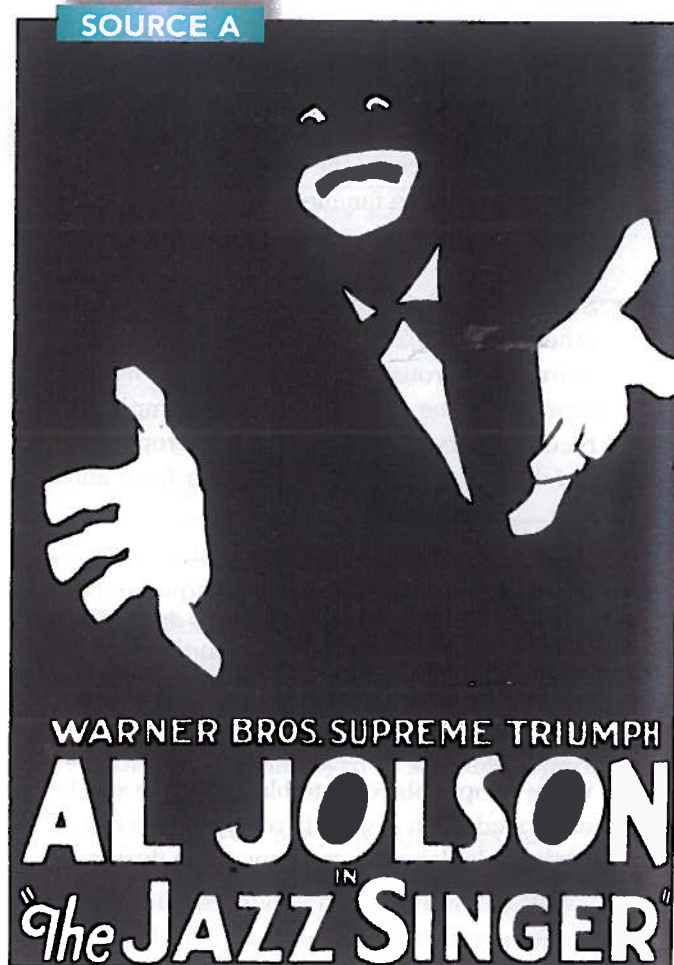


A/ type question .

What does the poster in source A tell you about US society in the 1920s?





SOURCE 12 Mural, *Entertainment*, by Thomas Hart Benton

Changing Morals

An immoral age?

Not everyone was swept away with the glamour of jazz and the movies. Some people thought they encouraged immorality. They thought jazz music, and the dances that went with it, were too sexual. They worried about the lifestyles shown in the movies. Women in the movies smoked and drank. Movies showed crimes being committed. Couples kissed on screen. Critics of the movies argued that this meant that people, especially women, eager to copy film stars would want to start smoking, drinking and kissing (and more) before marriage.

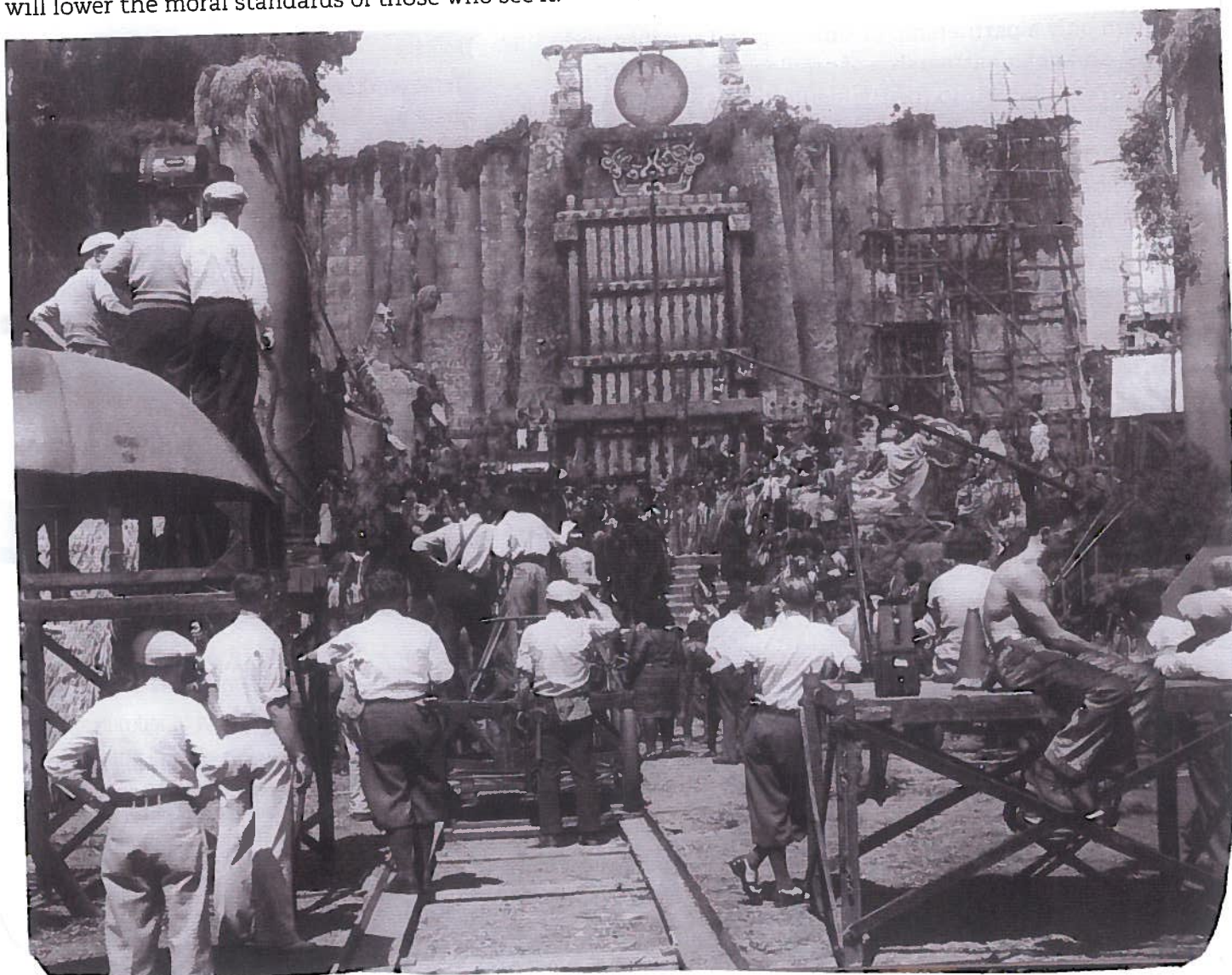
The wild lives of some film stars, reported in movie magazines and the newspapers, gave critics of the movies more ammunition. They said it was time for the movies to have a set of rules that limited what could be shown on screen. In 1930, the Hays Code was published. It set down rules for movies to make sure that, 'no picture shall be produced that will lower the moral standards of those who see it.'

Activities

- 1 a List all the new leisure activities that people spent money on.
b Explain how these leisure activities contributed to the economic boom in the USA.
- 2 Make three inferences about the movie industry from Source C.
- 3 'Sport was the only important leisure activity in the USA in the 1920s.'

Use the sources and the information here to explain whether you agree with this statement.

Source C: *Filming the 1933 movie King Kong. The movie cost about \$650,000 and made over \$4m profit after paying off its costs.*



Sex and the cinema

One of the biggest areas of change and controversy was sexual morals. Sex outside marriage became more common, and contraceptive advice was openly available for the first time. A big gap was developing between the attitudes of young people and their parents.

Young Americans in particular visited the cinema two or three times per week. They were greatly affected by what they saw on screen and by the lives of the 'stars' off screen. People wanted to know what their favourite stars were wearing and doing – and to copy the fads and fashions in their own lives. Studio publicity agents made sure that the magazines got all the information they needed to keep their readers interested.

The much freer sex of the 1920s horrified many older Americans. They blamed the cinema for its blatant use of sex symbols such as Clara Bow and Rudolf Valentino.

They were shocked by the morality in Hollywood films and by the private lives of some of the screen stars. Public scandals, like the mysterious death of a young girl at a party given by Fatty Arbuckle (a famous comic film star), led to a call for censorship. But Hollywood got in first by setting up the Hays code which specified that: 'no film shall be produced which shall lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience shall never be thrown to the side of crime, wrong-doing, evil or sin.' Nudity was not allowed and the length of kisses was restricted.



SOURCE 8 Clara Bow – the 'It' Girl. Everyone knew that it meant sex



SOURCE 10 Rudolf Valentino was the first male star to be sold on sex appeal. The studio publicity machine reported how women fainted when they saw him. When Valentino died tragically in 1926 people filled the streets outside the funeral parlour where the body lay, and 100,000 filed past his corpse. A hundred were injured in the struggle to gain admittance

SOURCE 9 An advertisement for the movie *Alimony*, 1925

“ Brilliant men, beautiful jazz babies, champagne baths, midnight revels, petting parties in the purple dawn, all ending in one terrific smashing climax that makes you gasp. ”

What was meant by 'consumerism'?

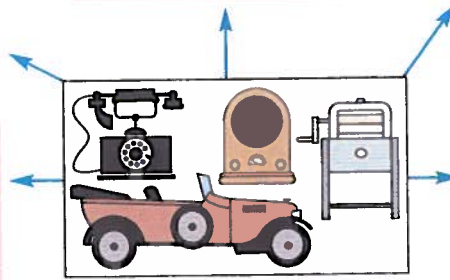
The growth in female employment (page 29) also increased the need for labour-saving devices, such as washing machines and vacuum cleaners.

By 1927 two-thirds of US homes had electricity. This situation stimulated the demand for electrical goods, such as washing machines and vacuum cleaners.

Hire purchase schemes (see page 10) made it easier to buy goods on credit.

Owing to the spread in popular entertainment, more and more Americans bought radios.

For the majority of workers in industry, wages increased. Between 1923 and 1929, the average wage rose by 8 per cent. In other words, workers had more spare money to spend on consumer goods.



The 1920s boom grew rapidly as a wave of consumerism swept the country. Consumerism is the urge to spend money on goods and services. People bought more and more goods and spent more and more money on leisure. This was partly because they had more time and money. Working hours dropped after the war and most wages rose. At the same time, most prices fell. So people could buy more. New industries produced new goods for people to spend their money on.

The power of advertising

Advertising became big business. Adverts on billboards and in newspapers and magazines urged people to spend their money. They used pictures that showed a desirable lifestyle. The words they used tried to convince people that they needed the products in the advert. They also applied pressure by suggesting that by not buying these goods the consumer was in some way letting his family down. The idea of 'keeping up with the neighbours' had arrived.

Soon, advertising was everywhere: on billboards, in shop windows, painted on the sides of buildings. There were adverts on the radio, too. By 1925, 2,700,000 families had a radio, so it was a powerful tool for advertisers. Radio adverts had to be short – advertisers paid by the minute.

Source B: The manager of an advertising firm explains how to appeal to women

Nine-tenths of the goods bought annually are bought by women. Woman is a creature of the imagination. We pay her a compliment when we say this, for imagination comes from the feelings and feelings come from the heart. And so the advertising appeal, to reach women, must not ignore the first great quality of the heart, which is love. Most advertisers do not ignore the quality of love. There, in almost every advertisement, is a reference, in word or picture, to mother love, to the home, to children, to sentiment.

Source A: A magazine advertisement for the latest in record players, from 1920.

Victrola
RECORD PLAYER

Will there be a Victrola in your home this Christmas?

If any one thing more than another can add to the joys of Christmas, it is music—and the Victrola can bring into your home, any music you may wish to hear.

The Victrola is the one instrument to which the greatest artists have entrusted their art—an unanswerable acknowledgment of its artistic achievements. Moreover, the Victrola is the only instrument specially made to play the records which these great artists have made.

Christmas day and any other day through all the years to come, the best or the newest of all the world's music may be yours to enjoy.

By all means get a Victrola this Christmas, but be sure it is a Victrola and not some other instrument made in imitation. \$25 to \$1500. Victor dealers everywhere.

Victor Talking Machine Company
Camden, New Jersey

Did you know?

In 1922, the first radio advert was broadcast; by a radio company looking for advertisers. At first, radio adverts just described the product, then they used slogans. The first radio musical jingle was for Wheaties cereals, in 1926.