

KS3 History

Lesson 1 of an enquiry of 4 lessons.

The Long Campaign for Democracy

Enquiry: Why did fascists gain support?

Miss Porter



The long campaign for democracy

Between the 18th and 20th centuries, the number of countries that could be identified as 'democratic' increased. A **democracy** is a system of government by all the citizens of a country. Everybody in a democratic country has the right to choose their leaders by voting for them. Common features of a democracy include strong parliaments, equal voting rights and access to free and fair elections. A country could be said to be more or less democratic depending on how active citizens are in decision-making. Another important feature of a democracy is respect for basic **human rights**. These rights include freedom of speech and assembly, freedom of religion and the right to be treated as equals.



The growth of democracy

The growth of democratic states can be attributed to the campaigns for democracy that took place across the world between the 18th and 20th centuries. By the end of World War One in 1918, many European countries had established representative governments and had given the majority of their citizens the right to vote for their leaders. For example, in Britain, the Representation of the People Act 1918 granted the vote to all men over the age of 21 and to women over the age of 30 who owned property. In Germany, all men and women over the age of 20 were granted the right to vote in 1919. Many countries had also removed their monarchies in favour of representative governments. The French first abolished their monarchy in the 18th century and the Russian Tsar chose to **abdicate** in 1917.



World War One

Therefore, by the 1920s it appeared that most European countries had granted greater freedoms to their populations and were becoming more democratic. However, in the 1920s and 1930s the movement towards democracy was halted or even reversed in some countries. During this time period, some political movements emerged that opposed democracy, one of these was called fascism. Benito Mussolini founded the first fascist movement in Italy in 1919. The movement began to grow due to a key group of local active supporters. By 1922, Mussolini became the Prime Minister of Italy.



The nature of fascism

Fascism differed from other **ideologies** such as communism as it did not have a founder who provided a list of its fundamental principles. Fascism took different forms in different countries. There are however, some key features of fascism. Firstly, it is a style of government led by a powerful leader or **dictator**. This dictator will lead the only political party that is allowed to exist in a fascist country. Another key feature of fascism is nationalism. This means a sense of belonging to a nation but it can also be the belief that one's country is superior and its interests should be put above all else. As the strengthening of the state is one of the core principles of fascism, fascist leaders were willing to use any means necessary to expand their nation, often using violence and war.



The nature of fascism

Fascism can also be defined by what it opposes. Fascism is an extreme right-wing ideology that opposes **liberalism** and democracy. During the 1920s, Britain, France and the United States were considered liberal democracies. Liberal democracy involved having a parliament, clear rules for governing the country, protection of human rights and a number of political parties. Fascism actively opposed such beliefs, favouring a one-party style of government and a powerful leader. Therefore, during the 1920s, many people began to support fascism, not only because of what it offered but also because of what it opposed.



Glossary

Abdicate: to choose to stop being king or queen

Communism: the system which replaces private ownership of property with public ownership where everyone is treated equally

Democracy: a system of government by all the citizens of a country, where everybody has the right to choose their leaders by voting for them

Dictator: a leader who has complete power in a country

Human rights: the basic rights that everybody should have



Glossary

Ideology: a set of ideas or beliefs, especially about politics

Liberalism: a political belief that promotes equality of opportunity and protection of individual rights.

Paramilitary: organised like an army



Comprehension questions

1. What is a democracy?
2. Describe one common feature of democracies.
3. Who was the first Fascist leader of Italy?
4. Describe two features of fascism.
5. Challenge question - What did fascism oppose in the 1920s? Provide at least two examples.



The nature of fascism

What did fascism offer?	What did fascism oppose?
<i>To make the nation stronger</i>	<i>Having multiple political parties in one state</i>

