

Aspects of Liberalism

History

1. It's the first self-aware modern ideology.
2. John Locke's Two Treatises on Government (1689) was the 1st expression of the philosophy of "liberté".

Radical For Its Time

3. It promoted the destruction of feudalism & absolute monarchy, and defended the emerging middle class of merchants, traders and small manufacturers.

10 Principles

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Conservative Reaction

- By the 1700s, the aristocratic class tried to stop the political gains & economic power of the middle class.
- This failed in most western countries; by the early 1900s, the upper & middle classes merged, often through marriage, into a new, business-oriented upper class. The new middle class was led by managers & professionals.

Socialist Reaction

- Most radical (communist) worker rebellions, like the 1871 Paris Commune, were suppressed. Most workers wanted “a piece of the pie”, not revolution.
- Workers campaigned for full suffrage; male labourers started to gain the vote by late 1800s.

Reform Liberalism

- Liberals like JS Mill were worried about industrial workers and attempted to mitigate their conditions.
- Supported widening the franchise, better working conditions and basic social programs.

The Great Depression

- Economic collapse required innovation. Under FDR’s New Deal, the American gov’t drastically expanded social programs, public works and the size of the gov’t itself.
- The role of the gov’t was to mediate economic booms and busts through more spending.

70s/80s: The (2nd) Conservative (aka Neo-Liberal) Reaction

- Margaret Thatcher & Ronald Reagan led a charge to reduce gov’t spending and the power of unions.
- We see the re-introduction of classical (e.g. less social spending/ lower taxes for the wealthy/free trade/privatization)

Right Wing Populism

- Right-wing populism (e.g. Trump/ Orban in Hungary) has risen in popularity among right-wing liberals.
- Less democracy & tolerance, but less free trade, too.

Key philosophical divide: New Deal liberalism vs. modern conservatism, which is itself split between neo-liberalism and authoritarian populism.