

READING CHECK

Why did Harding win the 1920 presidential election?

VOCABULARY BUILDER

What does the word *emergence* mean in the underlined sentence? What clues can you find in the root word? Name a synonym for the root word.

READING SKILL

Identify Main Ideas Identify the main factors that led to the first American Red Scare.

World War I produced significant economic, social, political, and cultural changes in America. An **influenza** virus that killed millions worldwide made the movement from war to peace even more difficult. The flu pandemic created a sense of doom and dread.

The end of the war spelled the end of wartime economic opportunities for women and African Americans. Adding to this crisis atmosphere were normal postwar adjustments. Falling agricultural prices made it difficult for farmers to pay their debts. **Inflation**, or rising prices, meant industrial workers' wages did not buy as much as they had bought during the war. All around the country, workers struck for higher wages and shorter workdays. They won some of the strikes, but they lost far more.

The violence of some strikes was often attributed to the presence of radicals among the strike leaders. The emergence of the Soviet Union as a communist nation compounded the fear of radicals and communists. Communist ideology called for an international workers' revolution, and communist revolts in Central and Eastern Europe made it seem like the worldwide revolution was starting.

Widespread fear of suspected communists and radicals thought to be plotting revolution within the United States prompted the first American **Red Scare**. In early 1920, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer mounted a series of raids, known as the **Palmer Raids**. Police arrested thousands of people, some who were radicals and some who were simply immigrants from southern or Eastern Europe. To many, these actions seemed to attack the liberties that Americans held most dear. By the summer of 1920, the Red Scare hysteria had run its course. **Warren G. Harding** campaigned for President calling for a return to "normalcy." Harding won in a landslide.

By 1920, the United States was the richest, most industrialized country in the world. The United States was also the largest **creditor nation** in the world, meaning that other countries owed the United States more money than the United States owed them. As a result of World War I, America's economic and political standing in the world had fundamentally changed.

Review Questions

1. Describe the problems Americans faced immediately after the war.

2. How did the war change America's role in world affairs?
