

The Roaring Twenties



& THE GREAT DEPRESSION

OUTLINE

A (Partial) Cultural Approach of:

- ❁ How They Got to the Crash of 1929
- ❁ The Crash Itself (autonomous work, CdL)
- ❁ The Great Depression and its Remedies



How They Got There



The Roaring Twenties

The Age of Jazz

- After WW I, and the Spanish Flu epidemic (22 million victims, twice as many as the casualties in the 1st WW), people were ready to have some **fun**.
- The 1920s were a decade of **massive societal changes**, which included (amongst other things) **women's rights** (19th amendment introduces female suffrage in 1920), **new consumer habits and behaviors**, new kinds of **music** and a generally very **optimistic** outlook on life.

BLUE SKIES - The Anthem of the Era

Creating the American Consumer

The Rise of Credit



"Buy now, pay later" became a powerful motto during the Jazz Age.

This motto even applied to the stock market:

"Buying on margin" > putting down 10% of the value of a share and borrowing the remaining 90%, a system which works only as long as confidence reigns.



Speculation, A National Sport



A Symbol of the Times: the Flapper



The Gibson Girl



Feminine ideal > 1890s
Moderately emancipated,
athletic, independent,
educated but not (never!) a
suffragette.

The Flapper



"Flap": young and careless, like a young bird.

Smoked, wore lots of makeup, danced in nightclubs, listened to jazz, wore short skirts, drank (prohibition!) and dated men indiscriminately.

A potent symbol of emancipation, though not all Flappers were feminists or suffragettes.

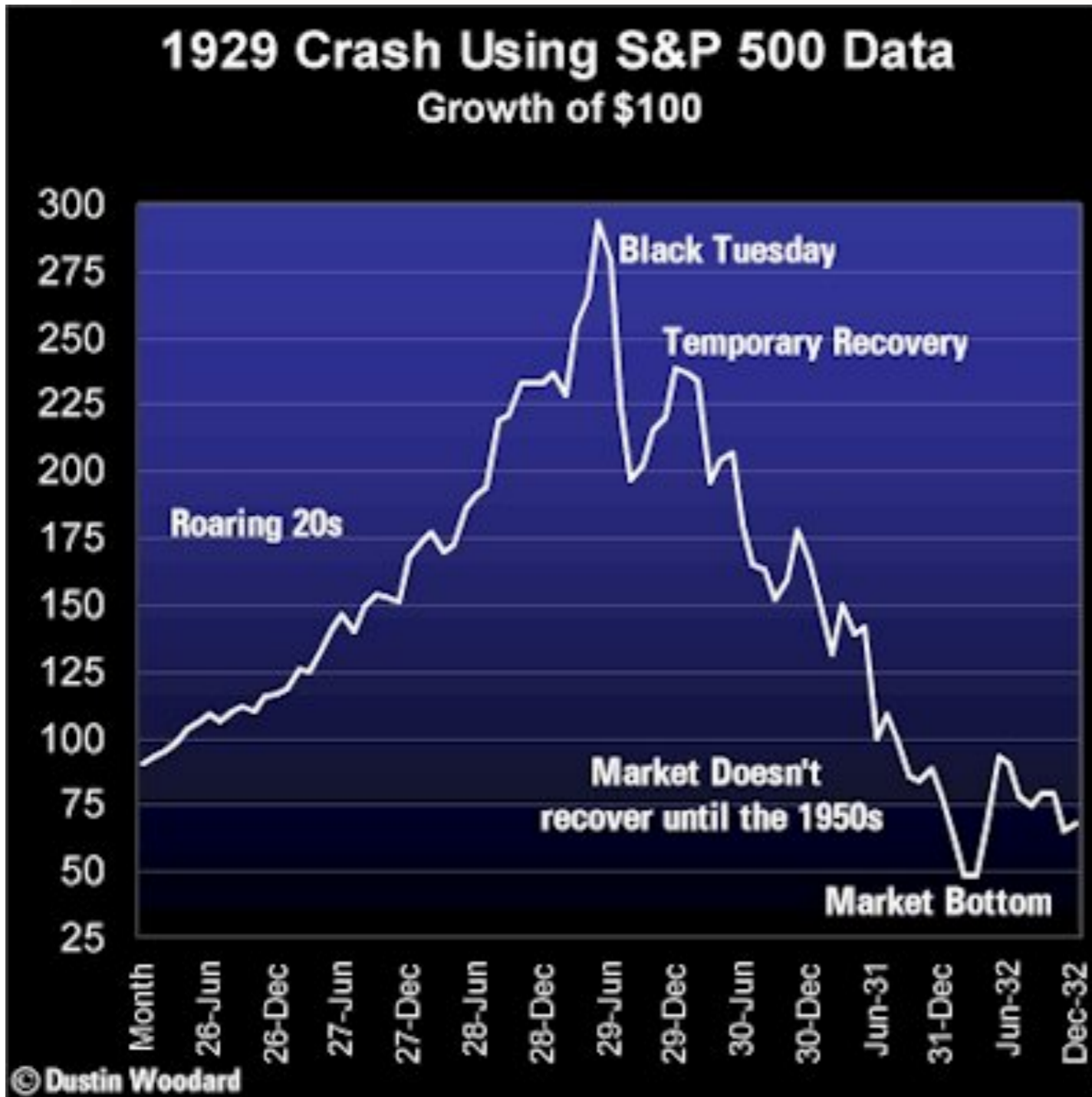
The Dark Side of the Flapper



The Flapper also embodied the rising consumer culture, the desire for immediate gratification, careless - sometimes even reckless - spending, speculation and superficiality

Previous generation suffragettes considered many Flappers bad heirs.

The 1929 Crash



The 1929 Crash

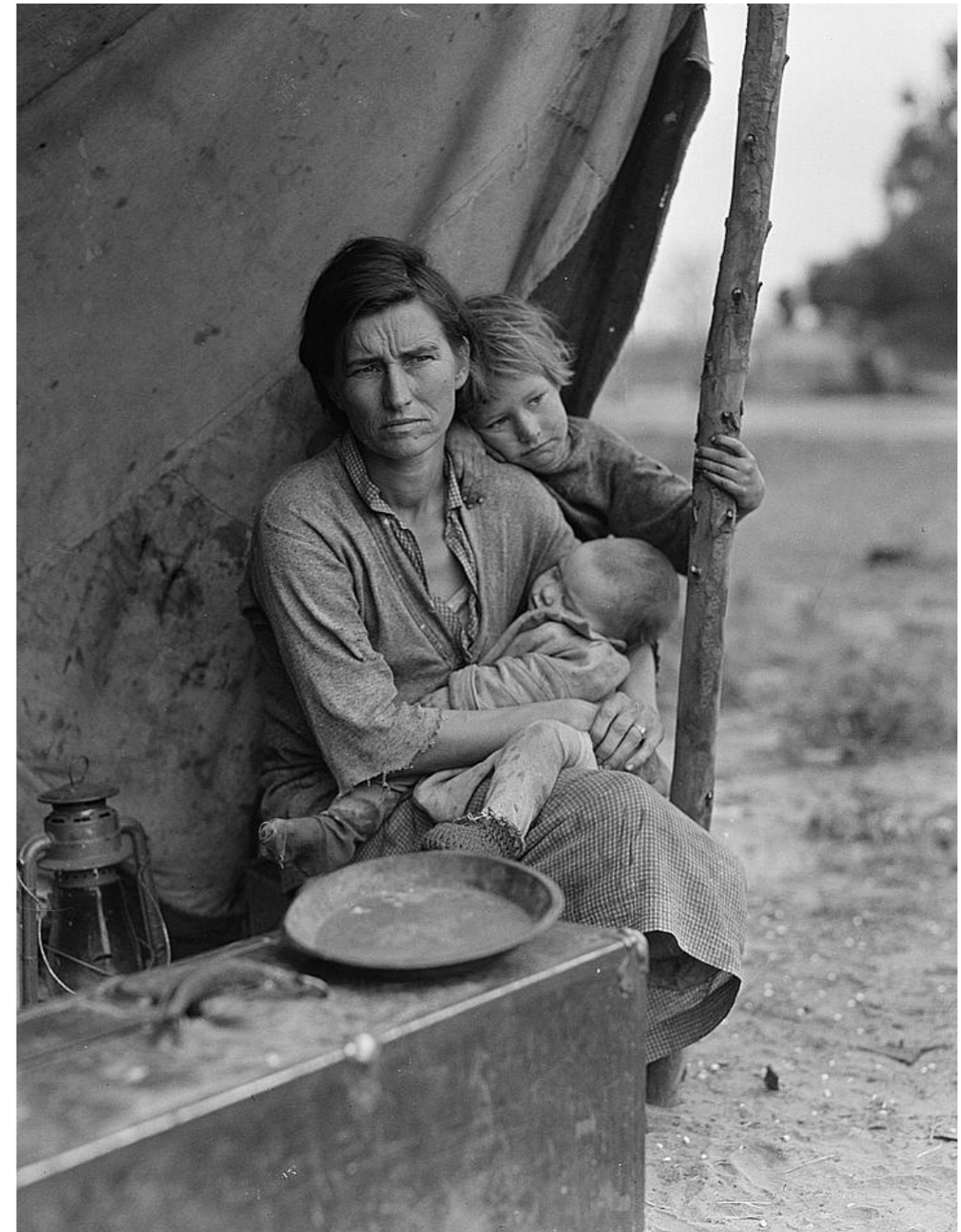
REMINDER:

Autonomous work on the CdL:

<http://centredelanguages.ens-lyon.fr/centredelanguages/espace-etudiants/sabine-remanofsky/semestre-2/m1-m2/key-moments-in-american-history-ii/the-1929-crisis-in-popular-culture/autonomous-work-the-1929-crisis>



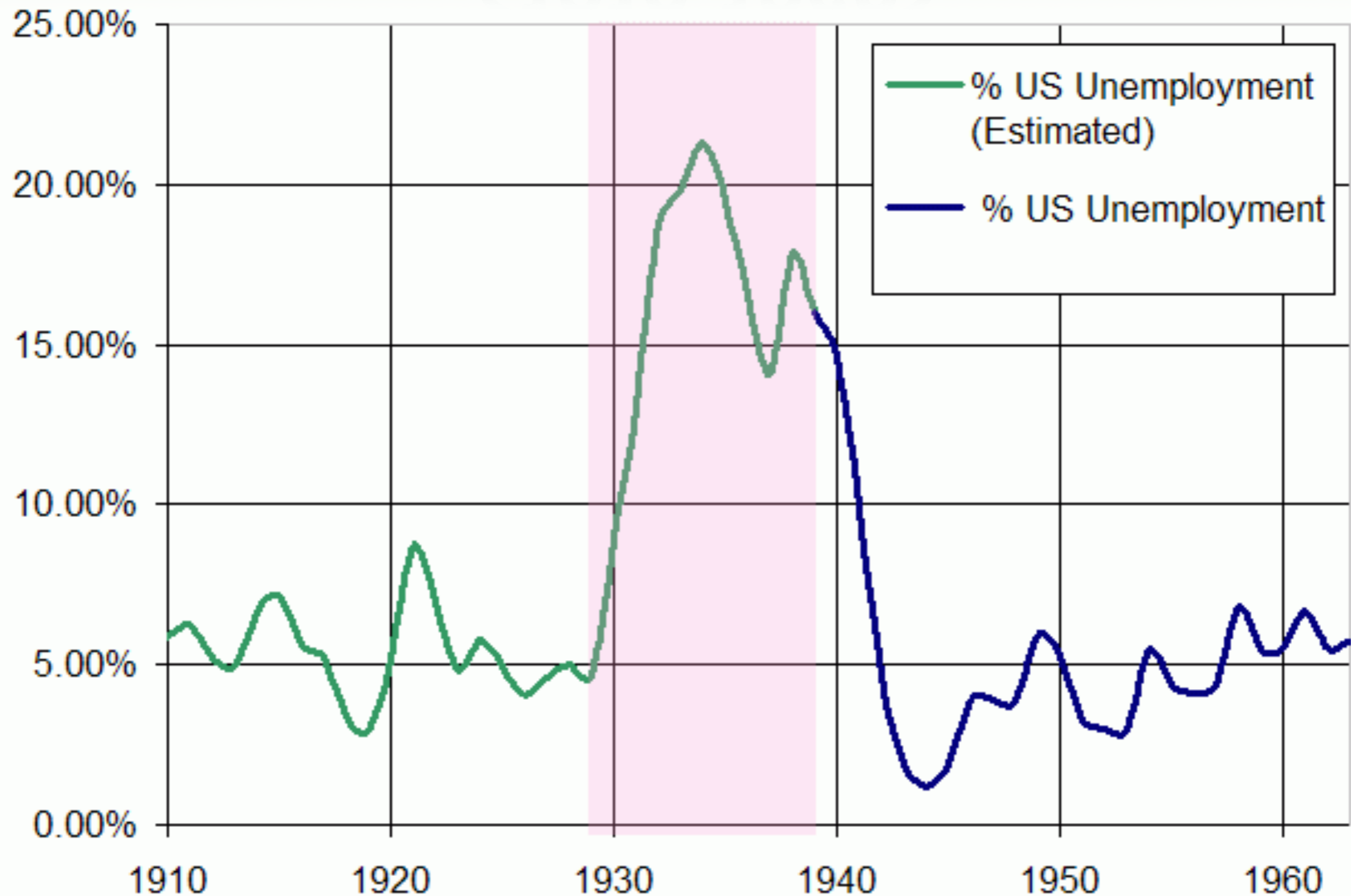
The Great Depression



Dealing with the crisis

Unemployment rate in the US (1910-1960)

(1910-1960)



1. The New Deal

- Herbert Hoover loses the 1932 presidential election to FDR
- **FDR's "New Deal" programs** (**1st ND** (1833-34) and **2nd ND** (1835-1838): **NRA** (National Recovery Administration), **NWA** (National Works Administration), **CCC** (Civilian Conservation Corps), **NIRA** (National Industrial Recovery Act) etc...
- For more info about the causes of and remedies to the Great Depression, see McNeese, *The Great Depression*, pp. 28-79)

2. The Dust Bowl



The Dust Bowl - The Causes

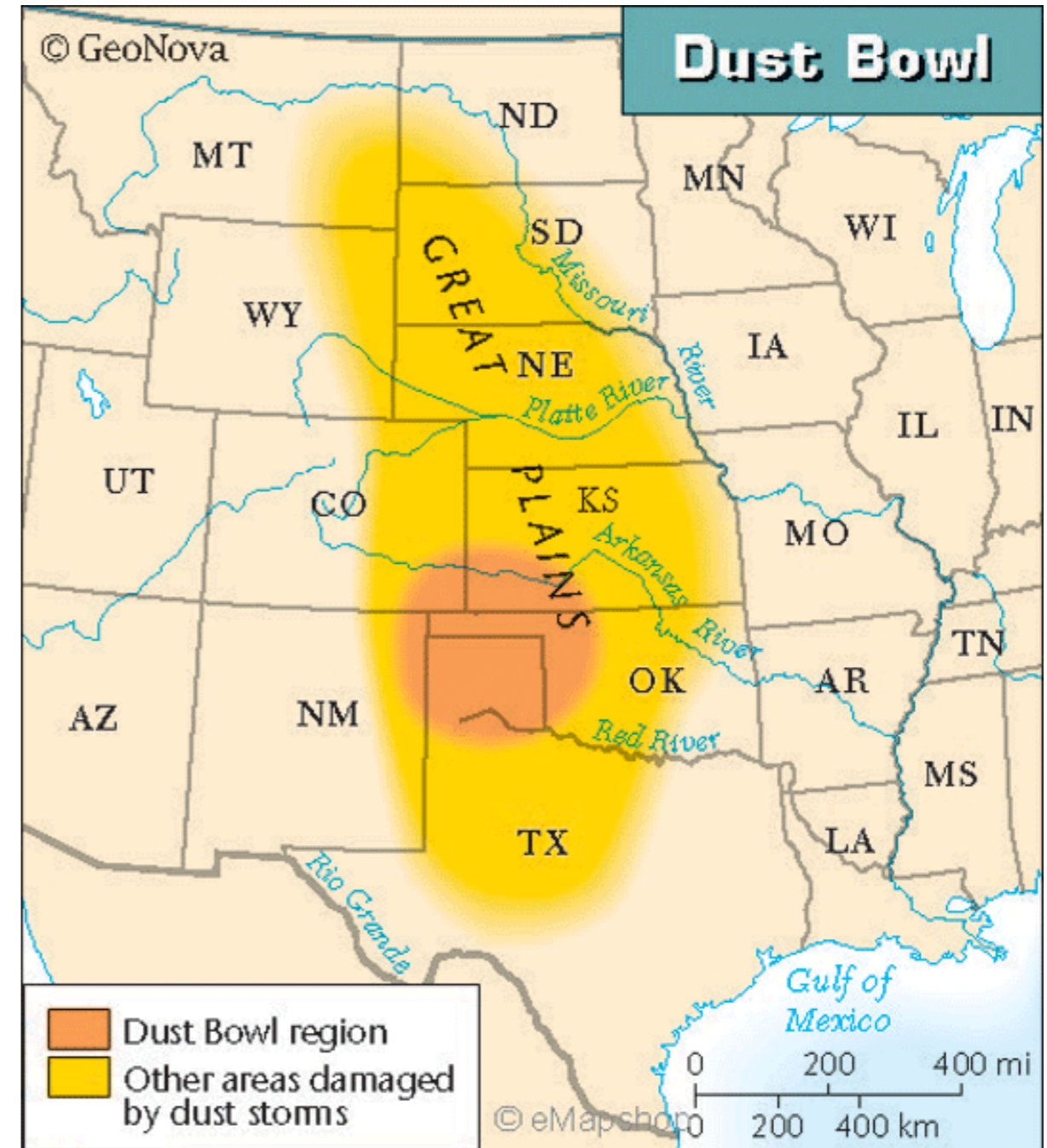
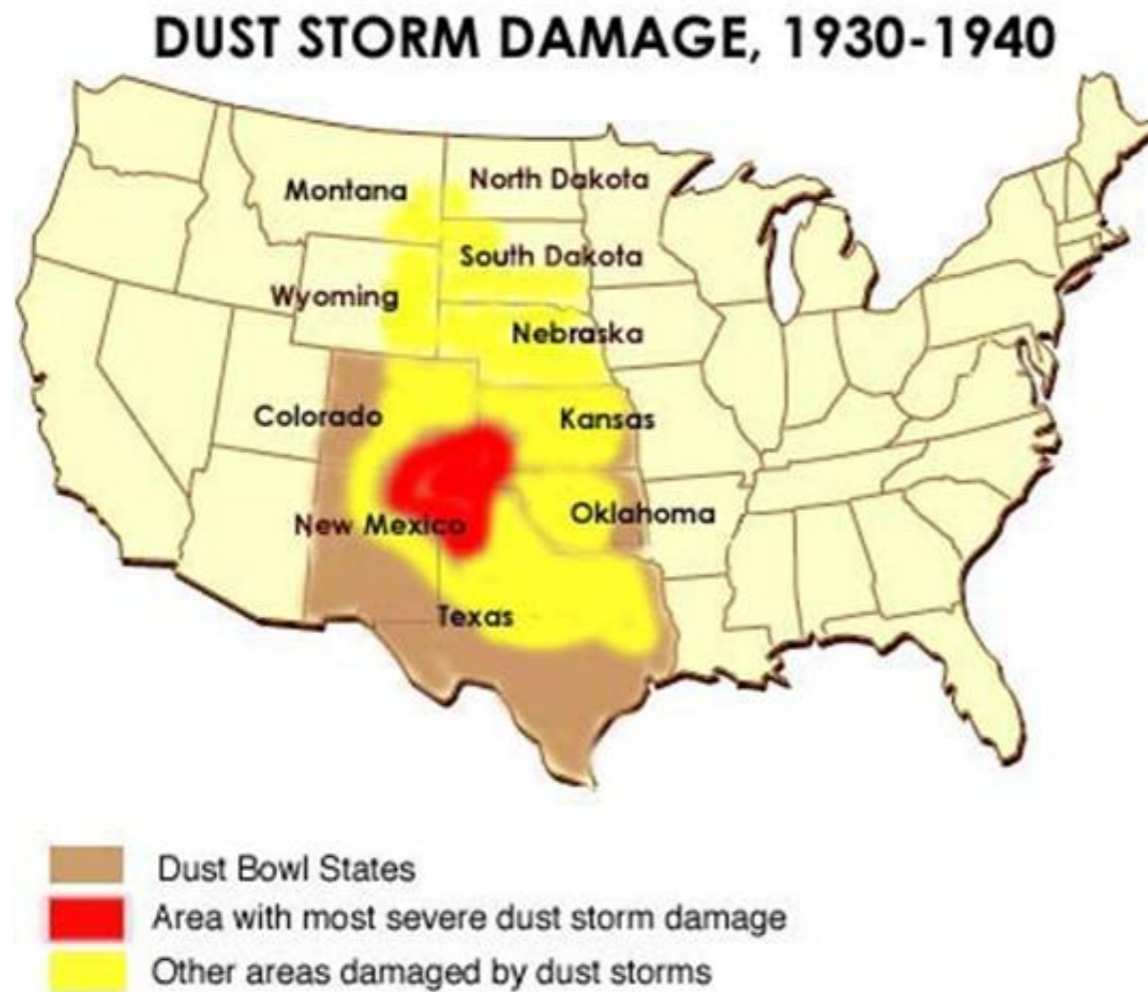
> Intensive farming on grasslands which were ecologically ill-suited for farming to begin with

> + A period of severe drought

This resulted in crop failures, increased drought, dust storms which in turn caused quite a few deaths ("dust pneumonia")

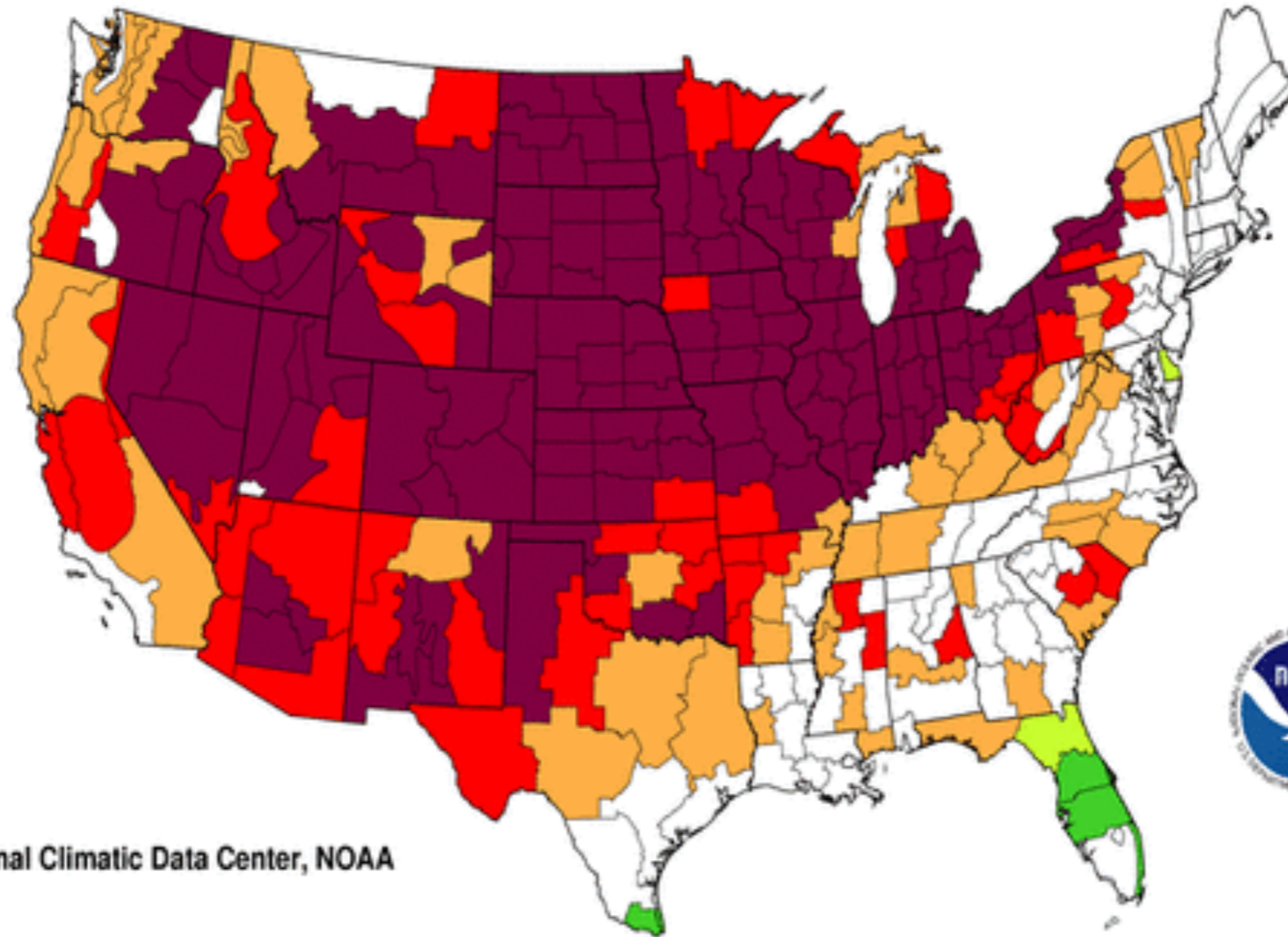
> Solutions: different farming methods, especially terracing to retain moisture and contour plowing

The Geography of The Dust Bowl



Palmer Hydrological Drought Index Long-Term (Hydrological) Conditions

July 1934



National Climatic Data Center, NOAA

extreme
drought



-4.00
and
below

severe
drought



-3.00
to
-3.99

moderate
drought



-2.00
to
-2.99

mid-
range



-1.99
to
+1.99

moderately
moist



+2.00
to
+2.99

very
moist



+3.00
to
+3.99

extremely
moist



+4.00
and
above





16,000,000 ACRES
DISTROYED IN TEXAS BY EROSION
"TERRACE *to* PROTECT YOUR FARM"

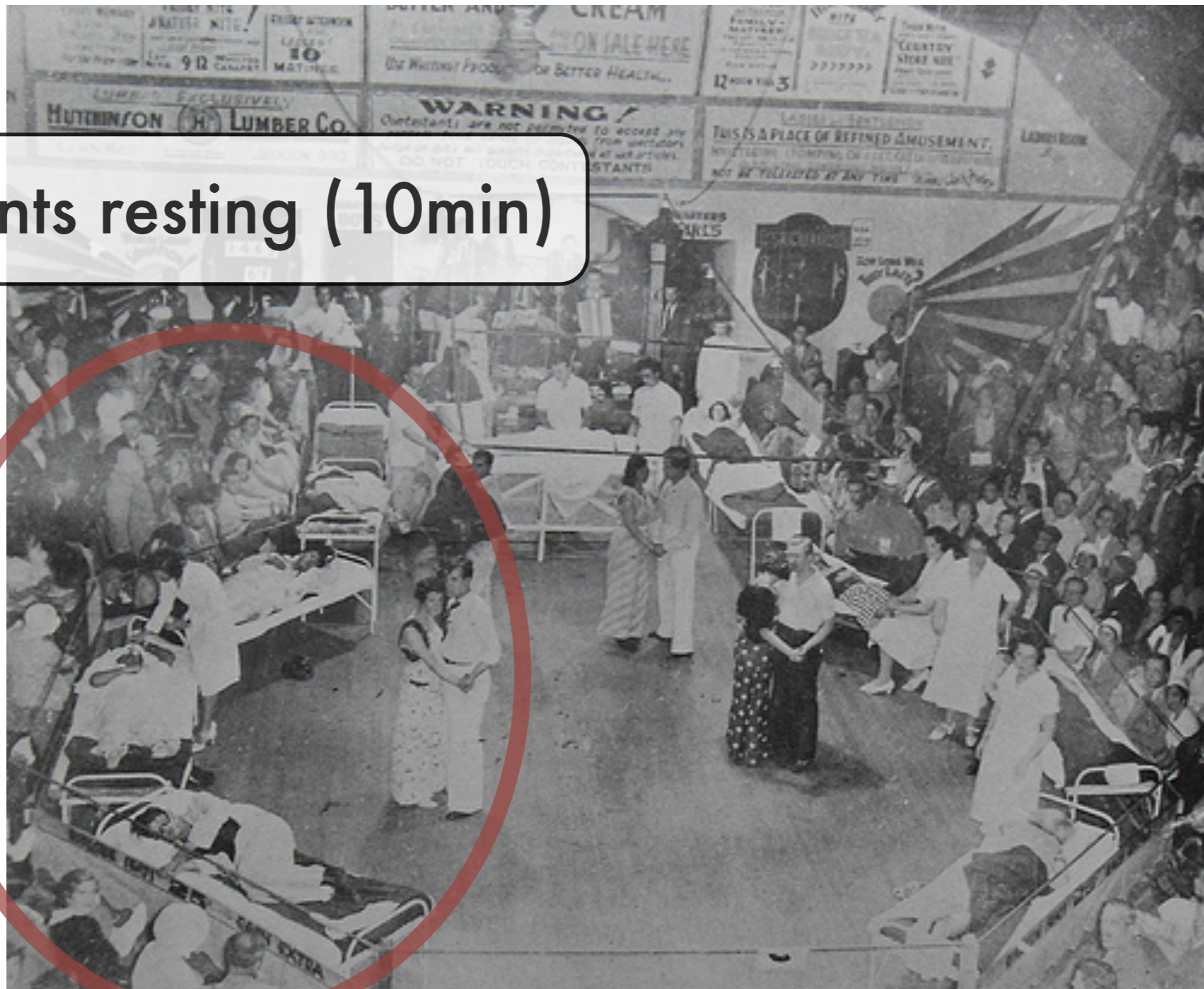
Popular Solutions to the Depression



Popular Solutions to the Depression



Contestants resting (10min)



1930s "Dance Marathons"

Knight of the Rails

The Great Depression Hobo

THE GREAT DEPRESSION HOBO



Knight of the Rails

The Great Depression Hobo

THE GREAT DEPRESSION HOBO



**"Hobo", Norman
Rockwell**

A "jungle"

Knight of the Rails

The Great Depression Hobo

"Hobo" > around since the Civil War (they were called "Hoe Boys" - men who carried a hoe or a shovel from place to place in search of work)

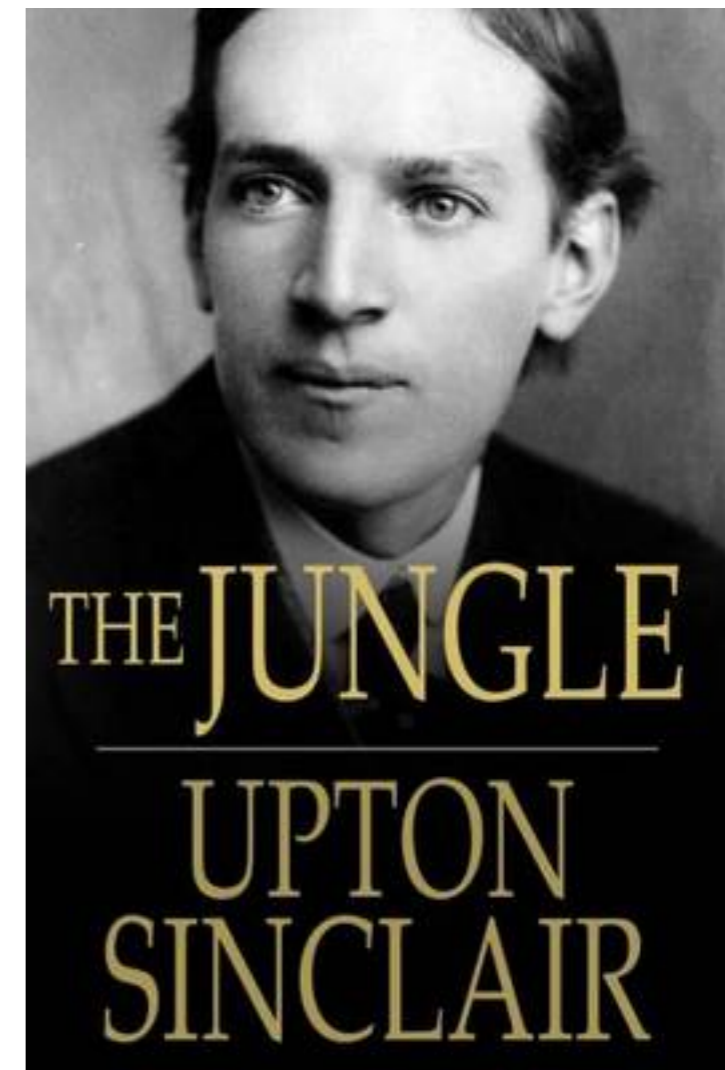
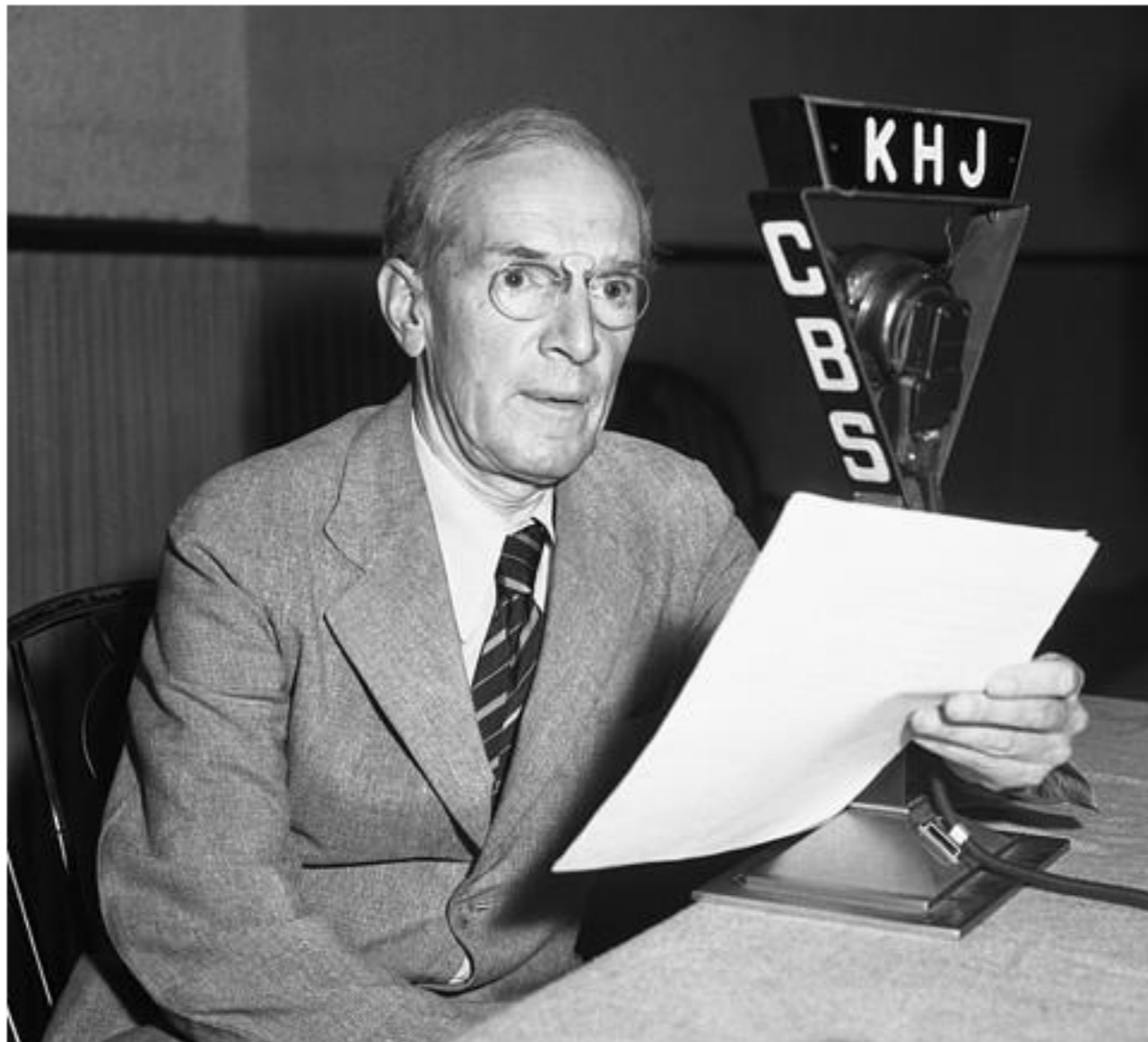
The Great Depression > sharp rise in the Hobo population

Not a bum or a beggar > insisted on *working*

"Freight hopping" > riding the rails illegally

Estimated number of Hobos during the GD > 1.5 mil

Upton Sinclair's EPIC plan





Highlights of the EPIC plan



- > Farms and factories have failed because they were devoted to production for profit, rather than use.**
- > Sinclair: production for use (the unemployed would work the idle farms and factories, consume what they produced and only sell the surplus if there was any)**
- > Redistributive measures: higher income tax, steeper inheritance tax, pensions for the old, the needy and widows.**

The Reaction to Sinclair's EPIC plan

KEEP CALIFORNIA THE GOLDEN STATE

We, the undersigned firms and individuals, believe that the welfare of California is dependent on the preservation of the fundamental principles of Liberty, Justice and Common-sense, as set forth in the Constitution of our Country. We believe that the adoption of the unsound and impractical theories which comprise Upton Sinclair's so-called "Epic" Plan will result in irreparable injury to our People, our Churches, our Schools, our Social and Moral Standards.

POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT



Upton Sinclair Says:
"But now the Social Revolution is coming; coming upon swift wings. And who knows but that we may see in America that wonderful sight which we saw in Russia."

Let's Keep
the
American
flag flying
at the
State Capitol

Elect

**FRANK
MERRIAM**

The Reaction to Sinclair's EPIC plan



The Reaction to Sinclair's EPIC plan

"California, Here We Come!"



Dustbowl
Oakies
migrating to
California

Freight
Hopping
Hobo

"If I am elected Governor, I expect one-half of the total unemployed in the United States will hop the first freights for California."—Upton Sinclair.