

US History

Social & Political History of the 1920s

Learning Target:

I can identify and examine four main problems facing post-war America, nativism & isolationism, the Red Scare, labor unrest, and race relations.

4. Postwar Issues - Race Relations

The Great Migration North –

1920s Migration –

- 800,000 blacks migrated north to join the hundreds of thousands who did so during WWI
- Large black communities developed in cities like Chicago, Detroit, & NYC
- Northern cities mostly did not welcome the influx of blacks
- Summer of 1919 saw 25 urban race riots in cities like Chicago

Why Move?

- Wanted better economic opportunities and less discrimination
- Blacks first to lose jobs in the north during early recession of the 20s

African American Rights Organizations –

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) –

- Formed in 1909 to fight for equality for blacks
- During the 1920s their focus turned toward anti-lynching legislation
- Lynching** – a form of violence, usually execution, outside the law to terrorize and intimidate a group of people

Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) –

- Formed by Marcus Garvey - believed blacks would never achieve equality in the US
- Promoted forming a new nation in Africa for African Americans
- Marcus Garvey – Founder UNIA and supported black nationalism

-2 Goals of UNIA –

1. Create black economic independence through black-owned businesses
2. Establish a new nation or homeland for African Americans in Africa

The Harlem Renaissance –Literary & artistic movement celebrating African American culture

Harlem, NY

- Became the world's largest black urban community
- Residents came from the South, the West Indies, Cuba, Puerto Rico, & Haiti
- Many considered it the capital of black America

Literature

- The Harlem Renaissance was driven by literature that expressed pride in black culture
- Also highlighted the trials of being black in a white America
- Langston Hughes – famous poet whose works often described the difficulties of working-class African Americans

Performing Arts

- Many shows launched black actors and singers' careers
- Shuffle Along* – black musical comedy who launched Josephine Baker's career

Jazz Music

- Started in New Orleans using ragtime music and vocal blues
- Louis Armstrong – became the most influential musician in jazz history
- Quickly spread to NY, Kansas City, Memphis, & Pittsburgh (Hill District)
- Other famous musicians included Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway

Influence

- The Harlem Renaissance put African Americans on the country's cultural stage
- Many aspects such as jazz crossed over to white America
- Showed a growing pride in black culture in America's black community

The Return of The Ku Klux Klan –

Reestablishment of the Klan –

- Had been officially dissolved during Reconstruction
- Newly established in 1915 by a preacher named William Joseph Simmons at Stone Mountain, GA

Why did the Klan come back?

- Gained popularity due to racism and the Red Scare
- Targeted blacks, Catholics, Jews, and radicals such as communists
- Staged mass rallies, carried out kidnappings, beatings, and lynching

The Fall of the Klan –

- Rapid rise in early 1920s came with a rapid decline in the late 1920s
- Decline happened due to:
 - Lessening of the Red Scare
 - Publicity about Klan violence and terrorism
 - Corruption and scandal internally in the Klan