

The Emerging Political Spectrum

Part A. During the course of the French Revolution, the interplay of opposing forces resulted in the emergence of political groupings which, for convenience, were labeled "republican," "liberal," and "conservative." At this time liberals, or leftists, favored change to emancipate the individual from class or governmental restraints. Republicans, or extreme leftists, favored more radical changes, while conservatives, or rightists, tended to favor a return to pre-Revolutionary conditions. Using the terms provided, complete the chart below by correctly categorizing political, economic, social, and religious beliefs under the proper headings for the period 1815-1848.

Terms: aristocrats in position of leadership; industrial capitalism; universal manhood suffrage; traditional agrarianism; limited manhood suffrage; socialist economy; laissez faire; traditional class structure based on birth and privilege; opposition to organized religion; traditional political system; limited constitutional monarchy; religious toleration; classless society; anti-capitalism; belief in equality of individuals with privilege of wealth; commercial agriculture; constitutional republic; traditional established church

	REPUBLICAN	LIBERAL	CONSERVATIVE
POLITICAL			
ECONOMIC			
SOCIAL			
RELIGIOUS			

Part B. In your small groups, read the following descriptions of political philosophy, and label each as republican, liberal, or conservative according to the definitions you developed in the chart above.

1. Robespierre, leader of the Committee on Public Safety during the first stage of the First French Republic, attempted to create the egalitarian society envisioned by Rousseau.
2. Charles X, the last Bourbon ruler in France, favored a divine right monarchy.
3. Madame Roland, infused with the thinking of the Enlightenment, believed the perfectibility of man was possible if he were freed from traditional laws and institutions.
4. Adam Smith, author of *The Wealth of Nations*, believed that government should be limited in its functions to protection of the individual and his property. Regulation of economic activity should be governed by the laws of the market place.
5. Lord Castlereagh, foreign minister of England, favored the aristocrats and emphasized traditional concepts of God, the king, and the privileges of birth.
6. Metternich, foreign minister of Austria, feared nationalism and revolution and favored autocratic rule.
7. Louis Philippe, king of France after the Revolution of 1830, mirrored the views of the businessmen who enthroned him.

Part C. Read the following three descriptions of liberals and answer the questions at the end.

An English liberal of 1830 found the roots of his thinking in the ideas of Locke, Voltaire, and Adam Smith. He believed that the sole role of government was to protect the individual and his property and guarantee his civil liberties.

An English liberal at the turn of the twentieth century was still concerned with the individual; however, he now focused on the human needs of the individual and, therefore, aimed to use government to improve living and working conditions.

A Russian liberal in 1900 believed that government should be restricted by a written constitution and that government's primary responsibility was to protect the individual's life and property.

1. Explain how the views of an English liberal in 1830 differed from those of an English liberal in 1900.
2. How would you compare the views of a Russian liberal in 1900 with the ideas of his English contemporary?

Name _____

Date _____

Part D. A political spectrum is a convenient way to depict the various shades of thinking from radical to reactionary, or from extreme left to extreme right, with respect to political, economic, social, or religious ideas. Study the drawing of the political spectrum below and test your understanding of the concepts in this lesson by answering the questions at the end.

- | Radical | Liberal | Conservative | Reactionary |
|---------|---------|--------------|-------------|
|---------|---------|--------------|-------------|
- Where would you place an English liberal and a Russian liberal of 1900 in relation to each other on the spectrum from left to right?
 - Where does the position of an English liberal of 1830 stand in relation to that of an English liberal of 1900?
 - Where would the position of an English liberal of 1830 appear in relation to the views of an English liberal of 1750?
 - Into which of the categories would you place each of the following persons on the issue of male suffrage?
 - An Englishman of 1832 who believed that all English males should vote
 - An Englishman of 1900 who believed all English males should vote
 - An Englishman of 1920 who believed only males in England should vote
 - A 1987 Englishman who believes only males in England should vote
 - Where would the concept of absolute monarchy fall on the political spectrum in each of these countries in 1830?
 - Russia
 - Britain
 - Where would the concept of limited monarchy fall on the political spectrum in 1830 in each of these places?
 - Russia
 - Britain
 - United States
 - Why does this lesson direct us to a cautious use of terms such as "radical," "liberal," "conservative," and "reactionary"?