

# American Rise to Global Power and Isolationism (WWI — 1940s)



# United States

## War Expenditures & National Income

Nation	Expenditures	National Income (1914)
British Empire	\$23 billion	\$11 billion
France	\$9.3 billion	Unavailable
US	\$17.1 billion	\$37 billion
Germany	\$19.9 billion	\$12 billion

Source: <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/us32.cfm>

# United States

- Came out economically stronger than any other country
  - Gave loans to European nations to rebuild country
- Best hope for peace in the U.S. is to stay out of European affairs
  - Congress voted against League of Nations and Treaty of Versailles
  - **Isolationism**
- Non-interventionism
  - WWII



# isolationism

“to remain alone  
or be separated  
from others”

“-tion”

The act of, or the  
state of

“-ism”

:idea, a state, policy

A (foreign) policy of avoiding political/military involvement and its affairs with other countries

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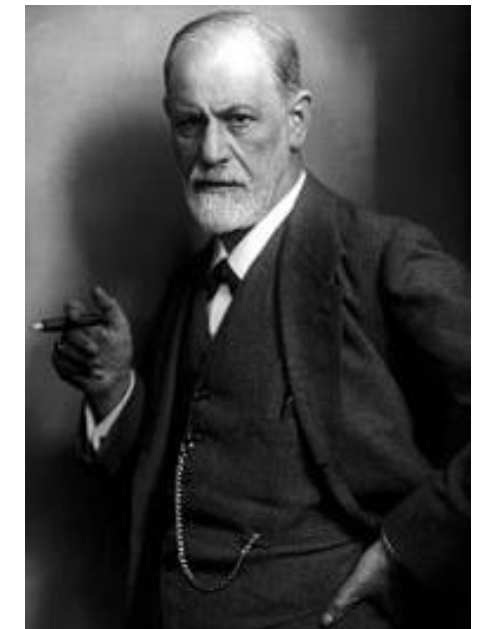
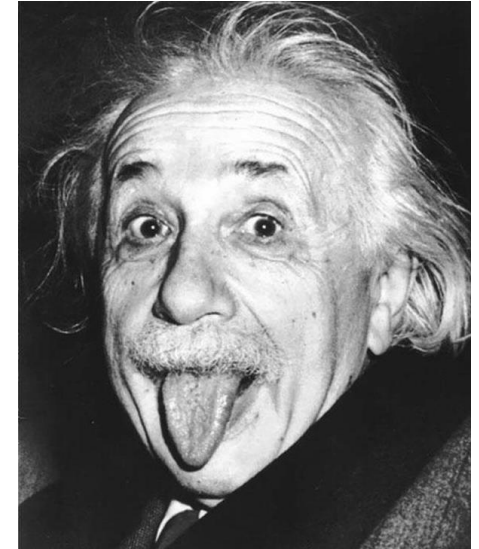
# An Age of Uncertainty “YOLO?” (Post-WWI Years, 1920s-1930s)



# Age of Uncertainty

After WWI, new ideas developed as people became disillusioned about the world and its old ideas

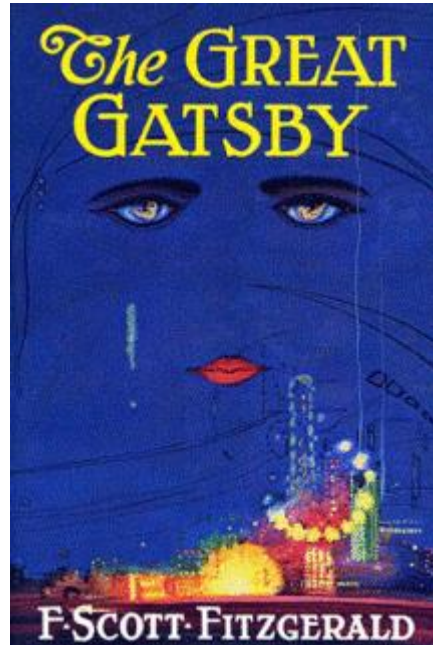
- **Einstein** and his ideas
  - Theory of Relativity
    - Space and time dependent on relative object
  - Modern physics
  - $E=mc^2$ 
    - Relationship between mass and energy
    - “World’s Most Famous Equation”
- **Sigmund Freud**
  - Theory of the human mind
  - id – pleasure
  - ego – reality
  - super-ego – morality & values of society



# Literature and Philosophy

Questioned accepted ideas about reason and progress. Critical of the world around them

- T.S. Eliot
  - Poetry
- Ernest Hemingway
  - “A Farewell to Arms”
- F. Scott Fitzgerald
  - “The Great Gatsby”



## Existentialism

- No universal meaning to life
- Find meaning through choices made and actions (experience)
- #YOLO
- Jean Paul Sartre
- Friedrich Nietzsche
  - “God is dead”
  - Look at other ideas



“We think of what has disappeared, and we are almost destroyed by what has been destroyed; we do not know what will be born, and we fear the future...Doubt and disorder are in us and with us. There is no thinking man, however shrewd or learned he may be, who can hope to dominate this anxiety, to escape from this impression of darkness.”



What kind of feeling do you get from this passage?

- Paul Valéry, *Variétés*

# Life & Society

## Technology

Brought the world closer and became more **interdependent**

- Cars
  - Became more affordable
  - Greater ease of travel
  - Suburbs
- Air Travel
- Radio
- Movies



# Life & Society

## Society

- Jazz
- #YOLO
- Women sought greater freedom

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48jUyAK\\_4Uo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48jUyAK_4Uo)

