

Backlash to the Roaring '20s

I. Origins

- a. While some embraced the rapidly changing culture of the 1920s, others were terrified of the changes around them. WHY?

II. A Brief History of the Ku Klux Klan:

- a. The KKK originated in the South in the post-Reconstruction Era (1860s-1870s)
- b. Goal was to:
- c. Klan was deemed a "terrorist organization" in the 1870s by Congress
- d. Achieved its goal of white supremacy in the South after which point it largely disappeared
- e. Brought back in 1915 by _____, a preacher who was inspired by **DW Griffith's** film _____

III. Resurgence of the KKK:

- a. Almost _____ members nationwide by the mid-1920s
- b. Located all over the U.S. (no longer merely a southern phenomenon)
- c. Members were native-born, white Protestants("respectable," middle-class Americans, both urban and rural, from coast to coast and from South to North.)
- d. Responding to rapidly changing society, KKK:
 - i. Hoped to stop the rapidly changing society by increased activism
 - ii. Focused on defending white, Christian civilization, promoting community activities, enforcing morality
 - iii. *Wanted* _____ (specify who is considered to be "white") *and maintenance of racial purity* (continued to oppose blacks)
 - iv. *Wanted to stop immigration*
 - v. *Wanted to promote* _____ *religious values* (anti-Catholic, family values, etc.)
 - vi. *Committed to protecting the* " _____,"

- vii. Hoped to stop the rapidly changing society by increased activism

Tactics (LIST)	Targets (LIST)

- e. The KKK gained a tremendous amount of power and influence in the 1920s
 - i. Elected a number of Klansmen to political office. Seized political control in a number of states
 - ii. KKK organized a mass March on Washington (August 8, 1925 40,000 Klansmen marched on the Capital)

IV. Continued Immigration Restriction and Nativism

- a. Problem with immigrants:
 - i. Wanted to put in place quotas on certain groups
 - ii. WWI propaganda had successfully stereotyped foreigners as radicals = prompt a resurgence of **Nativism**

- b. **Red Scare (Communism):** Fear of the _____ threat – became real in the years after the Russian Revolution.

- c. In the 1920s, Congress established annual immigration quotas that favored Anglo-Saxons but kept out blacks, Asians, South-Eastern Europeans, Slavs, Jews.

- d. **The Sacco & Vanzetti case:**
 - i. April 15, 1920, a paymaster and his guard were robbed of \$16,000 and murdered in South Braintree, MA. Shortly after, **Nicola Sacco** and **Bartolomeo Vanzetti** (avowed anarchists) were arrested and indicted by a grand jury.
 - ii. Witnesses identified the 2 as the killers BUT 20 witnesses put Vanzetti at his fish stall in Plymouth at the time of the murder, while the Italian consul in Boston said Sacco was with him at the time of the murders as well.
 - iii. Problems with the trial: (LIST 2)

- iv. Convicted and between 1921-1927 numerous motions for new trials turned down by Judge Thayer.
- v. 1927 MA Supreme Court rejected appeal for new trial b/c they felt no “failure of justice” had occurred = 2 men sentenced to die in the electric chair. August 23, 1927 the 2 were executed at the Charlestown Prison
- vi. **SIGNIFICANCE?**

V. Rise in fundamentalism

a. Definition of **Christian fundamentalism**:

b. Goals/beliefs:

- i. Sought comfort and stability through religion
- ii. Believed that if people follow the Bible directly, society will be ok (something which was needed in a time of rapid changes)

c. Fundamentalists' attention was drawn to schools in the 1920s as mandatory attendance laws meant their children were in school more and away from the watchful eye and control of their parents. Many parents saw schools as the place where children learn the values of society, as well as a place where kids could easily be led astray.

- a. What aspect of public schools' curriculum might fundamentalist parents object to? THINK!

d. Opposition to the theory of evolution:

- i. Evolution directly conflicts with the teachings of the Bible – HOW?

- ii. Opposed to the concept that men derived from apes – thought the theory was absurd and degrading. Desire to prevent the teaching of evolution, particularly in schools!

e. **Scopes “Monkey” trial**:

- a. In 1925, TN passed a law which stated: *Be it Enacted, by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, that it shall be unlawful for any teacher in any of the...public schools in the State...to teach the theory that denies the story of the divine creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals.*

MEANING WHAT?

- i. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) protested this law. They saw it as gross violation of which amendment? _____ Amendment
 1. By 1925, fundamentalists had successfully passed legislation in 3 states banning the teaching of evolution. Legislation was being considered in 15 states at the time of the trial.
 2. They paid Dayton science teacher, John T. Scopes, to teach evolution. He was arrested and they then used the trial to call attention to the issue.

- f. Who were the key players?
 - a. John T. Scopes: (defendant) science teacher.
 - b. Clarence Darrow: (attorney for the defense) America's most famous defense lawyer.
 - i. "If to-day you can take a thing like evolution and make it a crime to teach it in the public school...at the next session you may ban books and newspapers...."
MEANING WHAT?
 - ii. William Jennings Bryan: (attorney for the prosecution) At the time of the trial, he was the country's most famous figure in the fundamentalist crusade against the theory of evolution.
 - 1. "The first objection to Darwinism is that it is only a guess and was never anything more....The second objection to Darwin's guess is that it has not one syllable in the Bible to support it. This ought to make Christians cautious about accepting it without thorough investigation.... Third--Neither Darwin nor his supporters have been able to find a fact in the universe to support their hypothesis. With millions of species, the investigators have not been able to find one single instance in which one species has changed into another..."
 - a. MEANING WHAT?
- i. Trial of the century – PUBLICITY – why so big?
- ii. Who won?
- iii. Why was the trial significant?