bolsheviks eventually gained complete control of Russia and began to transform it into a communist state called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the Soviet Union, or U.S.S.R.). Despite the wishes of leaders like President Wilson, Russia (the U.S.S.R.) was now becoming even less like America than it had been before.



IMAGE 1: Woodrow Wilson, U.S. President (1913-1921)



IMAGE 2: Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, Communist revolutionary, leader of the Bolshevik party and first Premier of the Soviet Union

A popular high-school history textbook (*America: Pathways to the Present*) argues that the communist system of government in the Soviet Union meant that:

- The government owned all the land and property.
- A single political party controlled the government.
- Individuals had no rights that the government was bound to respect.
- The Soviet government promised to stir up revolution in other countries and spread Communism throughout the world.

1. Fill in the chart below to highlight **three important ways** the Soviet Communist system of government was *different* than the system of government found here in the United States.

	USA	USSR
1)		
2)		
3)		

2. Some historians would argue that the textbook definition of communism given above is not entirely accurate. It might, however, accurately reflect what many Americans *believed* about Communism in 1917. Why might many of these Americans have been afraid of the Soviet Communist government? You can use the chart above to help you answer this question.

OUT OF THE SMOKE: THE POST-WAR LABOR STRUGGLE IN AMERICA



IMAGE 3:
Workingmen on
strike, Brooklyn,
1918

Although the United States, along with France and Britain, won the First World War in 1918 by defeating the Central Powers (Germany, Austro-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire), peace did not come to America immediately. Instead, in 1919 and 1920, the U.S. was shaken by a series of big labor strikes. The vast

majority of American workers who went on strike in 1919 and 1920 did so to try and protect their jobs and the good wages they had earned during the war. Most were *not* on strike to provoke a revolution. Some Americans who opposed the strikes, however, claimed that the workers were **radicals**, communist revo-

lutionaries whose real aim in striking was to destroy the American government and create a communist state like the one in the U.S.S.R. These accusations of communist-inspired labor agitation were accompanied by growing fears of terrorism.

In the summer of 1919, a number of bombs were sent through the mail (no one really knows by whom) to influential Americans like J. P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller. A wave of fear swept across the country. Many Americans became convinced that both the strikes and the terrorist acts were caused by communists in America, under orders from the Soviet leaders Lenin and Trotsky. Although we can look back now and be certain there was very little chance that a communist revolution would occur in America, many people at that time believed the nation was dangerously on the edge of social and political **disintegration**.



IMAGE 4: John Pierpont Morgan, American banker and one of the richest men in America at the turn of the twentieth century.



IMAGE 5: John Davison Rockefeller, American industrialist, founder of Standard Oil, and, for a time, the richest man in the world.

3. Why might middle-class and wealthy Americans like J.P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller have had different attitudes about labor strikes than workers (like the men pictured in Image 3) who walked off their jobs in 1919 and 1920?

Glossary

disintegration: the breaking up of the component parts of a substance; decay.

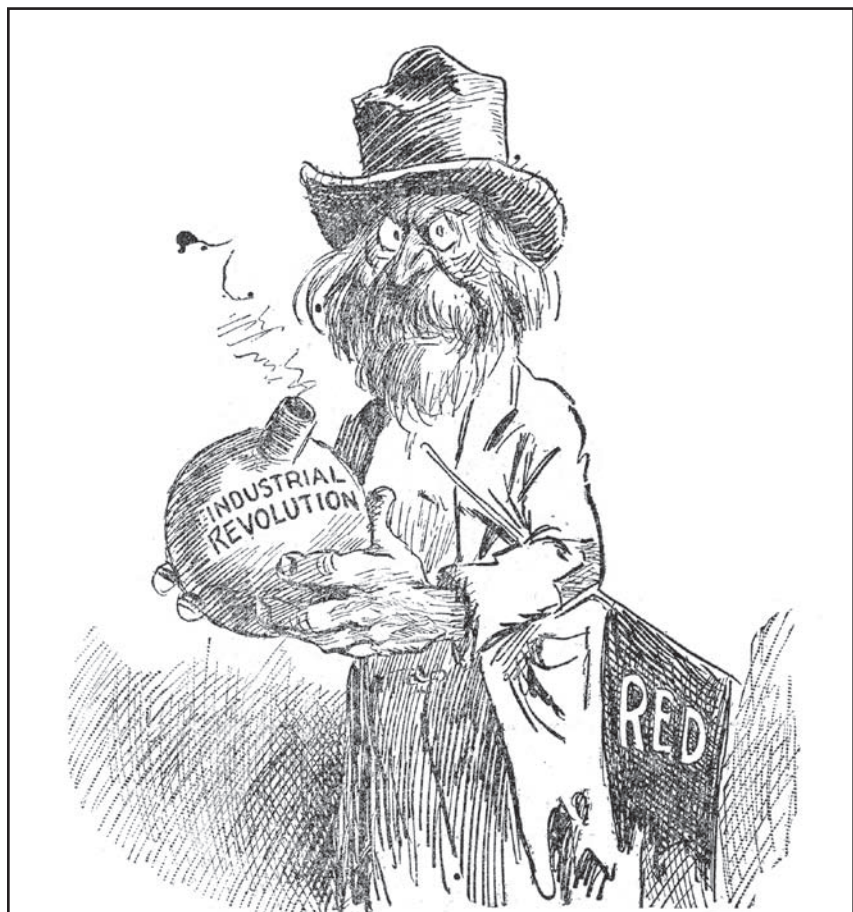
Take a look at the three political cartoons to the right, and on the following page, which were created in response to the **turmoil** affecting the United States after World War I. The three cartoons have similar messages.

Then, choose one of the cartoons and analyze it carefully by filling out the Primary Source Analysis Worksheet that follows. If you are working in a group, each member of the group should analyze a different cartoon. You can compare your findings after you have finished the analysis.



IMAGE 6, top: Kirby, “Coming Out Of the Smoke” (October 10, 1919)

IMAGE 7, right: Morris, “Curses, It Won’t Explode In America” (October 18, 1919)



Glossary

turmoil: a state of extreme confusion or agitation; commotion or tumult.

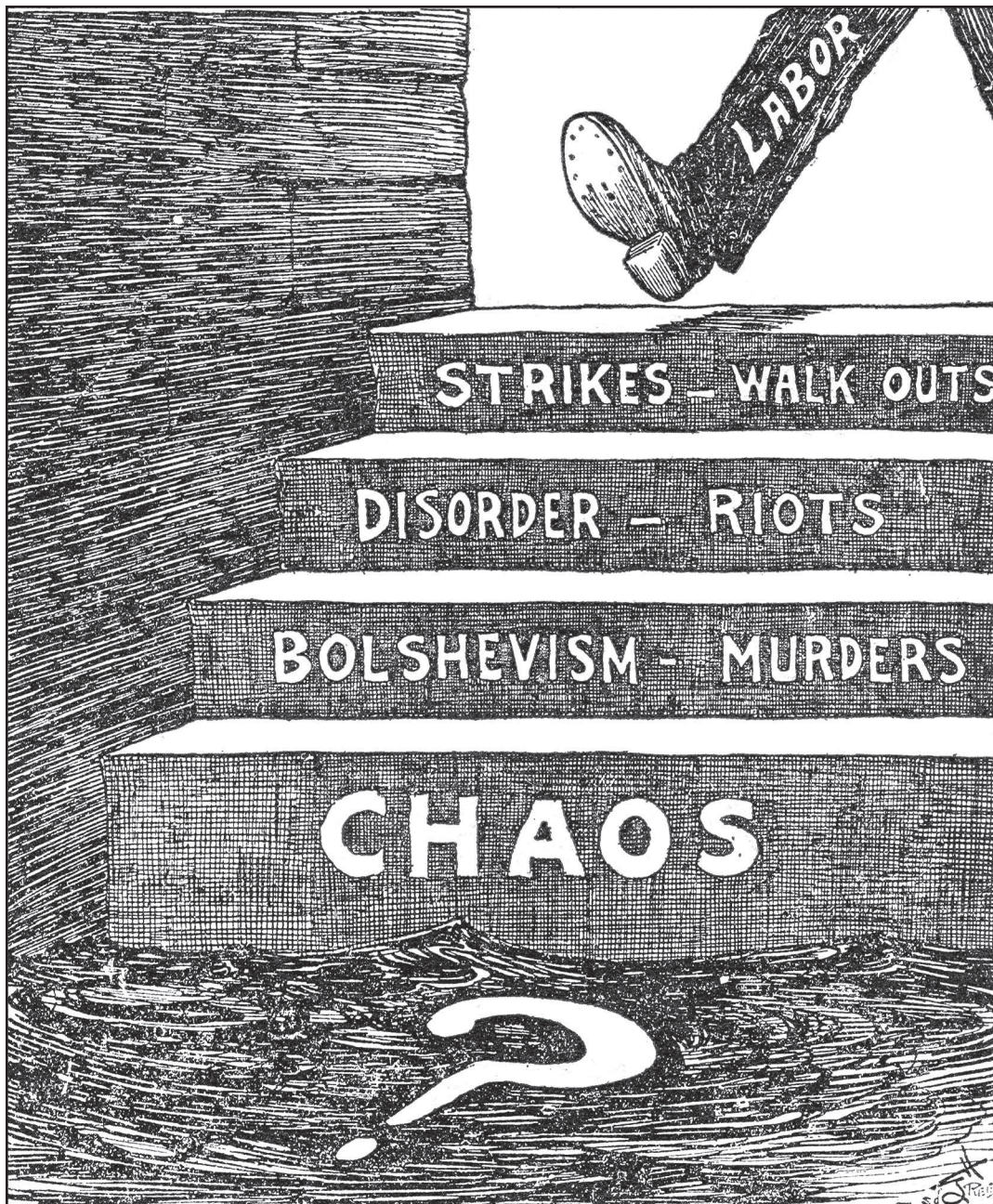


IMAGE 8: Greene,
“Step by Step”
(November 1,
1919)

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET – *POLITICAL CARTOONS*

Content:

1. Who is the author of this cartoon?
2. When was it created?
3. What is the author describing; in other words, what is the author's subject?
4. How might the title of the cartoon help you to understand its meaning?

Perspective:

1. How does the author portray, or picture, the subject of this cartoon? In other words, what is the author's perspective?
2. Does the author seem to have positive or negative feelings about the subject of this cartoon? How can you tell?
3. How might the author have been trying to influence the way that you, the reader, feel about the subject of this cartoon?

Context:

1. What was happening around the time when this cartoon was created that might have affected its content?

Corroboration and Significance:

1. Does this cartoon support or challenge what you already know or have learned about its subject? If so, how?
2. What can this cartoon teach us about the past?

Conclusions:

1. From whose perspective, or point of view, was this cartoon created?
2. What is the message, or thesis, that the author is attempting to communicate to the reader?

The Sedition Act

After a bomb blew up in front of U.S. **Attorney General** A. Mitchell Palmer's home in Washington D.C., he used laws that had been passed during the war to launch a campaign against those he suspected of being **subversives**. One of these laws, The **Sedition Act** (1918), made it a federal crime to criticize the government or Constitution of the United States.

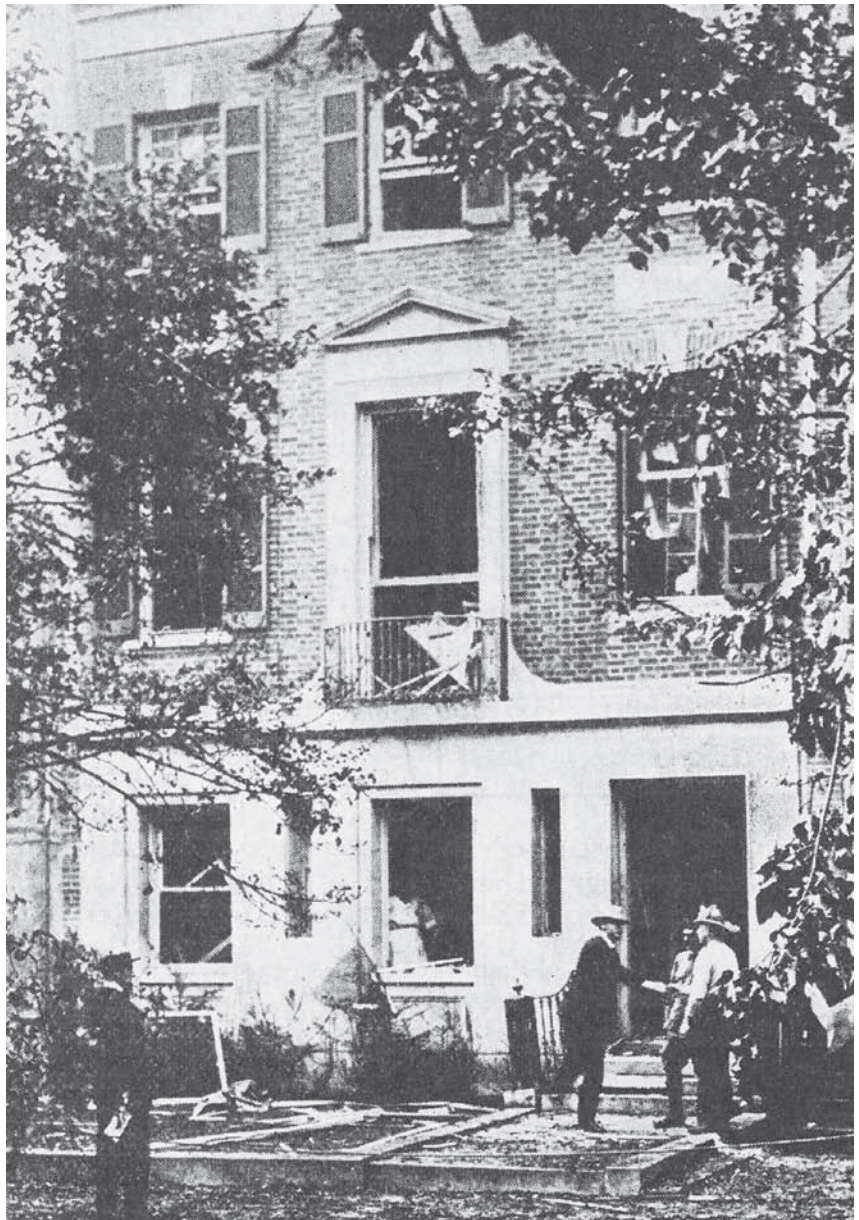


IMAGE 9: Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer's house after a bomb blew up in front of it on June 14, 1919

1. How might Americans have connected the attempted bombing of the government's top lawyer in 1919 (Image 9) to ideas expressed in the three political cartoons that you analyzed above? You can refer to one or more of the cartoons in answering.

Glossary

Attorney General: the head of the U.S. Department of Justice and a member of the President's cabinet.

Read Section 3 of the Sedition Act (below) and answer the questions that follow.

Whoever, when the United States is at war, shall **willfully** make or convey false reports or false statements with intent to interfere with the operation or success of the military or naval forces of the United States, or to promote the success of its enemies . . . or **incite insubordination**, disloyalty, **mutiny**, or refusal of duty, in the military or naval forces of the United States, or shall willfully **obstruct** . . . the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States, or . . . shall willfully utter, print, write, or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the United States, or the Constitution of the United States, or the military or naval forces of the United States . . . or shall willfully display the flag of any foreign enemy, or shall willfully . . . urge, incite, or advocate any **curtailment** of production . . . or advocate, teach, defend, or suggest the doing of any of the acts or things in this section **enumerated** and whoever shall by word or act support or favor the cause of any country with which the United States is at war or by word or act oppose the cause of the United States therein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than twenty years, or both.

2. List three particular activities made illegal by Section 3 of the Sedition Act (in your own words).

3. Now, summarize generally what the Sedition Act makes illegal. In other words, what do all the crimes listed in Section 3 have in common?

4. Can you think of any circumstances under which someone might engage in one of the prohibited activities listed above without being a traitor to the United States?

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Glossary

willfully: done intentionally, as opposed to something done carelessly or by mistake.
incite: to provoke and urge on.
insubordination: the condition of not obeying; defiance of authority.
mutiny: open rebellion against an established authority.
obstruct: to prevent the progress or accomplishment of.
curtailment: the act of decreasing or cutting off.
enumerated: listed.

Now read the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, below.

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or **abridging** the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a **redress** of grievances.*

5. Read the First Amendment carefully and rephrase it in your own words.

6. Fill in the chart below and use it to highlight how the Sedition Act (1918) and the First Amendment to the United States Constitution (1791) might have been in conflict.

The Sedition Act (1918) made it a crime to:	The First Amendment (1791) guarantees the right to:

7. Write a one-sentence statement explaining why or how the Sedition Act and the First Amendment may have been in conflict.

Remember, if the Supreme Court decides that any law passed in the United States is in conflict with the Constitution, then that law becomes **null and void.*

.....

Glossary

abridge: to diminish or reduce.

redress: a sum of money paid in compensation for loss or injury.

null and void: no longer valid or enforceable.



IMAGE 10: Attorney General Alexander Mitchell Palmer in 1919



IMAGE 11: J. Edgar Hoover, Special Assistant to Attorney General Palmer and, (after 1924), Director of the F.B.I.

8. How do you think Attorney General Palmer might have responded in 1919 if someone had pointed out that the First Amendment and the Sedition Act seemed to be in conflict?

It is important to remember that the Sedition Act made it a crime simply to criticize the government or Constitution of the United States.

9. How might the U.S. government use a law like the Sedition Act today to suppress speech it disagrees with?

The Palmer (and Hoover) Raids

Although it certainly seems to have been unconstitutional, many people supported Attorney General Palmer's use of the Sedition Act in his campaign to arrest suspected subversives. Palmer targeted labor leaders and outspoken radical intellectuals. His officials, under the direction of Palmer's special assistant, J. Edgar Hoover (who would later lead the FBI for many years), conducted raids on **anarchist** organizations, schools, and other gathering places in over thirty cities nationwide. Thousands of people were arrested and jailed. Most were recent immigrants to the United States. Almost 250 were deported back to the Soviet Union, including the outspoken anarchist and feminist activist, Emma Goldman.



IMAGE 12: Anarchist Emma Goldman

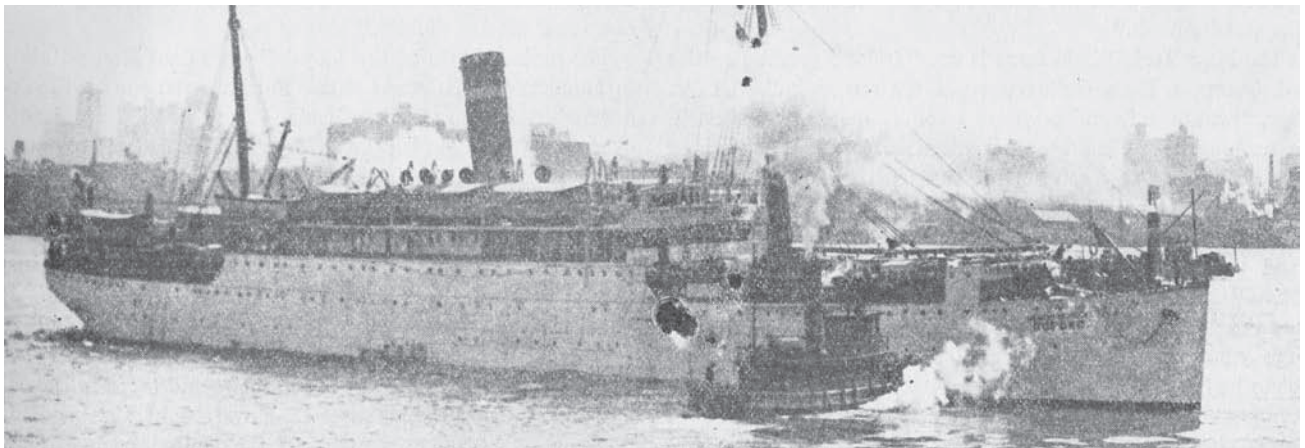


IMAGE 13: “The Soviet Ark”—a United States army transport carrying 249 Russian Reds as America’s Christmas present to Lenin and Trotsky

1. Look at the picture in Image 13, above. Why were these people arrested and deported?

The Sedition Act empowered Attorney General Palmer to round up people, not for things they had done, but for expressing their thoughts and beliefs. They were arrested because they spoke or wrote words

that the government claimed were dangerous. But doesn’t this conflict with the right to free speech protected by the First Amendment?



IMAGE 14: Police searching a group of arrested ‘suspects’ in police headquarters

2. In your opinion, when, if ever, does the government have the right to **suppress** free speech and **nullify** the First Amendment? Explain why you think the government should or should not have the right to do this.

Glossary

suppress: to put down by force or authority.

nullify: to declare invalid.

Justifying Detentions and Deportations

Many Americans' feelings about the Palmer Raids and suspected "subversives" were probably influenced by statements made by government officials like Attorney General Palmer. Here is how Palmer himself explained his actions in 1920, in an essay called "The Case Against the 'Reds.'"

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

*My information showed that communism in this country was an organization of thousands of **aliens** who were direct allies of Trotsky [a leader of the Russian Communist Revolution and the Soviet Union] . . . it showed that they were making the same glittering promises of lawlessness, of criminal **autocracy** to Americans that they had made to the Russian **peasants**. How the Department of Justice discovered upwards of 60,000 of these organized **agitators** of the Trotsky doctrine [Communism] in the United States is the **confidential** information upon which the Government is now sweeping the nation clean of such alien filth.*

1. According to Palmer, who was working together with the communists in America against the United States?
2. How many communists does Palmer say were working to overthrow the United States government?
3. Does Palmer explain how the United States government got the information it used to pursue suspected "subversives"?
4. Who is Palmer referring to when he says the government will sweep America clean of "alien filth"?
5. Why do you think he describes the aliens as "filth"? How is Palmer trying to influence his readers' opinions by using such terms?

.....

Glossary

autocracy: a government in which one person possesses unlimited power.

peasant: a country person; a rustic.

confidential: secret.

By the summer of 1920, the public gradually lost interest in Palmer and his campaign against subversives, in part because he predicted a series of terrorist attacks that failed to occur. The **paranoia** that had gripped America for over a year passed and Palmer was increasingly criticized for conducting searches without warrants and for denying detainees legal representation (he didn't let them have lawyers, even though the Constitution promises a lawyer to anyone accused

of a crime). When a bomb went off on Wall Street in New York City in September 1920, most Americans probably considered it the act of a crazy person rather than part of a communist plot against America. Palmer, once considered a possible presidential candidate, was largely forgotten.

The Palmer Raids and the Red Scare paranoia did, however, frustrate the labor movement's attempt to increase its influence in the United States. The Red Scare also helped convince

many Americans to support a dramatic change in the nation's immigration policy. Until the early 1920s, the United States had very few laws that stopped immigrants from coming here (racist regulations that restricted the entry of Asians, especially Chinese, were the great exception). In 1924, however, America became a "gatekeeping" nation for the first time, closing its doors to most Central and Eastern European immigration.

Closing the Gate

Study the political cartoon below and then fill in the Primary Source Analysis Worksheet that follows. After you have finished working with the chart, be prepared to explain how this cartoon—created during the Red Scare of 1919-1920—might have influenced the decision to drastically decrease immigration to the United States in 1924.

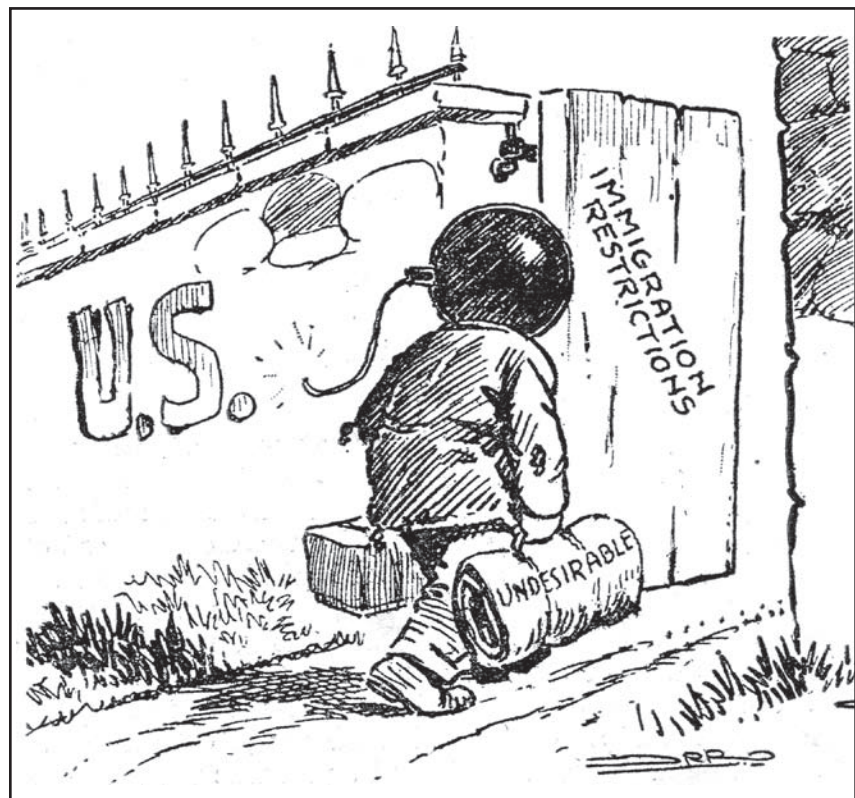


IMAGE 15: Orr, "Close the Gate"

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET — CLOSE THE GATE

Content:

1. Who is the author of this cartoon?
2. When was it created?
3. What is the author describing; in other words, what is the author's subject?
4. How might the title of the cartoon help you to understand its meaning?

Perspective:

1. How does the author portray, or picture, the subject of this cartoon? In other words, what is the author's perspective?
2. Does the author seem to have positive or negative feelings about the subject of this cartoon? How can you tell?
3. How might the author have been trying to influence the way that you, the reader, feel about the subject of this cartoon?

Context:

1. What was happening around the time when this cartoon was created that might have affected its content?

Corroboration and Significance:

1. Does this cartoon support or challenge what you already know or have learned about its subject? If so, how?
2. What can this cartoon teach us about the past?

Conclusions:

1. From whose perspective, or point of view, was this cartoon created?
2. What is the message, or thesis, that the author is attempting to communicate to the reader?
3. How do you think this cartoon might have influenced the decision to drastically decrease immigration to the United States in 1924?

ASSESSMENT

In order to demonstrate your understanding of the events surrounding the post-WWI Red Scare, you are going to write a short newspaper editorial. Imagine the date is January 24, 1920, and you are an editorialist for *The New York Times*. The Red Scare is at its height. The nation is filled with the fear that “alien” subversives are plotting against the United States government and every day Attorney General Palmer is arresting people he suspects of planning a violent revolution against the government. Some Americans, however, have begun to argue that arresting people who have done nothing more than simply criticize the government is unconstitutional and dangerous. How would you respond? On a separate piece of paper, explain why you support or oppose the actions of Attorney General Palmer. You can use the title provided or create your own.

The New York Times

January 24, 1920

Editorial section

By: _____

Title: The Palmer Raids and a “Red Scare”

Red Scare! The Palmer Raids and Civil Liberties, 1919-1920



IMAGE 1: Soyuzfoto, "Vladimir Il'ich Lenin." Circa 1920. Reproduced from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-USZ62-101877. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3c01877>.



IMAGE 2: “Woodrow Wilson.” Circa 1916. Reproduced from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-USZ62-107577. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3c07577>.



IMAGE 3: "Striking Conductors and Motormen in Brooklyn" (Underwood and Underwood). Reproduced from *The Literary Digest* (23 August 1919), p. 15.



IMAGE 4: “John Pierpont (J.P.) Morgan.” Circa 1902. Reproduced from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Reproduction number: LC-USZ62-105820. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3c05820>.



IMAGE 5: “John Davison Rockefeller.” Circa 1910. Reproduced from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-USZ62-94997. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b38638>.

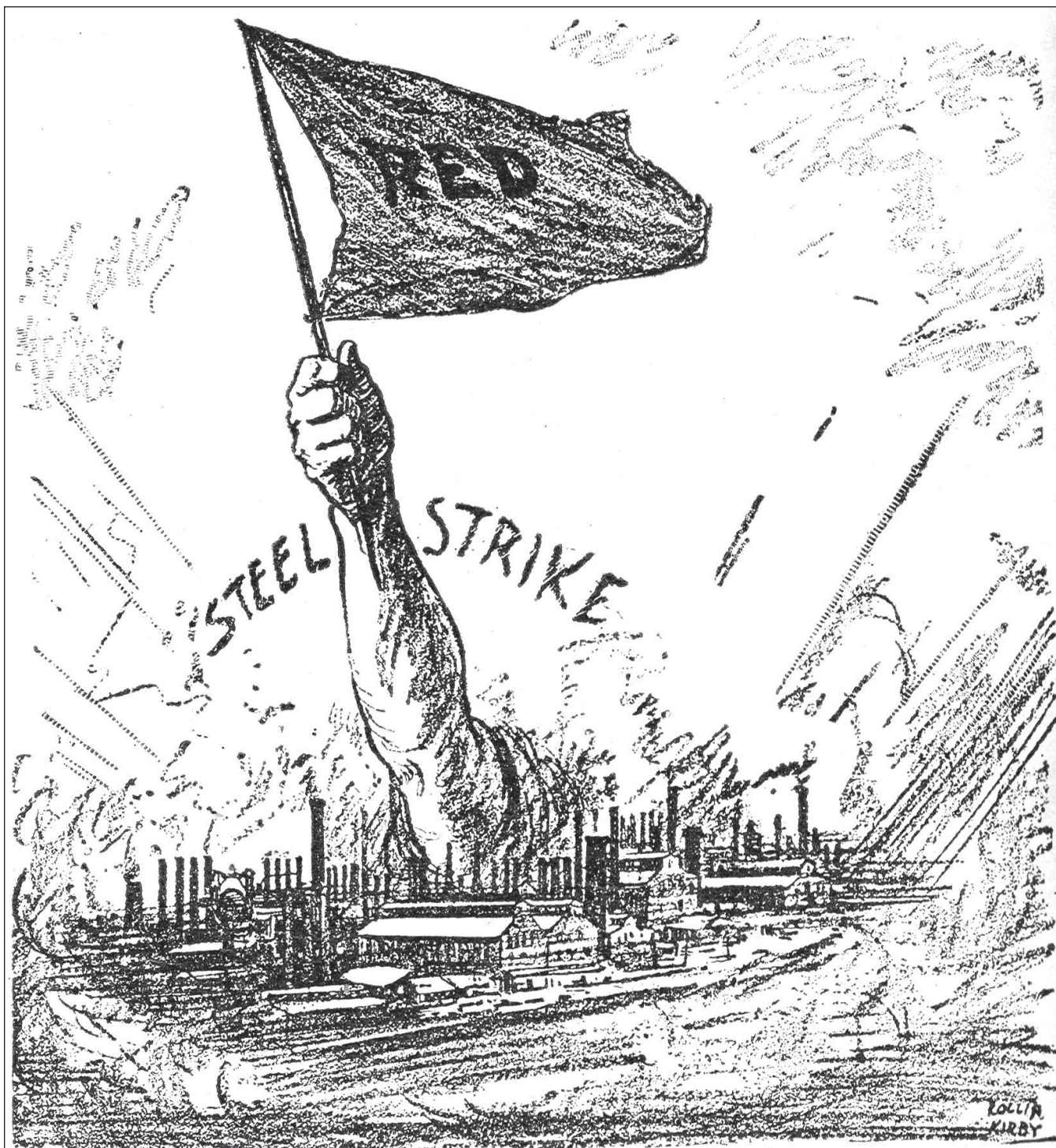


IMAGE 6: Kirby, "Coming Out Of the Smoke" (*New York World*). Reproduced from *The Literary Digest* (10 October 1919), p. 13.

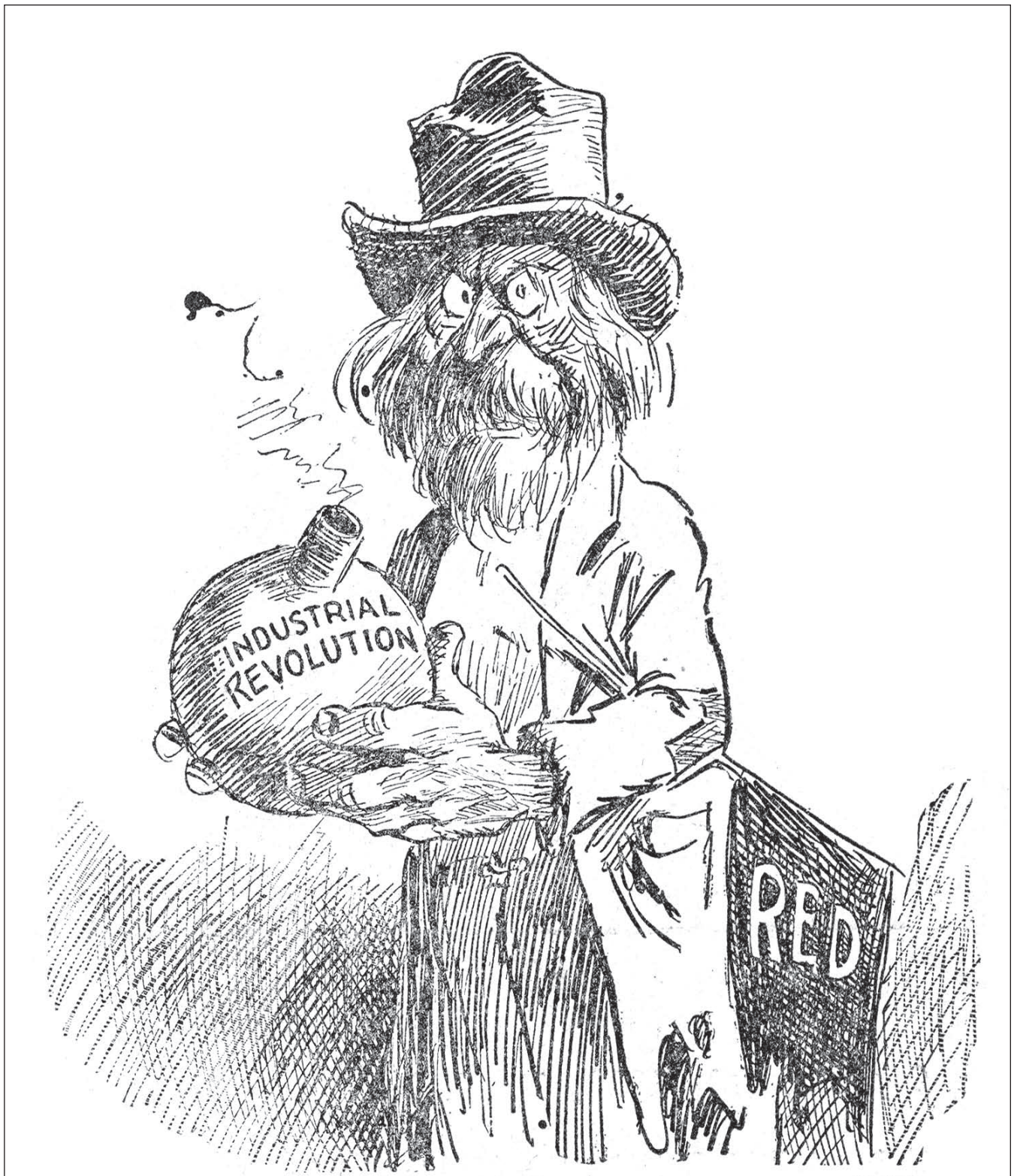


IMAGE 7: Morris, "Curses, It Won't Explode In America" (George Matthew Adams Service). Reproduced from *The Literary Digest* (18 October 1919), p.13.

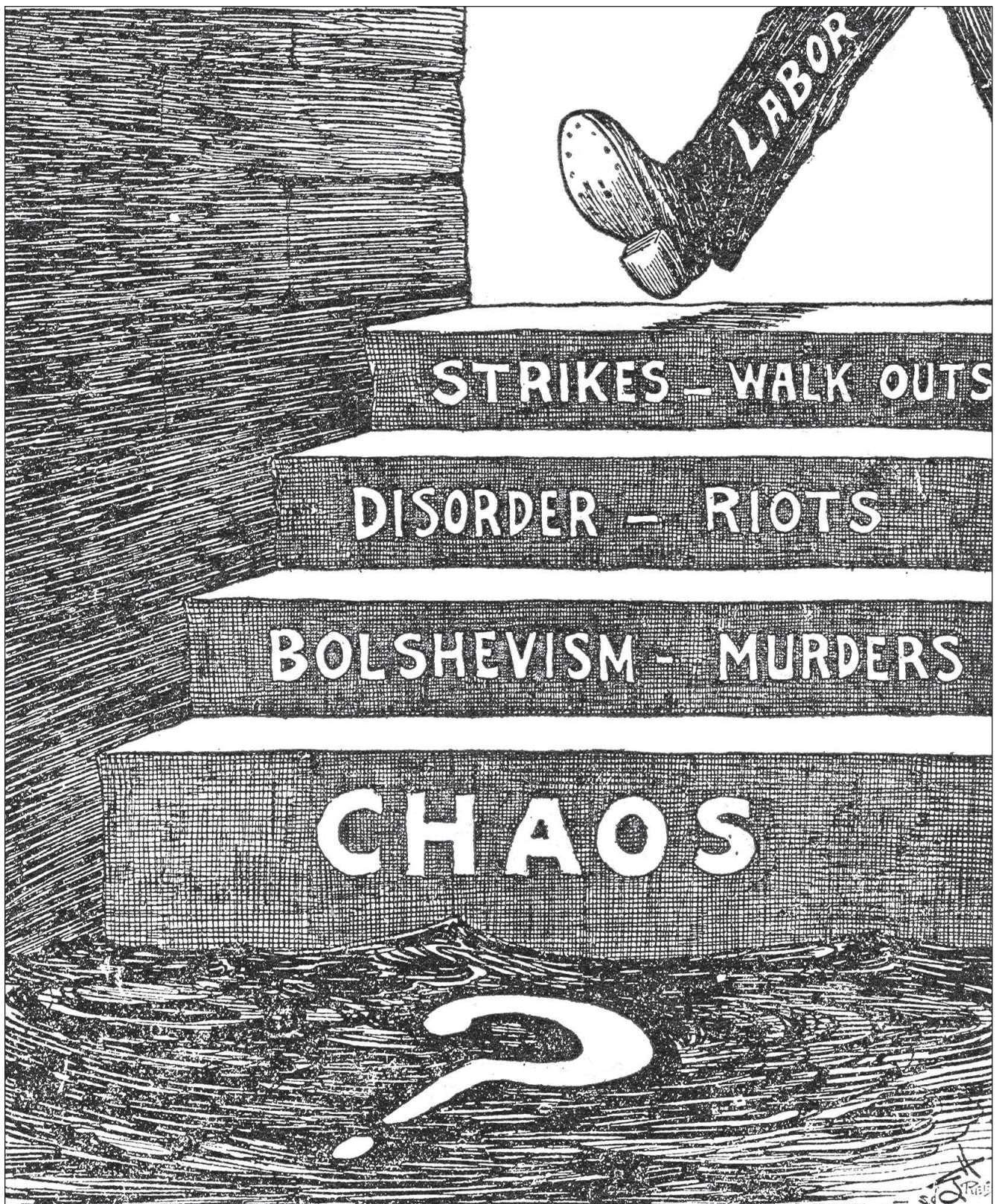


IMAGE 8: Greene, "Step by Step" (*New York Evening Telegram*). Reproduced from *The Literary Digest* (1 November 1919), p.12.



IMAGE 9: "These Attacks Will Only Increase the Activities of our Crime-Detecting Forces." Reproduced from *The Literary Digest* (14 June 1919), p.9.



IMAGE 10: Harris & Ewing, "Alexander M. Palmer." Circa 1919. Reproduced from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-USZ62-36869. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3a37242>.



IMAGE 11: “J. Edgar Hoover.” N. date. Reproduced from the National Photo Company Collection at the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-USZ62-92411. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b38714>.



IMAGE 12: “Emma Goldman.” Reproduced from the George Grantham Bain Collection at the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-B2-3748-11. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ggbain.21014>.

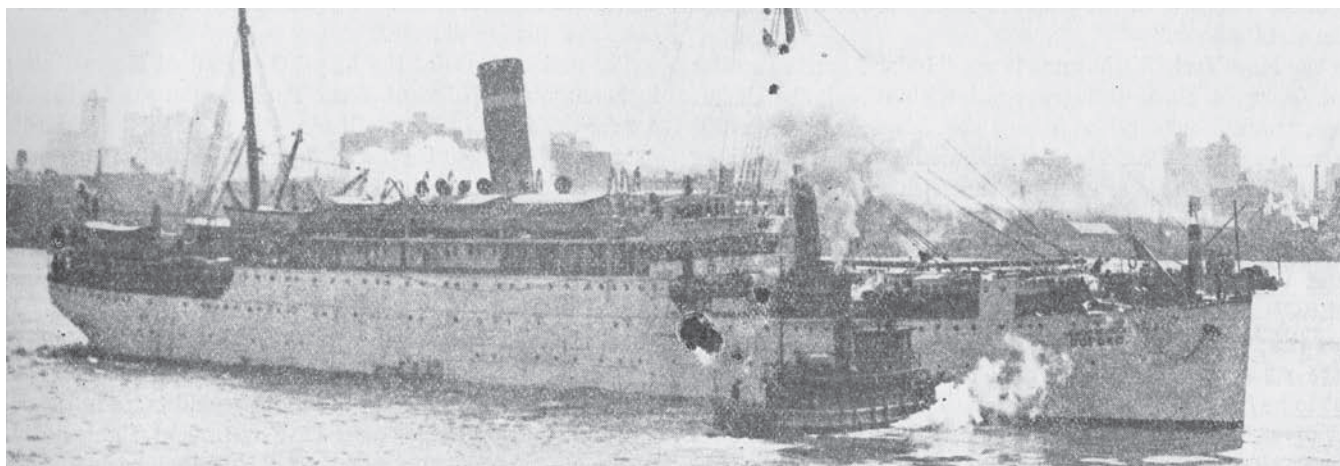


Image 13: "The Soviet Ark" (Press Illustrating Service). Reproduced from *The Literary Digest* (3 January 1920), p. 15.



Image 14: "Police Searching a Group of Arrested 'Suspects' in Police Headquarters, Chicago: Rounding Up the 'Reds' in a Nation-Wide Campaign against Revolutionaries." Reproduced from *The Outlook* (21 January 1920), p. 113.

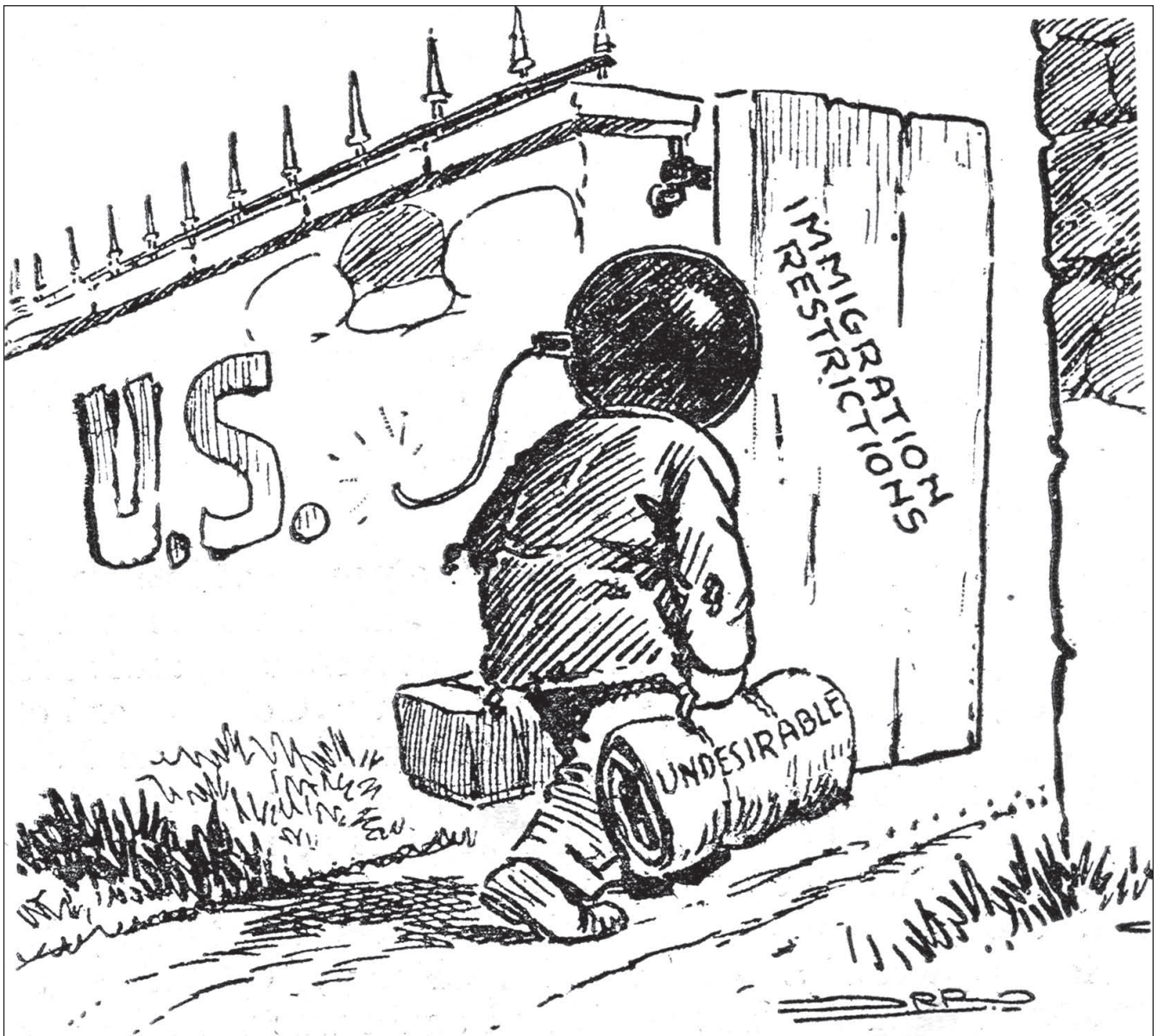


Image 15: Orr, "Close the Gate" (*Chicago Tribune*). Reproduced from *The Literary Digest* (5 July 1919), p. 29.

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