**Liberalism in International Relations**

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**Introduction:**

* The central issues that the liberalism seeks to address are the problems of achieving lasting peace and cooperation in international relations, and the various methods that could contribute to their achievement.
* Its roots lie in the broader liberal thought originating in the Enlightenment
* Liberalism emphasizes that the broad ties among states have both made it difficult to define national interest and decreased the usefulness of military power.
* Increasing globalization, the rapid rise in communications technology, and the increase in international trade in 1970s meant that states could no longer rely on simple power politics to decide matters.
* Liberal approaches to international relations are also called ‘*theories of complex interdependence’*

**Liberalism claims**

* The world is a harsh and dangerous place, but the consequences of using military power often outweigh the benefits. International cooperation is therefore in the interest of every state.
* Military power is not the only form of power. Economic and social power matter a great deal too. Exercising economic power has proven more effective than exercising military power.
* Different states often have different primary interests.
* International rules and organizations can help foster cooperation, trust, and prosperity.

***Example:****Relations among the major Western powers fit a model of complex interdependence very well. The United States has significant disagreements with its European and Asian allies over trade and policy, but it is hard to imagine a circumstance in which the United States would use military power against any of these allies. Instead, the United States relies on economic pressure and incentives to achieve its policy aims.*

**Origin:**

Generally, its roots lie in the broader liberal thought originating in the age of Enlightenment.

More importantly, catalytic events in the early 2 decades of 20th century caused paradigmatic revolution in the field of International Relations.

1. **1st World War:** The total number of military and civilian casualties in World War I was over 37 million: over 17 **million deaths** and 20 million wounded, ranking it among the deadliest conflicts in human history.
2. **Bolshevik Revolution-1917 in Russia:**

Marxist-Leninist thought became popular

The revolution was bloody, brutal and cruel. No exact figure of casualties however, millions of people were put to death.

1. **Nazism of Hitler:** usually characterized as offshoot of Fascism. It instrumentalize racism.

**Liberal World View:**

* It emphasizes on behaviour, dignity and liberty of Individuals. According to idealist humans are good by nature. Therefore, people should be treated as ends rather than means.
* It stresses the importance of ethical principles over pursuit of power and institutions over capabilities as forces of shaping interstate relation.
* Liberalists view politics as a struggle for consensus than a struggle for power and prestige.

**Fundamental Principles of Liberalism**

Liberal idealism is based on the following assumptions;

1. Human nature is essentially good or altruistic: People are capable of mutual aid and collaboration through reason and ethically inspired education.
2. The fundamental human concern for others’ welfare makes progress possible.
3. Bad human behavior, such as violence, is the product not of flawed people but of evil institutions that encourage people to act selfishly and to harm others.
4. War and international anarchy are not inevitable and war’s frequency can be reduced by strengthening the institutional arrangements that encourage its disappearance.
5. War is a global problem requiring collective or multilateral, rather than national, efforts to control it.
6. Reforms must be inspired by a compassionate ethical concern for the welfare and security of all people, and this humanitarian motive requires the inclusion of morality in statecraft.
7. International society must reorganize itself in order to eliminate the institutions that make war likely, and states must reform their political systems so that self-determination and democratic governance within states can help pacify relations among states.

**The Reform Programme of Liberals**

Several voices within liberalism suggesting respective institutional reforms to establish world peace;

1. **The collective security:** Collective security refers to an arrangement where ‘each state in the system accepts that the security of one is the concern of all, and agrees to join in a collective response to aggression’

**Woodrow Wilson’s Speech:** In his famous ‘Fourteen Points’ speech, addressed to Congress in January 1918, Wilson argued that ‘a general association of nations must be formed’ to preserve the peace.

1. **Legislative Approach:** Disputes among states should be dealt through International law.

The Kellogg–Briand Pact- 1928: Signatory states promised not to use war to resolve "disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them

1. **International Court of Justice**: to arbitrate international disputes
2. **Disarmament**: the act of reducing, limiting, or abolishing weapons

**Nuclear Disarmament:**  the act of reducing or eliminating nuclear weapons and to the end state of a nuclear-free world, in which nuclear weapons are completely eliminated.

Several conferences have been held to reduce arms e.g., 1932-34: World Disarmament Conference

1. **Self Determination:** In his Fourteen Points, U.S. president Woodrow Wilson listed self-determination as an important objective for world peace and politics.

"National aspirations must be respected; people may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent. *Self determination* is not a mere phrase; it is an imperative principle of action..."

Woodrow Wilson- Feb, 1918