

15.7

Social Issues of the 1950s

As a Young Historian, I will be able to...

- Summarize the arguments made by critics who rejected the culture of the fifties.
- Describe the causes and effects of urban and rural poverty.
- Explain the problems that many minority groups faced in the postwar era.

Critics & Rebels

People believe that while material conditions were better, the quality of life had not improved

Sociologists believed that Americans had sacrificed their individuality in order to fit into larger communities

Themes of “alienation” were present in everything from novels to films

Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* described the plight of the suburban housewife

Beatniks

Beatniks- Group of artists & writers who criticized American society

Novels such as Alen Ginsberg's *Howl* & Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* attacked materialism & conformity

James Dean & Marlon Brando became famous actors & role models for disenchanted teenagers

Rock-And-Roll!!!!

Disc Jockey Alan Feed began broadcasting “race” music. It became popular & it was renamed...

Rock-And-Roll- Music with rhythm & blues traditions with a boogie-woogie beat

Elvis Presley became the “King of Rock” sparking a massive rock movement in the country

Congress & Minsters spoke out against it, but the effect it had on mass culture couldn’t be stopped

Poverty in the Country

Behind the wealth, the nation was made up of poverty, urban slums, & discrimination

Michael Harrington believed that 50 million Americans lived in poverty, $\frac{1}{4}$ the nation

While nonwhite minorities moved to cities, the white middle class moved to suburbs

The lack of taxes and declining political powers weakened city governments

Renewal

Urban Renewal- When a government tries to develop projects to update & enrich urban neighborhoods

People would often lose their homes & federal government attempted building homes

Farmers & Miners faced obstacles as companies took jobs & many-faced poverty

Many farmers would relocate to the city causing more strain toward urban areas

Struggles of Minorities

Puerto Ricans migrated to New York city & were crammed into poor inner city neighborhoods

Mexican Americans came to the U.S. to farm during WWII, but were later forced to migrate around the nation

Termination Policy- Major change in the rules governing Native Americans

Goal was to have tribes integrate into society & ended federal health care to reservations