

Groupwork Checklist for Press Conference

1. Make sure your group members have copies of **Student Handout 1.2A**, **Student Handout 1.2B**, and **Student Handout 1.2C**.

2. Make sure each group member knows his or her role:

Actor Plays the part of the historical figure being questioned by Reporters and Historians during the class presentation. Takes time to learn the ideas and personality of the historical figure. Helps others learn about the figure he or she represents. Cuts out the mask. Thinks of appropriate props and costumes to help bring the historical figure to life.

Historian Responsible for ensuring that all group members understand the ideas and beliefs of the historical figure. Looks in textbooks, encyclopedias, and other sources for additional information on the historical figure. Prepares and asks supportive question of historical figure during press conference.

Public Relations Agent Takes time to learn about the ideas and personality of the historical figure. Introduces historical figure at the start of the press conference. Assists Actor in answering any difficult questions during the press conference. Solicits ideas from group members to design nameplate for historical figure with name and appropriate visual symbol of the figure's view on diversity in the United States.

Investigative Reporter Responsible for anticipating and preparing Actor for any questions that may be asked. Carefully examines **Student Handout 1.2C** to find out which historical figures on the panel have ideas that support or oppose the group's. Prepares and asks probing questions of other panel members to expose weaknesses in their arguments.

3. Read and discuss the Biographical Briefing. Prepare Actor by making sure he or she can represent the historical figure's ideas on diversity in the United States. Brainstorm costume and prop ideas. Design a nameplate with appropriate visual symbol. Prepare probing questions to ask other historical figures.
4. Rehearse by asking Actor questions that are likely to come up during the press conference. Cut out mask so it fits snugly on the Actor's face. Make sure Public Relations Agent has brief introduction prepared. Make sure Reporter and Historian have appropriate questions ready. As press conference unfolds, take notes on **Student Handout 1.2E**.

Summary of Historical Figures

Directions: Listed below are the historical figures that will take part in the press conference, along with a summary of the views of each. Use this information to help you prepare for the press conference. This should be especially helpful to the Historians.



William Du Bois—One of the founders of the NAACP, he fought against racial prejudice and for civil rights for African Americans. He believed that a fully integrated socialist society could achieve racial and economic equality.



Hiram Wesley Evans—The Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) through much of the 1920s, he spouted hatred for minorities, unions, and communists. Under his leadership lynchings, bombings, and harassment of KKK opponents increased.



Marcus Garvey—Founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), he advocated racial pride, black nationalism, economic independence for African Americans, and racial separation. His belief in the fundamental injustices of American society led to his starting the Black Star Line to transfer American blacks back to Africa.



Charles Evans Hughes—Chief justice of the Supreme Court from 1930 to 1941, he championed the cause of justice while defending socialists and labor organizations against the prejudices of the early 1920s.



John L. Lewis—President of the United Mine Workers of America (UMW) from the early 1920s to the mid 1960s, he fought big business and the government to gain better wages and working conditions for impoverished miners and other laborers.



A. Mitchell Palmer—Attorney general from 1919 and 1921, he orchestrated a vigorous effort to arrest and deport communists, socialists, and other leftists that he believed were planning a revolution against the U.S. government.



Judge Webster Thayer—A Massachusetts judge, he tried the famous Sacco-Vanzetti case, a trial of two Italian anarchists for robbery and murder, in which Sacco and Vanzetti were eventually executed. Many believed Thayer convicted them because they were Italian and held unpopular political views, not because they were guilty.



Bartolomeo Vanzetti—An Italian immigrant who espoused anti-government views and avoided the draft in World War I. He was tried, convicted, and executed for allegedly participating in a robbery and murder in 1920. He and many others felt that his conviction was based on his immigrant status and radical political views rather than strong evidence.



Ida B. Wells—A crusading journalist, she spoke out for decades against the racial inequalities evident in the United States. Her articles and speeches raised people's consciousness about the excesses of prejudice, particularly lynching, in the United States.

Roaring 20's Press Conference

Appendix I

Directions

- Write $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page explaining your character's beliefs on:
 - change and diversity (write in first person)
 - Link this to your character's beliefs/interests
 - What change and diversity means for the country
 - What would your character like to see in the future
 - Must be typed
- Create a digital collage with your character's name, at least 3 pictures of your character and a symbol that represents your character.
- Write and memorize a very brief introduction of your character (P.R. person presents this). This will just include general background of the person.
- Write out a list of ten questions to ask the other panelists. This is to make those characters that oppose your character's beliefs look bad, or to make those characters that might agree with you look good. See the handout that summarizes the other characters.

Grading Rubric

- $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page write-up, typed, 5pts
- Collage, 3 pts
- Write out and type your character's introduction, 2pts
- 10 questions, written out and typed, 5 points
- Press Conference performance (taking the role seriously and from the perspective of your character), 5pts

Total, 20 points

If you do this well there will be a very spirited and fun discussion during the press conference.



Biographical Briefing on A. Mitchell Palmer

Directions: The following information will help your group prepare for the press conference, in which one of you will play A. Mitchell Palmer and the rest of you have other roles to play. To prepare for the press conference, each group member reads a section of the handout and leads a discussion of the questions following that section.

A. Mitchell Palmer, attorney general of the United States between 1919 and 1921, was born in Pennsylvania on May 4, 1872. His parents were Quakers and believed in nonviolence. He graduated from Swarthmore with top honors and went on to law school. After graduating from law school, he became one of the top lawyers in Pennsylvania. He soon became active in politics and was elected as a Democrat to the Congress in 1908.



- **How might the beliefs of Palmer's parents have affected him later in life?**
- **What career path did Palmer follow to get into politics?**
- **Which political party did he support?**

Palmer became an ardent supporter of Woodrow Wilson and worked energetically for him in the presidential primary in Pennsylvania in April 1912. He attended the Democratic National Convention in Baltimore as chairman of the state delegation and was one of the most active Wilson supporters there. He helped Wilson win the nomination and emerged from the convention as one of Wilson's most trusted advisers and confidants. When Wilson was elected president, he offered Palmer the post of secretary of war. Palmer declined because of his Quaker faith and upbringing.



- **Why did Wilson offer Palmer a position in his cabinet after winning the presidency?**
- **Why did Palmer turn down the offer to become secretary of war?**

During World War I Palmer became a government lawyer. In the position, he was placed in charge of confiscating property owned by foreigners living in the United States. It was feared that foreigners might use their property to help the enemy during the war. After the war, on March 4, 1919, Wilson appointed Palmer to the post of attorney general—the most powerful law officer in the United States. One of the first issues confronting the new attorney general was a rash of terrorist bombings. The bombings were thought to have been the work of leftist extremists from groups that many Americans thought were planning a revolution and hence a threat to the American government. A package containing a bomb arrived in the Seattle mayor's office after he had used troops to break a general strike there. Similar

packages—set aside for insufficient postage—were found in a New York post office addressed to known opponents of organized labor and immigration.



- **What did Palmer do during World War I? Why?**
- **What powerful government position did he hold after the war?**
- **What was one of the first problems confronting Palmer in his new job? What do you think he did about it?**

As attorney general, Palmer attempted to stop the terrorist attacks. He arrested more than 1,000 persons (mostly radical and left-leaning groups such as anarchists and communists), which, in turn, made him a prime target for terrorist attack. On the night of June 2, 1919, a terrorist was killed while planting a bomb on Palmer's doorstep. The same night, similar attempts were made against a number of other public officials throughout the country, but without causing loss of life. Undeterred by these events and numerous threats of violence, Palmer pursued his tactics throughout 1919 and early 1920 by continuing his prosecution of "Reds"—those whose sympathies were aligned with the Soviet red flag and philosophy of communism. In the fall of the same year, after several hundred members of the Union of Russian Workmen were arrested and tried for espionage, 250 of them were deported to Russia. Just a few months later, on the morning of January 2, 1920, more than 3,000 other foreign suspects were arrested by order of the attorney general in various cities. Many of them were found guilty of conspiring against the United States and then deported. None of the raids, however, revealed any plot to overthrow the government.



- **How did Palmer go about trying to rid the country of so-called "Reds"?**
- **Do you think any innocent people were hurt by Palmer's actions?**
- **Why do you think Palmer so energetically arrested possible "Reds"?**
- **In your opinion, did Palmer have reason to arrest so many people?**

At first people were swept up in the frenzy of intolerance and fear and responded enthusiastically to Palmer's actions. Eventually, though, a growing number of Americans became concerned about violations of constitutional rights. Some public officials, such as former Supreme Court justice Charles Evans Hughes, spoke out against Palmer's tactics. By late 1920, most people lost their enthusiasm for such raids as it became obvious that no revolution had broken out.



- **What was the public's reaction to the Palmer raids at first?**
- **Why did people speak out against Palmer? Why might that have been a risk?**
- **Do you think the United States was ever at risk of being overtaken by communists?**
- **From Palmer's viewpoint, to what extent does the United States benefit from a diversity of people and ideas? Why?**



Biographical Briefing on Hiram Wesley Evans

Directions: The following information will help your group prepare for the press conference, in which one of you will play Hiram Wesley Evans and the rest of you have other roles to play. To prepare for the press conference, each group member reads a section of the handout and leads a discussion of the questions following that section.

Hiram Wesley Evans was born into a poor family in Ashland, Alabama, on September 26, 1881. His family moved to Texas when he was in elementary school. He graduated from a small high school in Hubbard, Texas. He then studied dentistry and opened a successful family practice in Dallas, Texas. But dentistry was not Evans' main interest: political power was. He saw the local Ku Klux Klan (KKK) chapter as a place to begin forming a political power base. The KKK's anti-black, anti-Jewish, anti-union, and anti-immigrant views appealed to Evans. Shortly after the Klan's drive for members in 1920, Evans became head of the Dallas Klavern. His followers liked him for his frankness and practicality, as well as for his rousing speeches before the public. One Klansman said Evans could convince the average Klansman "that Jesus wasn't a Jew."



- **Where was Evans born? Where did he grow up? What profession did he enter?**
- **What was Evans' main motivation for becoming active in the KKK?**
- **What strengths did Evans have as a leader? Why were these strengths ideally suited for an organization like the KKK?**

After a short term as Great Titan of Province #2 in Texas, Evans moved to the KKK's Imperial Palace headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, and assumed the role of national secretary. He quickly made friends with David Curtis Stephenson, a leading Klansman in Indiana. The two concocted a plan to wrest control of the Klan from the alcoholic and aging Imperial Wizard William Joseph Simmons. During a national Klan convention, or Klonvokation, in November 1922, Evans and Stephenson convinced Simmons that it would be best to allow Evans to be elected Imperial Wizard and leave the "greater powers of Emperor" to Simmons. Simmons later regretted his actions, and fought Evans bitterly. But in the end, Simmons lost the battle and Evans then became the all-powerful Imperial Wizard of the Klan. In spite of the nastiness of the Simmons-Evans fighting and the negative press coverage it received, the Klan's membership reached a peak under Evans.



- **How did Evans become Imperial Wizard?**
- **Why do you think Klan membership grew under Evans?**
- **What do you think motivated Evans to work so hard to rule the KKK?**

As the Klan's popularity rose under Evans' leadership, so did its violent excesses. Lynchings, bombings, and harassment increased. But Evans downplayed these and tried to increase the Klan's political strength. Governors and senators were pressured into voting for more restrictive immigration laws. The Klan's greatest show of political strength came in the election of 1924 at the Democratic National Convention in New York. When anti-Klan senator and presidential candidate Oscar Underwood condemned the KKK as a "hooded and secret organization" menacing America, pro-Klan demonstrators broke out in jeers and protests. The demonstration that followed is reported to have been the most violent brawl ever to occur inside a national convention hall. By the end of 1924 Evans had scored a political victory for the Klan: the entire nation was aware of the organization and heatedly discussing its merits and flaws.



- **Was Evans able to turn the KKK into a respectable political force?**
- **What did the KKK do to disrupt the 1924 Democratic convention? What do you think Evans hoped to gain by this?**
- **Why was 1924 such a good year for the Klan?**

Evans remained the Imperial Wizard of the Klan throughout the 1920s. He wrote several books and scores of articles describing the Klan's philosophy. Not only was the Klan anti-black, anti-Jewish, anti-union, and anti-immigrant, but it also opposed those with radical political views. In the following section of a 1926 article from the *North American Review*, Evans rallied against "alien" ideas such as communism and socialism: "Alien ideas are just as dangerous to us as the aliens themselves, no matter how plausible such ideas may sound. Ideas which may be perfectly healthy for an alien may also be poisonous for Americans."



- **What types of "alien" ideas do you think Evans opposed?**
- **Why was Evans afraid of "alien" ideas? Can an idea be poisonous?**
- **From Evans' viewpoint, to what extent does the United States benefit from a diversity of people and ideas? Why?**

Evans remained the Imperial Wizard until the mid 1930s. With the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Klan became even more stridently anti-communist, anti-union, and anti-black. Evans presided over an organization that now regularly terrorized blacks with beatings and lynchings, burned crosses on the lawns of union organizers, and even killed a pair of young people caught in Atlanta's lovers' lane for reportedly having premarital sex. In 1936, in the midst of these violent beatings and murders, Evans resigned, announcing that the Klan was bankrupt. A few years later he was arrested and convicted for bribing Georgian state officials to buy paving asphalt from him. He spent the later part of his life paying his fines.



- **Do you think Evans approved of the violent nature of the Klan?**
- **Why do you think the Klan became more violent in the 1930s?**
- **Why did Evans leave the Klan and what eventually happened to him? What does that say about the type of person Evans was?**



Biographical Briefing on Bartolomeo Vanzetti

Directions: The following information will help your group prepare for the press conference, in which one of you will play Bartolomeo Vanzetti and the rest of you have other roles to play. To prepare for the press conference, each group member reads a section of the handout and leads a discussion of the questions following that section.

On May 5, 1920, a shoemaker by the name of Nicola Sacco and a fish peddler by the name of Bartolomeo Vanzetti were arrested in Massachusetts at a memorial service for a fellow anarchist. Both Sacco and Vanzetti were anarchists; that is, they believed the government did not serve the people and should be abolished. They were both Italian immigrants who could not speak English very well. And they had both avoided the World War I draft because of their political beliefs. At the time of their arrest, both men were carrying loaded guns.



- **Who were Sacco and Vanzetti? Where were they born? What work did they do?**
- **What political beliefs did Sacco and Vanzetti hold?**

Vanzetti was charged with a payroll holdup that had occurred earlier in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. The judge in the case was the Honorable Webster Thayer, a wealthy Bostonian who opposed all radical political views and actions. Despite only the thinnest of circumstantial evidence and 30 witnesses saying Vanzetti was not present in Bridgewater at the time of the crime, the jury found Vanzetti guilty of the holdup. Judge Thayer later commented on Vanzetti's guilt in light of his anarchist beliefs: "This man, although he may not actually have committed the crime attributed to him, is nevertheless morally culpable because he is the enemy of our existing institutions."



- **What was the crime Vanzetti was charged with committing?**
- **Does it sound as if Vanzetti had a fair trial? Explain.**
- **What was Judge Thayer's reaction to the guilty verdict against Vanzetti? Why might he have had that response?**

In the spring of 1921 another trial was held involving Vanzetti. This time both Vanzetti and Sacco were accused of an April 20, 1920 robbery in which the paymaster and a guard at a factory in South Braintree, Massachusetts, were shot to death. Judge Thayer presided at this trial, too. The evidence against the pair was mixed. Some witnesses placed Sacco and Vanzetti at the scene of the crime. Others, including the Italian Consulate, said they were elsewhere. The most damaging evidence given was that Sacco was carrying a gun that could have fired one of the bullets that killed the guard.



- **For what crime were Sacco and Vanzetti tried in the spring of 1921?**
- **How did testimony in the trial conflict?**
- **Who was the presiding judge in the Sacco and Vanzetti trial?**
- **What was the most damaging evidence against Sacco and Vanzetti?**

During the 1921 trial, Sacco and Vanzetti were defended by Fred Moore, a famous labor lawyer. Moore assumed that Sacco and Vanzetti were not likely to get justice in the courtroom, so he put more effort into focusing national attention on the trial than into making legal points to show their innocence. For example, he did not pursue the testimony of an expert who claimed the bullets found at the murder site were “consistent with being fired by Sacco’s pistol.” The district attorney and the judge had erased all doubts of Sacco and Vanzetti’s innocence from the jurors’ minds. The jury deliberated six and a half hours before they found both men guilty. Many people believed the two men had not received a fair trial, and the case caused protests and appeals for the next six years. Judge Thayer denied all motions for a new trial.



- **What tactics did Moore use to help defend Sacco and Vanzetti?**
- **Were Moore’s tactics successful? Why or why not?**
- **If you had been Moore, what would you have done differently?**

On April 9, 1927, as Judge Thayer prepared to sentence the two, Vanzetti claimed in his final remarks that he and Sacco had been convicted primarily because of their anarchist beliefs: “We were tried during a time that has now passed into history. I mean by that, a time when there was hysteria of resentment and hate against the people of our principles, against the foreigner, against slackers, and it seems to me—rather, I am positive of it—that both Judge Thayer and Mr. Katzmann [lawyer for the prosecution] has done all what it were in your power in order to work out, in order to agitate still more the passion of the juror, the prejudice of the juror, against us....” Nonetheless, Judge Thayer upheld the verdicts and sentenced the men to death by electrocution. So many protests were mounted in response that Massachusetts governor Fuller granted a one-month reprieve and appointed the Lowell Commission to examine the evidence. The commission upheld the verdict. Protests and riots erupted in response, and the U.S. flag was burned in capitals around the world. Finally, after seven years of uproar and court appeals, on August 23, 1927, Sacco and Vanzetti were electrocuted. Many felt that they had been executed more for their immigrant status and radical political views than because of the weight of evidence against them. Many Americans claimed, however, that Sacco and Vanzetti had received the full protection of the law.



- **What was the main idea behind Vanzetti’s remarks to the court?**
- **From Vanzetti’s viewpoint, to what extent does the United States benefit from a diversity of people and ideas? Why?**
- **What sentence did Judge Thayer give Sacco and Vanzetti?**
- **What was the worldwide effect of Judge Thayer’s decision?**



Biographical Briefing on William Du Bois

Directions: The following information will help your group prepare for the press conference, in which one of you will play William Du Bois and the rest of you have other roles to play. To prepare for the press conference, each group member reads a section of the handout and leads a discussion of the questions following that section.

William Du Bois was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, on February 23, 1868. His father was a vagabond who left his young family when Du Bois was only a boy. Du Bois was thus raised by his mother, who worked as a housekeeper to support William and his half brother. By the time he was 15 years old, Du Bois was a writer for the *New York Globe*. His success at such a young age impressed some wealthy people in his town, and they arranged to pay for his education at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee—a black university with a white faculty. At Fisk, Du Bois experienced for the first time the presence of a large black community, and at the same time a distinctly segregated American society. After growing up in a town with very few blacks and feeling the sting of discrimination, Du Bois embraced his fellow African-American classmates at Fisk, “Into this world I leapt with enthusiasm: henceforward I was a Negro.” Du Bois’ sense of identity was mixed. He described feeling a sense of “twoness,” a revelation that he was a part of American society and yet separated from it by his race.



- Describe William Du Bois’ childhood.
- How was Du Bois able to attend Fisk University?
- Can you imagine the “twoness” that Du Bois felt at Fisk? Describe it in your own words. Have you ever felt this way about something?

Du Bois graduated from Fisk in 1888, but continued his studies. His senior paper was on Otto von Bismarck, the great German leader who formed a unified Germany “out of a mass of bickering peoples.” Du Bois saw the unification of Germany as a model for the black community in the United States. He believed that with intelligent leadership and scientific knowledge about how societies function, black people could be bonded together and solve their problems as a group. After earning his master’s degree in 1891, Du Bois studied and traveled in Europe for several years.



- What impressed Du Bois about Otto von Bismarck?
- How did he think Bismarck’s ideas could apply to the United States?

After returning from Europe, Du Bois earned his Ph.D. in history. In 1896 he married Nina Gomer, then he went to the University of Pennsylvania, where he began an intensive study

of the black community in Philadelphia. His study resulted in a book, *The Philadelphia Negro*, published in 1899. In it, he argued that the most capable blacks, the “aristocracy of the race,” should assume a leadership role in changing the face of black society. Du Bois believed that the top ten percent, the most educated and gifted blacks, should lead the black masses to greater equality and freedom. In 1905, Du Bois founded the Niagara Movement to organize the African-American elite. The group called for the elimination of all forms of class differences based on race or color, equal employment opportunities, universal voting rights, a free black press and the recognition of human brotherhood.



- **What did he propose as a way for blacks to improve their society?**
- **What do you think of Du Bois’ ideas about the “aristocracy of the race”?**
- **What was the Niagara Movement? What were its goals?**

In 1897 Du Bois joined the faculty of Atlanta University, a black university in Georgia. There, he started an annual Conference for the Study of Negro Problems. Du Bois’ philosophy differed from that of black leader Booker T. Washington, who believed black people should adapt to their position in white-dominated society rather than protest racism. Du Bois was outraged by the treatment of blacks in America, and wanted to achieve change.



- **What was the purpose of the Atlanta conference?**
- **How did Du Bois’ views differ from those of Booker T. Washington?**

In 1909 Du Bois helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Du Bois spoke out against discrimination and encouraged vigorous protest, writing: “Agitate then brother; protest, reveal the truth and refuse to be silenced.” When Washington died in 1915, Du Bois became the chief spokesman for black civil rights. However, in the 1920s Marcus Garvey emerged as a rival. Garvey, a dark-skinned Jamaican, preached a message of racial pride and separation. He criticized Du Bois for cooperating with whites, implying that Du Bois, a man with some European ancestry, was hypocritical: “Sometimes...he is French...another time he’s Dutch, and when it is convenient, he is Negro.” Du Bois largely ignored these attacks and continued his work. In 1926 Du Bois traveled to the Soviet Union, openly admitting his attraction to socialism, with its emphasis on government ownership of industry and worker control. He came to believe that a fully integrated socialist society could achieve racial and economic equality. Du Bois joined the Communist Party in 1962 and died in Ghana, a nation in West Africa, in 1963.



- **Describe Du Bois’ work for the NAACP.**
- **Why was Marcus Garvey critical of Du Bois?**
- **Why was Du Bois attracted to socialism?**
- **From Du Bois’ viewpoint, to what extent does the United States benefit from a diversity of people and ideas? Why?**



Biographical Briefing on Judge Webster Thayer

Directions: The following information will help your group prepare for the press conference, in which one of you will play Judge Webster Thayer and the rest of you have other roles to play. To prepare for the press conference, each group member reads a section of the handout and leads a discussion of the questions following that section.

Webster Thayer, a superior court judge, was born in Blackstone, Massachusetts, on July 7, 1857. When he was a boy, he moved with his wealthy parents to Worcester, Massachusetts, where he attended Worcester Academy and went to college at Dartmouth. After graduating from college, he helped his father in the wholesale meat business for a few months before going to law school. He was admitted to the bar in 1882 and began practicing law in Worcester.



- **Where was Thayer born and raised?**
- **How would you describe Thayer's early life?**
- **How might Thayer's early life—limited to the state of Massachusetts—have affected his later decisions as a judge?**

As a lawyer, Thayer excelled in marshalling (putting in order) the facts of his cases. He was also skilled in the art of cross-examination, but never abused witnesses. In 1917 he was appointed a judge of the superior court in Massachusetts and tried many important cases, although no special fame marked his work. In 1921 he attained worldwide prominence when he was assigned to try the case of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, immigrants from Italy who were charged with murdering a factory paymaster and his guard in a payroll robbery at South Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1920.



- **What was Thayer's profession? How did he become a judge?**
- **What type of judge had Thayer been up until the time of the Sacco and Vanzetti case?**
- **What was the Sacco and Vanzetti case about?**

The Sacco and Vanzetti case was one of the most celebrated in American history. The evidence in the case was far from conclusive. Judge Thayer listened to hundreds of witnesses and experts give contradictory testimony. During the trial, protesters around the world took up the cause of Sacco and Vanzetti. Both Sacco and Vanzetti were avowed anarchists. An *anarchist* is a person who believes that government does not serve the people and should be abolished. Many people, including several distinguished lawyers, believed the anarchists would be convicted because they were Italian and held unpopular political views. An equally vocal group argued that their conviction would be a warning to other radicals. Supporters

raised a large fund for their defense, which was used to hire able attorneys and circulate millions of pamphlets about the case.



- **How would you describe the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti?**
- **Why did many believe Sacco and Vanzetti were being tried unfairly?**
- **Why did others believe that the conviction of Sacco and Vanzetti would be a positive step for the United States?**

Judge Thayer and the U.S. judiciary system were roundly criticized for being biased during the trial. Indeed, many of Thayer's actions supported such charges. Thayer often discussed the case outside the courtroom. According to George Crocker, who frequently lunched with the judge, Thayer "conveyed to me by his words and manner that he was bound and determined to convict [Sacco and Vanzetti] because they were 'Reds' [anarchists]." A veteran court reporter said, "In 35 years I never saw anything like it.... His whole attitude seemed to be that the jurors were there to convict these men." Throughout the trial Thayer's rulings favored the prosecution's case. At the end of the trial, Judge Thayer convicted the two defendants and unleashed a fury of worldwide protest. The American embassies in Paris and Buenos Aires and the consul at Montevideo were bombed. Judge Thayer received hundreds of letters threatening the lives of his family and himself. Thayer did not bend, though it was necessary to keep both him and his home under constant guard. He refused five times to set aside the conviction. The Massachusetts and the U.S. Supreme Courts both refused to intervene. On April 9, 1927, he sentenced Sacco and Vanzetti to death.



- **Why was Thayer criticized for being biased during the case?**
- **What was Thayer's final conviction in the case? What worldwide repercussions did that conviction have?**
- **Why was Thayer put under constant guard during and after the trial?**
- **From Thayer's viewpoint, to what extent does the United States benefit from a diversity of people and ideas? Why?**

After Judge Thayer's final conviction, a committee headed by President A. Lawrence Lowell of Harvard was appointed by the governor of Massachusetts to review the proceedings. The Lowell Commission reported that the defendants had received a fair and impartial (unbiased) trial. It also refused to recommend a commutation of the sentence and on August 23, 1927, Sacco and Vanzetti were electrocuted. Judge Thayer's conduct during the case was approved of by many people in the United States, but he continued to receive threatening letters. In September 1932, his home was destroyed and his wife and maid injured by the explosion of a bomb, which many suspected was placed by sympathizers of Sacco and Vanzetti.



- **What was the Lowell Commission? What did it find?**
- **Why do you think Sacco and Vanzetti sympathizers criticized the Lowell Commission?**
- **How did the case continue to affect Thayer?**



Biographical Briefing on Charles Evans Hughes

Directions: The following information will help your group prepare for the press conference, in which one of you will play Charles Evans Hughes and the rest of you have other roles to play. To prepare for the press conference, each group member reads a section of the handout and leads a discussion of the questions following that section.

Charles Evans Hughes, chief justice of the Supreme Court between 1930 and 1941, was born in Glens Falls, New York, on April 11, 1862. Hughes studied at home under the guidance of his parents until age nine, when he attended public schools in Newark, New Jersey. He went on to get a law degree from Columbia University, and then joined a major New York City law firm. Hughes first gained prominence in 1905, as counsel to New York State legislative committees investigating abuses in the gas and electric power industries and in life insurance businesses. The next year, with the aid of President Theodore Roosevelt, he defeated the flamboyant publisher William Randolph Hearst in the race to be governor of New York. Though he was reelected governor in 1908, Hughes resigned to accept an appointment to the Supreme Court of the United States.



- Describe the career path that led Hughes to the Supreme Court.
- In what type of legal cases did Hughes involve himself as a young lawyer? How might this have affected his later career?

In 1916 Hughes was nominated for the presidency by the Republican Party. He resigned from the Supreme Court at the outset of the campaign. Although he went to bed on election night thinking he had won the election, he was defeated (277 electoral votes to 254) by Woodrow Wilson, who had the advantage of the popular belief that he had kept the nation out of the war in Europe.



- To what political party did Hughes belong?
- How close did Hughes come to winning the presidency in 1916?
- Why was Wilson able to defeat Hughes? If you were Hughes, how would you have reacted to being defeated by Wilson?

During World War I, Hughes helped President Wilson investigate corruption in the Army's aircraft production program. After the armistice ending the war, Hughes returned to his neglected law practice and argued many cases before the Supreme Court. He represented John Lewis and the United Mine Workers of America in two cases before the court and argued several other cases in which he supported the common laborer against large business interests. In 1920, when the New York Assembly refused to seat five duly elected Socialist

members out of intolerance for leftist political beliefs, Hughes became involved. He asserted that the assembly's refusal to accept the Socialists was a gross miscarriage of justice and he began a legal battle to reverse the assembly's action. Although the assembly rejected his plea, he succeeded in arousing public opinion against hysterical decisions of this sort.



- **How did Hughes serve President Wilson and the United States during World War I?**
- **What legal battle did Hughes fight with the New York Assembly in 1920? What was the outcome?**
- **Although he lost his case against the New York Assembly, what did Hughes gain? What do his actions say about intolerance in the 1920s?**

During the Red Scare of 1919 and early 1920, socialists, communists, and other radicals were frequently harassed by individual citizens and local authorities who feared their organizations and did not accept their political beliefs. Immigrants, especially those from eastern Europe, were often the targets of such harassment. Many Americans feared that the communist ideas of the Russian Revolution had spread to eastern Europe and would infiltrate American society. In response to public demands for action to suppress such ideas, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer organized a series of raids to arrest suspected communists. In January 1920, over 6,000 people in 33 cities were seized. Almost none had committed any crime, and the raids revealed no plots to overthrow the government. Nonetheless, of those arrested, about 550 were deported. Hughes spoke out against Palmer's tactics, saying, "The Attorney General has abused his power and the Constitution. Arresting people for their political beliefs is by itself unconstitutional. But basing those arrests on nothing more than the identity of a person by national origin and then deporting him without the least bit of legal evidence is immoral."



- **What was Hughes' reaction to the Palmer raids?**
- **Why do you suppose Hughes spoke out against Palmer, one of the most powerful men in the country at that time?**
- **Why do you think Hughes spoke out against intolerance?**

In late 1920, President Warren G. Harding appointed Hughes as secretary of state. Hughes served in the position until he was appointed chief justice of the United States Supreme Court in 1930. In the 11 years he served, Hughes led the Supreme Court through the great controversy arising over President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal social legislation.



- **What positions in government did Hughes hold after 1920?**
- **From Hughes' viewpoint, to what extent does the United States benefit from a diversity of people and ideas? Why?**



Biographical Briefing on John L. Lewis

Directions: The following information will help your group prepare for the press conference, in which one of you will play John L. Lewis and the rest of you have other roles to play. To prepare for the press conference, each group member reads a section of the handout and leads a discussion of the questions following that section.

John Llewellyn Lewis, labor leader, was born in Lucas, Iowa, on February 12, 1880. His father, a miner, emigrated from Wales to the United States in 1875 in search of a better life. At the age of 17, having left public school in the eighth grade, he joined his father in the Iowa coal mines. From 1901 to 1906, he was employed mining copper in Montana, silver in Utah, coal in Colorado, and gold in Arizona and Mexico. He returned to Lucas in 1906 and went to work in nearby coal mines.



- **Describe Lewis's upbringing. How might his childhood have affected his later life as a labor leader?**
- **How much education did Lewis have? Do you think this caused any problems for him later in life?**

In 1909, Lewis moved to Panama, Illinois, and was elected president of the local United Mine Workers of America (UMW). Following a mine disaster in which 160 miners lost their lives, Lewis appeared before the state legislature to fight for mine safety laws. The labor leader Samuel Gompers was so impressed by his dynamic qualities and gift of leadership that he appointed him to a job with the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in Washington, DC. Working at the AFL gave Lewis legislative experience and strengthened his position in the UMW. In 1917 Lewis was elected vice-president of the UMW. During World War I he sat as a member of the National Defense Council and opposed suggestions that the U.S. government assume control over operation of the coal mines.



- **What personal characteristics led to Lewis's job with the AFL?**
- **What jobs did Lewis hold with the UMW?**
- **What did Lewis do during World War I?**

In 1919, UMW president Frank J. Hayes became too ill to lead the union through the turbulent 1920s, and Lewis became acting president. As acting president, Lewis called a coal strike in November 1919, after operators refused to meet miners' demands for a 60 percent wage increase, a six-hour day, and a five-day week. Lewis defied a federal court injunction forbidding a strike, and he and 83 other officials were cited for contempt. During the strike, approximately 425,000 men stopped working in the mines at the beginning of the winter.

This led to a coal shortage, and the government used wartime powers to assert control over coal distribution. In response, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer secured a court order against the strike. Lewis then urged the miners to return to work, but they refused. Settlement was reached only after Lewis traveled to the White House and conferred with President Woodrow Wilson. Lewis emerged from the meeting to say that he would no longer fight his government, the greatest government on the earth. The strike ended with the miners receiving pay increases from 20 to 34 percent.



- **What was Lewis's role in the famous coal strike of 1919?**
- **How did Lewis help settle the coal strike?**
- **Was Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer tolerant of Lewis's attempts to better the life of coal miners? Why or why not?**

During the strike, Lewis was accused of being a communist. Such accusations had a great effect on Lewis, a life-long Republican. He developed strong anti-communist attitudes and later blamed labor violence during strikes on communist agitators. Lewis constantly battled against the labor radicals (socialists and communists) in the union. During his tenure, Lewis sent a strong message to government and business owners alike: give the UMW what it wants and John Lewis will keep the radicals from taking control of organized labor.



- **Why did people accuse Lewis of being a communist?**
- **What affect did being labeled a communist have on Lewis's beliefs?**
- **Was Lewis a victim of the intolerance of the 1920s? Was he intolerant himself? Explain.**
- **From Lewis's viewpoint, to what extent does the United States benefit from a diversity of people and ideas? Why?**

In 1920 Lewis was elected president of the UMW, a post he held until his retirement in 1960. In this position he was a bold leader. His nerve and potent hatreds were of legendary scale, and his massive presence was formidable: he had a wild mane of hair, heavy eyebrows, and a growling, melodramatic voice. He often made allusions to Shakespeare's writings. "They are smiting me hip and thigh, and right merrily I return the blows," he said after a Gallup poll had found him to be the most unpopular man in the country. His ruthless use of the strike, undeterred by the national interest in time of war, by court order, or by government seizure, won him little support from the public at large. But concern for his public image was second to his concern for improving the lot of the coal miners, who had been vulnerable to the repressive, often brutal methods of large mining companies. The UMW stood unified behind Lewis for his 40 years as president, during which he never called a strike they could not win.



- **What personal characteristics did Lewis bring to his position?**
- **What was the public's image of Lewis?**
- **Why did the UMW support Lewis so loyally for 40 years?**



Biographical Briefing on Marcus Garvey

Directions: The following information will help your group prepare for the press conference, in which one of you will play Marcus Garvey and the rest of you have other roles to play. To prepare for the press conference, each group member reads a section of the handout and leads a discussion of the questions following that section.

Marcus Garvey, an early leader in the struggle for black identity, was born in a small, poor town on the northern coast of Jamaica on August 17, 1887. Garvey attended a local elementary school and received additional schooling at an Anglican Church grammar school. Bright and gifted in the use of language, he avidly read as many books as he could find. At the age of 14, family financial difficulties obliged him to leave school to become a printer's apprentice. This training sharpened his journalistic skills, which became very important to him later in life.



- **Where was Garvey born? How was he educated?**
- **What early training did Garvey have that would help him later in life?**
- **How do you think Garvey's early life might have helped him develop empathy for poor, uneducated blacks?**

In 1904, at the age of 17, Garvey began working in Kingston, the island's capital, as a printer. He left Jamaica some years later to work on a United Fruit banana plantation in Costa Rica and on newspapers in Port Limón and Colón, Panama. These experiences made him grow increasingly concerned about the humiliating discrimination and exploitation facing black people. When he returned to Jamaica in 1914, he launched the organization that occupied all of his time and energy for the rest of his life, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). The association was aimed at "drawing the peoples of the race together" through education, the promotion of racial pride, worldwide commercial activity, and the development of Africa.



- **How did Garvey's travels help him find his life's work?**
- **What association did Garvey found in 1914? What were the goals of that association?**

Two years after forming the association, Garvey moved to New York to organize a chapter of the UNIA. In January 1918 he began publishing a newspaper, *The Negro World*, which quickly became one of the leading African-American weeklies and a highly effective vehicle for the advancement of his black nationalist ideas. These included the development of a black nation within the United States by establishing separate institutions, such as churches,

schools, and businesses. The response to Garvey's vivid exhortations (appeals) for racial pride and solidarity was almost electric. By 1920 he had many thousands of followers and there were scores of UNIA divisions chartered throughout the United States and abroad.



- **How did Garvey reach black America with his message of racial pride and black nationalism?**
- **Why do you think blacks were so quick to follow Garvey?**
- **How did Garvey spread his influence throughout the United States?**

Garvey's message of pride and courage was appealing. "We have died for five hundred years for an alien race," he declared. "The time has come for the Negro to die for himself." Thousands of poor and uneducated blacks sent Garvey donations and his treasury swelled to over \$10 million. Black leaders, however, warned the black community not to give him their scarce funds: "Do not take desperate chances in flighty dreams." Garvey used part of the money he collected to buy three ships and organized the Black Star Line. His idea was to use the ships to transport emigrés back to Africa, and to bring trade items from America to his African kingdom. The scheme fell through, and the government charged him with using the mail to defraud prospective shareholders. In 1923, a federal court sent him to prison for five years. In 1927 President Coolidge pardoned him and deported him back to his native Jamaica. His movement quickly collapsed, but it left a lasting imprint on black society.



- **How did Garvey raise funds for his projects?**
- **What was Garvey's idea for the Black Star Line? What happened to it?**
- **From Garvey's viewpoint, to what extent does the United States benefit from a diversity of people and ideas? Why?**

In the eyes of the admiring black world, the daring Garvey had accomplished something unique in race history. He had created a fleet of ships, operated by a black company and manned by black crews, to link the scattered black peoples of the world who had been taken from Africa during slavery. It was a daring dream, and it buoyed the hopes of discouraged African Americans following the bloody race riots that occurred in the summer of 1919. As Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer was rounding up suspected communists and deporting them to Europe, white Americans in many cities and some rural areas were battling impoverished blacks in race riots around the nation. Many blacks wondered if the persecution of Garvey by U.S. authorities had more to do with racial intolerance than it did with legitimate concern for justice.



- **Why did the Black Star Line raise blacks' hopes in the summer of 1919?**
- **How were relations between whites and blacks immediately following World War I?**
- **How was Garvey affected by the intolerance of the 1920s? Do you think his actions contributed to racial tolerance or to racial intolerance?**



Biographical Briefing on Ida B. Wells

Directions: The following information will help your group prepare for the press conference, in which one of you will play Ida B. Wells and the rest of you have other roles to play. To prepare for the press conference, each group member reads a section of the handout and leads a discussion of the questions following that section.

Ida Bell Wells was born to slaves in 1862 during the American Civil War. In her youth in Holly Springs, Mississippi slaves became free and her father, a carpenter, joined the ranks of African-American males who exercised newly granted political rights. During the brief period of Reconstruction, blacks took on political jobs, including becoming sheriffs, Aldermen, and even U.S. senators. Young Ida participated in these political happenings by reading the newspaper to her father and listening to lively political discussions. Wells' relatively happy and stable youth was cut short at age 16 when both her mother and father died of yellow fever. For the next several years, Wells supported five younger brothers and sisters by teaching in a rural school near Holly Springs.



- **How do you think the events of Wells' youth might have affected her beliefs and her behavior as an adult?**
- **What event cut Wells' youth short? How did she support the household?**

Wells continued her teaching career in a small town near Memphis. Her train ride to school was routine until one day when Wells refused to comply with a new law that required blacks to sit in a segregated, or separate, car along with the smokers. Wells fought three white men as they dragged her from her regular rail car. She filed suit against the railroad, won her case in a lower court, and wrote an article challenging others to stand up for their rights. The article was well received and Wells began a career as a crusading journalist, writing boldly and passionately under the pen name "Iola" for hundreds of black-owned publications around the country. Eventually, she was known as the "Princess of the Press."



- **What happened to Wells during her train ride to school?**
- **Why do you think Wells refused to comply with the segregation laws?**
- **How did Wells' resistance to segregation affect her career?**

In the 1880s Wells' circumstances and outlook soured. Wells' victory over the railroad was overturned by a higher court. Laws requiring strict segregation were passed, and in state after state throughout the South blacks lost the right to vote. But for Wells, the worst came in 1892 when she learned that Tom Moss, a dear friend and good and decent man, had been lynched by a mob of masked white men. Tom Moss's murder changed Wells' life. She spoke out so stridently against lynching that she was run out of Memphis and had to resettle in New York.

From there, Wells began a one-woman crusade against lynching. Her research revealed that in the previous ten years, 728 black men and women had been killed by mobs. Some had been shot, others hung, still others burned or dismembered. She spoke eloquently on the issue on both sides of the Atlantic, using graphic language in her speeches and exhibiting agonizing photographs of some of the victims. Wells' courage in speaking out against lynching brought her considerable fame. Frederick Douglas, a leading black figure, acknowledged her contribution when he wrote, "Brave woman! You have done your people and mine a service that can neither be weighed or measured."



- **What setbacks to civil rights did Wells observe in the late 1800s?**
- **How did Moss's lynching impact Wells' life? Why do you think many blacks did not speak out against lynching?**
- **How do you think many Southern whites might have responded to Wells' writing and speaking?**

In 1895 Ida Wells married and became Ida Wells-Barnett. She and her husband settled in Chicago, where she bore and raised four children. In addition to tending to her family responsibilities, Ida continued to work for justice. She helped found the National Association of Colored Women in 1896. Later, in 1909, Wells was one of only a few black women to be involved in the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Wells was deeply disappointed when only one black was named an officer to this organization—William Du Bois. Wells was considered too radical to be a member of the guiding committee for the NAACP. As a result, she felt that she had been betrayed by the white founders who were supposed to be champions of civil rights.



- **What two national organizations did Wells help found?**
- **Why was Wells disappointed with the NAACP?**

In the 1920s conditions for African Americans worsened, but Wells continued her activism. During World War I blacks had served America in Europe to "make the world safe for democracy" but had returned to a society caught up in a frenzy of intolerance. Lynchings increased during the decade, and the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was on the march again to spread anti-black sentiment. Race riots, often instigated by whites, erupted throughout the country. Wells responded to this intolerance by courageously speaking out for civil rights and protection just as she had in the past. Wells was often the first journalist to arrive on the scene of a riot to report the sometimes indiscriminate killing of African-American citizens. Wells continued her political activity until her death in 1931.



- **What were some of the problems facing blacks in the 1920s?**
- **From Wells' viewpoint, to what extent does the United States benefit from a diversity of people and ideas? Why?**