

LIBERAL IDEOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO HUMANITY

Under a Political and Moral Philosophy Based on Liberty and Equality

For the past 300 years Western Civilization has been dominated by the liberal package of individualism, human rights, democracy, and the free market. Since the Age of Enlightenment philosophers and scientists have advanced a range of ideas centered on reason as the primary source of knowledge and advanced the ideals of liberty, progress, toleration, fraternity, constitutional government and separation of church and state. The ideas of the Enlightenment undermined the authority of the monarchy and the church and paved the way for the political revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Liberalism is a philosophy about the meaning of humanity and society. The common strands of liberal thought are individualist, egalitarian, meliorist, and universalist. Through all the strands and traditions scholars have identified the following major common facets of liberal thought: believing in equality and individual liberty, supporting private property and individual rights, supporting the idea of limited constitutional government and recognizing the importance of related values such as pluralism, toleration, autonomy, bodily integrity and consent.

In the United States both Democratic and Republican parties have embraced “**progressive**” initiatives through affirmative legislative and executive action (i.e., Medicare, National Environmental Policy Act, affirmative action legislation, etc.).

Liberalism has exalted the power of reason. Its philosophy symbolizes an extensive intellectual tradition, and has and continues to contribute many of the most important and controversial principles of the modern world: (Wikipedia)

ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- Lockean Ideal of Every Man’s Natural Right to Life, Liberty & Property
- Lockean Annunciation of Man’s Natural Right to Liberty of Conscience
- Cultural Pluralism/Ethnic Toleration
- Civil Rights (Notably the American Civil War)
- Women’s Rights
- LGBT Rights
- International Human Rights’ Concerns

PROMOTE DEMOCRACY/INTERNATIONALISM

- Launched the Political Revolutions of the 18th & 19th Centuries (overthrow of Royal Tyranny)
- Established the Rule of Law (upstaged Hereditary/Aristocratic Privilege & Absolute Monarchy (Divine Right of Kings))
- Opposed State Religion (Separation of Church & State)
- Spread Representative Democracy
- Introduced Constitutional Government (Parliamentary Power)
- Established the Independent Judiciary with Trial by Jury
- Stopped Fascism during World War I & II
- Established League of Nations, United Nations
- Encouraged Globalization through Open Trade

ESTABLISHED INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS UNDER CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT (e.g., U.S. Constitution)

- Separation of Powers

- Equal Rights
- Women's Suffrage
- Freedom of the Press
- Freedom of Speech
- Freedom of Religion/Religious Toleration
- Freedom of Association
- Equal Protection
- Due Process
- Rights of the Accused (Public Trial, Trial by Jury, Speedy Trial, Limits on Excessive Punishment)

ADVANCE ENLIGHTENMENT/KNOWLEDGE

- Generated the Ideas for the Age of Enlightenment
- Adherence to the Power of Reason
- Promote Science
- Explore the Universe
- Advance the Arts

PROMOTE FREE MARKETS

- Ended Royal Monopolies, Mercantilist Policies and other Barriers to Free Trade
- Popularized Economic Individualism
- Established Private Property Rights
- Pursue International Trade Agreements
- Support Unionism
- Deploy Keynesian Economics

SEEK LEGAL PROTECTIONS FOR THE CONSUMER AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Government Regulation of Commerce
- Consumer Protection Legislation
- Food & Drug Administration Oversight
- Environmental Protection Legislation

ELEVATE THE OPPRESSED/IMPOVERISHED

- New Deal Initiatives (Welfare, Social Security)
- Great Society (Medicare, Medicaid)
- War on Poverty (Head Start, Job Corps)
- Affirmative Action
- Humanitarian Relief Efforts
- Immigration Opportunity

SOLIDIFY THE HEALTH & EDUCATION OF SOCIETY (including current initiatives)

- Expanded Health Insurance Coverage (Affordable Care Act)
- Seek Broad Health Insurance Coverage under a Single-payer System
- Tax Supported, Inclusive Local Public Education
- Tuition Reduced or Free Technical and Higher Education

PURSUE ELECTION REFORM (including current initiatives)

- Expansion of the Right to Vote
- Campaign Finance Reform/Disclosure
- Public Financing of Elections