

# Was WW1 a war for democracy? Knowledge Organiser

## How democratic was Britain before 1914?

- In 1910, only about **60% of men** had the vote due to restrictions based on gender and property ownership.
- This meant that the **aristocracy dominated voting events**, holding the most political power as well as most of the money.
- Britain also ruled over a vast empire, **23% of the world's population**.

## Did the experience of war change relationships in society?

- Men of different social classes mixed in the trenches, blurring class boundaries. More aristocratic men also died in the war (17% officers died) resulting in **many aristocratic families having to sell their estates due to a loss of heirs**.
- Women were disenfranchised before the war, with the suffragettes and suffragists campaigning for the right to vote. **The Representation of the People Act 1918 enfranchised women over 30.**
- **Women stepped up during the war and carried out jobs** such as munitions workers, proving that they could do the same jobs as men. Although they were expected to go back to being housewives when the war ended, their opinions of themselves and goals had changed.
- Friendships were often formed between men from different countries due to the close fighting quarters. However, **self-determination was still denied to the colonies**, and racial theories persisted.

## Why is WW1 associated with democracy?

- Nationalism, imperialism, militarism and alliances all contributed to causing the war. The Allies argued they were fighting for liberty and democracy.
- Woodrow Wilson outlined his **14 points** of how to ensure lasting peace. His main two ideas were **self-determination** and the formation of the **League of Nations** to help solve disputes through talking rather than fighting.
- Countries such as India fought with the understanding that they would be given self-government after the war – this did not happen for many years.
- **Treaty of Versailles** was supposed to ensure lasting peace and the continuation of democratic ideas.

## World War One was the first 'total war'.

- Western Front stretched across France and saw soldiers of different races and social classes fighting together.
- Home Front had women working for the war effort, rationing and DORA (Defence of the Realm Act 1914).
- Factories were repossessed to make weapons and uniforms.
- 8.5 million troops would die, with an estimated 13 million civilians also being killed

## The state used propaganda to get its message across:

- Posters advocating the use of rationing and encouraging men to enlist.
- Only sharing positive stories of the war, and censoring other sources of information.
- Appealed to nationalistic feelings and ideas of masculinity.



## Key Words:

**Democracy** – a system of government by the whole population or elected representative, principles of social equality

**Imperialism** – building a country's power by conquering other countries and having an empire

**Conscription** – compulsory enlistment into the armed forces

**Nationalism** – love and loyalty for your country and all its actions

**Self-determination** – the right of a country to decide who rules it

**Total war** – war involving all aspects of society

**Propaganda** – information used to promote a particular point of view

**Representation of the People Act 1918** – Allowed men over 21 to vote for MPs, and women over 30 who owned property worth more than £5.

# Why did Democracy fail in the Inter-war period? Knowledge Organiser

## How democratic was Europe before 1914?

- Before 1914 there were only 3 republics in Europe.
- Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary were ruled by autocratic emperors and kings.
- Almost no European countries gave the vote to all their citizens.

## How did the peace of 1919 create tension?

- There was disagreement about how the treaty should be constructed, Clemenceau (the French PM) pushed for Germany to be punished and weakened.
- The treaty was imposed upon Germany, it had no ability to negotiate and the leaders of the new democratic government were forced to sign a treaty that imposed harsh terms on Germany.
- The German right wing attacked the treaty and the government that signed it, nationalist groups would claim that that Germany had been 'stabbed in the back'.
- In Italy nationalists talked of the end of the war as a 'mutilated victory' and Italy emerged from the war weakened.
- The war had created deep political divisions in Italy between those who sought to expand Italy (like D'Annunzio) and those who had been opposed to entry to the war.

## How did the structure of democracies weaken them?

- Many democracies were set up along theoretical lines with the most representative democracy possible in mind.
- Proportional representation created problems as it gave a voice to marginal parties and demonstrated the deep political divides that had developed.
- Both Germany and Italy were unable to form majority governments and so the government changed frequently.
- As they didn't have enough support to pass resolutions and changed frequently, governments struggled to make changes and deal with problems.
- Provisions to support governments in times of crisis (like Article 48 in Germany) gave nationalist groups the tools to establish a dictatorship.

## What outside threats destabilised democracies? Fear of socialism pushed people towards right wing groups.

- The Russian revolution in October 1917 created a deep fear across Europe that further revolutions could occur.
- Communist and Socialist groups gained support in most European countries. Incidents in Italy and Germany pushed the middle classes to support parties who appeared to be prepared to actively oppose communists.
- In Germany, Bavaria was taken over by a Socialist revolt for two months and the KPD (the German Communist Party) gained votes through the 1920's and 30s.
- In Italy there were waves of strikes and peasant revolts. 1919-1920 were referred to as the Biennio Rosso (two red years).
- The Nazi Party and the Fascist party had armed sections (the SA in Germany and the Squadristo in Italy) who attacked communist groups and were seen to be tackling what was seen as a serious threat.

## The world economic crash undermined faith in democracies:

- In 1929 the Wall Street Crash sent countries across the world into depression. America recalled the money that had lent the Germans plunging them into deeper financial crisis.
- Unemployment and poverty drove many towards communism making the actions of Nationalist parties who opposed communism look even more necessary.
- Nationalist parties also proposed big solutions to the economic crisis, increasing their support.



"Did the history of eastern Europe not suggest that democracy had been a last-minute gift — if not an imposition — of the victors at Versailles rather than the result of a popular movement? Was it then surprising that people should agree so calmly to the loss of something they had scarcely fought for? Democracy's shallow roots in Europe's political tradition helped explain why anti-liberal regimes were established with such ease and so little protest."

*Dark Continent, Mark Mazower*

## Key Words:

**Democracy** – a system of government by the whole population or elected representative, principles of social equality

**Socialism** – political ideology based in shared ownership and equality.

**Treaty of Versailles** – peace treaty signed after WW1 to resolve how Germany would be treated.

**Nationalism** – political ideology based on love and loyalty for your country and all its actions.

**Fascism** – authoritarian and dictatorial form of government associated with the right wing.

**Proportional representation** – form of voting in which seats are assigned based on the proportion of votes won.

**Wall Street Crash** – economic disaster which prompted a world wide depression.

# Did the road to Black American Civil Rights run smoothly?

## Important people:

**Martin Luther King:** Leader of the SCLC, brilliant orator who is the symbol of the peaceful movement and rose to fame in the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

**Rosa Parks:** member of the NAACP who sparks the Montgomery Bus Boycott by refusing to stand up for a white passenger.

**Earl Warren:** Supreme Court Justice appointed during the Brown case who is seen as pivotal in help the case to gain a unanimous outcome against segregation.

**Thurgood Marshall:** lawyer for the NAACP who argued the Brown case in the supreme court. Later the first black supreme court justice.

**Malcolm X:** Civil rights activist who pushed for more aggressive protest. Member of the Nation of Islam before starting his own organisation.

**Stokely Carmichael:** Leader of the SNCC then 'honorary Prime Minister' of the BPP. First uses the phrase Black Power.

**Huey Newton:** co-founder of the BPP, he was jailed for the shooting of a police officer (the charges were later dismissed).

**Bobby Seale:** co-founder of the BPP. He was arrested as one of the 'Chicago eight' who were charged with inciting riots in 1968.

**Angela Davis:** member of the SNCC, campaigner for black, feminist and gay rights. Involved with the Black Panther Party and briefly on the FBI Most Wanted list for involvement in a plot to free black prisoners.

## Key events:

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| 1896: <b>Plessy V. Ferguson</b> establishes the doctrine of 'separate but equal' and so Jim Crow Laws | 1954: <b>Brown Vs Topeka Kansas</b> holds that separate education facilities are intently unequal | 1955: <b>Rosa Parks'</b> actions start the <b>Montgomery Bus Boycott</b> which last over a year. | 1956: <b>Southern Manifesto</b> is signed. The <b>NAACP</b> is banned from Alabama. <b>Browder V. Gayle</b> desegregates busses | 1960: The <b>Greensboro'</b> sit-ins result in wide spread sit-ins across the country. Public spaces start to be desegregated. | 1963: The <b>Birmingham campaign</b> reveals the violence of the south. The <b>March on Washington</b> is a high point of peaceful protest. | 1964: <b>Malcolm X</b> makes his <b>Ballot or Bullet speech</b> . Many black Americans are starting to become angry with slow progress. | 1965: The <b>Selma campaign</b> aims to increase black voter registration. <b>Malcolm X</b> is assassinated. | 1966: <b>Chicago freedom movement</b> is King's first Northern campaign. The <b>Black Panther Party</b> is founded. | 1968: Black Panthers start to use ' <b>survival programmes</b> '. Failed <b>Poor Peoples Campaign</b> . <b>Martin Luther King Assassinated</b> . |
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## What challenges faced Black Americans?

**Black American's** faced **significant violence**, white supremacist groups like the **Ku Klux Klan** made voting and protesting dangerous.

**A legacy of slavery in the South** meant that black Americans were seen as second class citizens.

**The Southern states had legal segregation**, the precedent set by **Plessy v. Ferguson** meant segregation was legal.

**Black's struggled to vote** and so it was hard to have influence in government.

## Organisations:

**National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP)** Organisation created in 1909 to fight for the rights of black people and end discrimination. Often challenged segregation in the **Supreme Court**.

**Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC)** organisation focused on peaceful protest started by Martin Luther King in 1957 (following the Montgomery bus boycott) designed to unite civil rights organisations.

**Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** emerged in 1960 from the sit-in's and was focused on giving a voice to the young. Became increasingly involved in the **Black Power** movement during the 1960's.

**Nation of Islam** political and religious movement founded in Detroit in 1930. Focused on traditional Islam and Black Nationalist ideology.

**Black Panther Party for Self-defence (BPP)** founded in California in 1966 with the objective of defending the black residents of Oakland California from police brutality. The FBI viewed them as a significant threat to national security and worked to undermine them.

**Black Power:** this was a set of ideas that many argue came from Malcolm X (he never used the phrase himself). It meant different things to different people. It was a **political slogan** and a name for ideas aimed at emphasising racial pride and creating black political and cultural organisations. Associated with the SNCC & Black Panthers.

## Influencing Factors:

**American Presidents:** all presidents in this period made some (in many cases limited) contributions to civil rights. Kennedy and Johnson worked for the Civil Rights Act which was passed in 1964.

**World War Two:** many black Americans served in the war and felt that they should be rewarded by equal treatment for fighting for their country.

**The Media:** black music often bridged the gap between white and black and the print media (and TV) were key in reporting black actions and white violence.

## Key Words:

**Segregation:** a system that aims to keep different races apart.

**Jim Crow Laws:** state and local laws that enforced racial segregation in the Southern United States.

**Supreme Court:** the highest court in the USA. Makes final decisions in complex cases

**Direct Action:** political action that does not use standard political institutions. Instead uses popular campaigns; marches, boycotts and sit-ins (sitting in white areas and refusing to move) are examples.

**Civil Disobedience:** active refusal to obey unjust laws.

**Black Supremacism:** belief that black people are superior to white people.

**'Uncle Tom':** a term of abuse applied to black people who didn't stand up for their rights and had a 'slavish' attitude.

**Survival Programme:** aimed at improving the lives of black Americans. Free breakfasts for children, health clinics etc.