[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Redirect](/wiki/Template:Redirect) [Template:Pp-pc1](/wiki/Template:Pp-pc1) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Use British English](/wiki/Template:Use_British_English) [Template:Liberalism sidebar](/wiki/Template:Liberalism_sidebar) **Liberalism** is a [political philosophy](/wiki/Political_philosophy) or worldview founded on ideas of [liberty](/wiki/Liberty) and [equality](/wiki/Egalitarianism).[[1]](#cite_note-1)[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3) Whereas [classical liberalism](/wiki/Classical_liberalism) emphasises the role of liberty, [social liberalism](/wiki/Social_liberalism) stresses the importance of equality.[[4]](#cite_note-4) Liberals espouse a wide array of views depending on their understanding of these principles, but generally they support ideas and programmes such as [freedom of speech](/wiki/Freedom_of_speech), [freedom of the press](/wiki/Freedom_of_the_press), [freedom of religion](/wiki/Freedom_of_religion), [free markets](/wiki/Free_market), [civil rights](/wiki/Civil_rights), [democratic societies](/wiki/Democracy), [secular governments](/wiki/Secularism), and [international cooperation](/wiki/Internationalism_(politics)).[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6)[[7]](#cite_note-7)[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[11]](#cite_note-11) Liberalism first became a distinct political movement during the [Age of Enlightenment](/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment), when it became popular among [philosophers](/wiki/Philosopher) and [economists](/wiki/Economist) in the [Western world](/wiki/Western_world). Liberalism rejected the prevailing social and political norms of [hereditary privilege](/wiki/Nobility), [state religion](/wiki/State_religion), [absolute monarchy](/wiki/Absolute_monarchy), and the [Divine Right of Kings](/wiki/Divine_Right_of_Kings). The 17th-century philosopher [John Locke](/wiki/John_Locke) is often credited with founding liberalism as a distinct philosophical tradition. Locke argued that each man has a [natural right](/wiki/Natural_rights) to life, liberty and [property](/wiki/Private_property),[[12]](#cite_note-12) while adding that governments must not violate these rights based on the [social contract](/wiki/Social_contract). Liberals opposed [traditional conservatism](/wiki/Traditionalist_conservatism) and sought to replace [absolutism](/wiki/Absolutism_(European_history)) in government with [representative democracy](/wiki/Democracy) and the [rule of law](/wiki/Rule_of_law).

Prominent revolutionaries in the [Glorious Revolution](/wiki/Glorious_Revolution), the [American Revolution](/wiki/American_Revolution), and the [French Revolution](/wiki/French_Revolution) used liberal philosophy to justify the armed overthrow of what they saw as [tyrannical](/wiki/Tyrant) rule. Liberalism started to spread rapidly especially after the French Revolution. The 19th century saw liberal governments established in nations across [Europe](/wiki/Liberalism_in_Europe), [South America](/wiki/Liberalism_and_conservatism_in_Latin_America), and [North America](/wiki/Liberalism_in_the_United_States).[[13]](#cite_note-13) In this period, the dominant ideological opponent of [classical liberalism](/wiki/Classical_liberalism) was [conservatism](/wiki/Conservatism), but liberalism later survived major ideological challenges from new opponents, such as [fascism](/wiki/Fascism) and [communism](/wiki/Communism). During the 20th century, liberal ideas spread even further as [liberal democracies](/wiki/Liberal_democracy) found themselves on the winning side in both world wars. In Europe and North America, the establishment of [social liberalism](/wiki/Social_liberalism) became a key component in the expansion of the [welfare state](/wiki/Welfare_state).[[14]](#cite_note-14)[[15]](#cite_note-15) Today, [liberal parties](/wiki/Liberal_Party) continue to wield power and influence [throughout the world](/wiki/Liberalism_by_country).

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## Etymology and definition[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

Words such as *liberal*, [*liberty*](/wiki/Liberty), [*libertarian*](/wiki/Libertarianism), and [*libertine*](/wiki/Libertine) all trace their history to the Latin *liber*, which means "free".[[16]](#cite_note-16) One of the first recorded instances of the word *liberal* occurs in 1375, when it was used to describe the [*liberal arts*](/wiki/Liberal_arts) in the context of an education desirable for a free-born man.[[16]](#cite_note-16) The word's early connection with the classical education of a medieval university soon gave way to a proliferation of different denotations and connotations. *Liberal* could refer to "free in bestowing" as early as 1387, "made without stint" in 1433, "freely permitted" in 1530, and "free from restraint" – often as a pejorative remark – in the 16th and the 17th centuries.[[16]](#cite_note-16)In 16th century [England](/wiki/Kingdom_of_England), *liberal* could have positive or negative attributes in referring to someone's generosity or indiscretion.[[16]](#cite_note-16) In [*Much Ado About Nothing*](/wiki/Much_Ado_About_Nothing), [Shakespeare](/wiki/William_Shakespeare) wrote of "a liberal villaine" who "hath ... confest his vile encounters".[[16]](#cite_note-16) With the rise of the [Enlightenment](/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment), the word acquired decisively more positive undertones, being defined as "free from narrow prejudice" in 1781 and "free from bigotry" in 1823.[[16]](#cite_note-16) In 1815, the first use of the word *liberalism* appeared in English.[[17]](#cite_note-17) In Spain, the [*Liberales*](/wiki/Liberalism_and_radicalism_in_Spain), the first group to use the *liberal* label in a political context,[[18]](#cite_note-18) fought for the implementation of the [1812 Constitution](/wiki/Spanish_Constitution_of_1812) for decades. From 1820 to 1823, during the [*Trienio Liberal*](/wiki/Trienio_Liberal), [King Ferdinand VII](/wiki/Ferdinand_VII_of_Spain) was compelled by the *liberales* to swear to uphold the Constitution. By the middle of the 19th century, *liberal* was used as a politicised term for [parties and movements](/wiki/Liberal_Party) all over the world.[[19]](#cite_note-19) Over time, the meaning of the word "liberalism" began to diverge in different parts of the world. According to the [*Encyclopedia Britannica*](/wiki/Encyclopedia_Britannica), "In the United States, liberalism is associated with the welfare-state policies of the New Deal programme of the Democratic administration of Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt, whereas in Europe it is more commonly associated with a commitment to limited government and *laissez-faire* economic policies."[[20]](#cite_note-20) Consequently, in the U.S., the ideas of [individualism](/wiki/Individualism) and *laissez-faire* economics previously associated with classical liberalism became the basis for the emerging school of [libertarian](/wiki/Libertarianism) thought,[[21]](#cite_note-21) and are key components of [American conservatism](/wiki/Conservativism_in_the_United_States).

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

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### Early history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[thumb|upright|The](/wiki/Image:Agreement_of_the_People_(1647-1649).jpg) [Agreement of the People](/wiki/Agreement_of_the_People) (1647) was a manifesto for political change, proposed by the [Levellers](/wiki/Levellers) during the [English Civil War](/wiki/English_Civil_War). It called for [freedom of religion](/wiki/Freedom_of_religion), frequent convening of [Parliament](/wiki/Parliament) and equality under the law. Isolated strands of liberal thought had existed in [Western philosophy](/wiki/Western_philosophy) since the [Ancient Greeks](/wiki/Ancient_Greeks), but the first major signs of liberal politics emerged in modern times. In the 17th century, political and financial disputes between the [English Parliament](/wiki/Parliament_of_England) and King [Charles I](/wiki/Charles_I_of_England) sparked a massive [civil war](/wiki/English_Civil_War) in the 1640s. The war culminated in the execution of Charles and the establishment of the [Commonwealth of England](/wiki/Commonwealth_of_England). The period produced a significant amount of political and philosophical commentary. In particular, the [Levellers](/wiki/Levellers), a radical political movement, published their manifesto [*Agreement of the People*](/wiki/Agreement_of_the_People), in which they advocated for [popular sovereignty](/wiki/Popular_sovereignty), for extended voting [suffrage](/wiki/Suffrage), [religious tolerance](/wiki/Religious_tolerance) and [equality before the law](/wiki/Equality_before_the_law). Many of the liberal concepts of Locke were foreshadowed in the radical ideas that were freely aired at the time.[[22]](#cite_note-22) [Algernon Sidney](/wiki/Algernon_Sidney) was second only to John Locke in his influence on liberal political thought in eighteenth-century Britain.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) He believed that [absolute monarchy](/wiki/Absolute_monarchy) was a great political evil, and his major work, *Discourses Concerning Government*, argued that the subjects of the monarch were entitled by right to share in the government through advice and counsel. [thumb|upright|alt=Head and shoulders oval portrait of a somber-looking man with flowing black and gray hair, a thin face, and a prominent and sharp nose. He wears a white shirt beneath a black coat.|](/wiki/File:John_Locke.jpg)[John Locke](/wiki/John_Locke) was the first to develop a liberal philosophy, including the right to [private property](/wiki/Private_property) and the [consent of the governed](/wiki/Consent_of_the_governed). These ideas were first unified as a distinct [ideology](/wiki/Ideology) by the English philosopher [John Locke](/wiki/John_Locke), generally regarded as the father of modern liberalism.[[23]](#cite_note-23)[[24]](#cite_note-24) Locke developed the radical notion that government acquires [consent from the governed](/wiki/Consent_of_the_governed), which has to be constantly present for a government to remain legitimate.[[25]](#cite_note-25) His influential [*Two Treatises*](/wiki/Two_Treatises_of_Government) (1690), the foundational text of liberal ideology, outlined his major ideas.[[26]](#cite_note-26) His insistence that lawful government did not have a [supernatural](/wiki/Supernatural) basis was a sharp break from previous theories of governance.[[27]](#cite_note-27)[[28]](#cite_note-28)Locke also defined the concept of the [separation of church and state](/wiki/Separation_of_church_and_state).<ref name=AFP>Feldman, Noah (2005). *Divided by God*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, pg. 29 ("It took [John Locke](/wiki/John_Locke) to translate the demand for liberty of conscience into a systematic argument for distinguishing the realm of government from the realm of religion.")</ref> Based on the [social contract](/wiki/Social_contract) principle, Locke argued that there was a natural right to the liberty of conscience, which he argued must therefore remain protected from any government authority.[[29]](#cite_note-29) He also formulated a general defence for [religious toleration](/wiki/Religious_toleration) in his *Letters Concerning Toleration*.[[30]](#cite_note-30) Locke was influenced by the liberal ideas of [John Milton](/wiki/John_Milton), who was a staunch advocate of freedom in all its forms.[[31]](#cite_note-31) Milton argued for [disestablishment](/wiki/Disestablishment) as the only effective way of achieving broad [toleration](/wiki/Religious_toleration).[[32]](#cite_note-32) In his [*Areopagitica*](/wiki/Areopagitica), Milton provided one of the first arguments for the importance of [freedom of speech](/wiki/Freedom_of_speech) – "the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties".

### Glorious Revolution[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|The](/wiki/File:English_Bill_of_Rights_of_1689.jpg) [Bill of Rights](/wiki/Bill_of_Rights_1689) was a landmark piece of liberal legislation. The impact of these ideas steadily increased during the 17th century in England, culminating in the [Glorious Revolution](/wiki/Glorious_Revolution) of 1688 which enshrined [parliamentary sovereignty](/wiki/Parliamentary_sovereignty) and the [right of revolution](/wiki/Right_of_revolution), and led to the establishment of what many consider the first modern, liberal state.[[33]](#cite_note-33) Significant legislative milestones in this period included the [Habeas Corpus Act of 1679](/wiki/Habeas_Corpus_Act_1679) which strengthened the convention that forbade detention lacking sufficient cause or evidence. The [Bill of Rights](/wiki/Bill_of_Rights_1689) formally established the supremacy of the law and of parliament over the monarch and laid down basic rights for all [Englishmen](/wiki/England). The Bill made royal interference with the law and with elections to parliament illegal, made the agreement of parliament necessary for the implementation of any new taxes and outlawed the maintenance of a [standing army](/wiki/Standing_army) during peacetime without parliament's consent. The right to petition the monarch was granted to everyone and "[cruel and unusual punishments](/wiki/Cruel_and_unusual_punishment)" were made illegal under all circumstances.[[34]](#cite_note-34)[[35]](#cite_note-35)This was followed a year later with the [Act of Toleration](/wiki/Act_of_Toleration_1689), which drew its ideological content from [John Locke's](/wiki/John_Locke) four letters advocating religious toleration.[[36]](#cite_note-36) The Act allowed freedom of worship to [Nonconformists](/wiki/Nonconformist) who pledged oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy to the [Anglican Church](/wiki/Anglican_Church). In 1695, the [Commons](/wiki/British_House_of_Commons) refused to renew the [Licensing of the Press Act 1662](/wiki/Licensing_of_the_Press_Act_1662),[[37]](#cite_note-37) Liberal socialism has been particularly prominent in British and Italian politics.[[120]](#cite_note-120) One of the most outspoken critics of liberalism was the [Roman Catholic Church](/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church),[[121]](#cite_note-121) which resulted in lengthy power struggles between national governments and the Church. In the same vein, conservatives have also attacked what they perceive to be the reckless liberal pursuit of progress and material gains, arguing that such preoccupations undermine traditional social values rooted in community and continuity.[[122]](#cite_note-122) However, a few variations of conservatism, like [liberal conservativism](/wiki/Liberal_conservativism), expound some of the same ideas and principles championed by [classical liberalism](/wiki/Classical_liberalism), including "small government and thriving capitalism".[[112]](#cite_note-112) [Social democracy](/wiki/Social_democracy), an ideology advocating progressive modification of capitalism, emerged in the 20th century and was influenced by socialism. Yet unlike socialism, it was not collectivist nor anti-capitalist. Broadly defined as a project that aims to correct, through government reformism, what it regards as the intrinsic defects of capitalism by reducing inequalities,[[123]](#cite_note-123) social democracy was also not against the state. Several commentators have noted strong similarities between [social liberalism](/wiki/Social_liberalism) and social democracy, with one political scientist even calling [American liberalism](/wiki/Modern_liberalism_in_the_United_States) "bootleg social democracy" due to the absence of a significant social democratic tradition in the United States that liberals have tried to rectify.[[124]](#cite_note-124) Another movement associated with modern democracy, [Christian democracy](/wiki/Christian_democracy), hopes to spread [Catholic social ideas](/wiki/Catholic_social_teaching) and has gained a large following in some European nations.[[125]](#cite_note-125) The early roots of Christian democracy developed as a reaction against the [industrialisation](/wiki/Industrialisation) and [urbanisation](/wiki/Urbanisation) associated with *laissez-faire* liberalism in the 19th century.[[126]](#cite_note-126) Despite these complex relationships, some scholars have argued that liberalism actually "rejects ideological thinking" altogether, largely because such thinking could lead to unrealistic expectations for human society.[[127]](#cite_note-127)

## Worldwide[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:Quote box](/wiki/Template:Quote_box) Liberalism is frequently cited as the dominant [ideology](/wiki/Ideology) of modern times.[[128]](#cite_note-128)[[129]](#cite_note-129) Politically, liberals have organised extensively throughout the world. [Liberal parties](/wiki/Liberal_Party), [think tanks](/wiki/Liberal_International#Liberal_think_tanks_and_foundations), and other institutions are common in many nations, although they advocate for different causes based on their ideological orientation. Liberal parties can be [centre-left](/wiki/Centre-left), [centrist](/wiki/Centrism), or [centre-right](/wiki/Centre-right) depending on their location.

They can further be divided based on their adherence to [social liberalism](/wiki/Social_liberalism) or [classical liberalism](/wiki/Classical_liberalism), although all liberal parties and individuals share basic similarities, including the support for [civil rights](/wiki/Civil_rights) and [democratic institutions](/wiki/Democracy). On a global level, liberals are united in the [Liberal International](/wiki/Liberal_International), which contains over 100 influential liberal parties and organisations from across the [ideological spectrum](/wiki/Political_spectrum).

Some parties in the LI are among the most famous in the world, such as the [Liberal Party of Canada](/wiki/Liberal_Party_of_Canada), while others are among the smallest, such as the [Gibraltar Liberal Party](/wiki/Gibraltar_Liberal_Party). Regionally, liberals are organised through various institutions depending on the prevailing geopolitical context. The [European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party](/wiki/European_Liberal_Democrat_and_Reform_Party), for example, represents the interests of liberals in Europe while the [Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe](/wiki/Alliance_of_Liberals_and_Democrats_for_Europe) is the predominant liberal group in the [European Parliament](/wiki/European_Parliament).

### Europe[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:1271754717_william-e.-gladstone.jpg)[William Ewart Gladstone](/wiki/William_Ewart_Gladstone) of the [Liberal Party](/wiki/Liberal_Party_(UK)) was British Prime Minister four times in the 19th century In Europe, liberalism has a long tradition dating back to 17th century.[[130]](#cite_note-130) Scholars often split those traditions into [British](/wiki/Gladstonian_liberalism) and [French](/wiki/Liberalism_and_radicalism_in_France) versions, with the former version of liberalism emphasising the expansion of [democratic values](/wiki/Democracy) and [constitutional reform](/wiki/Constitutional_amendment) and the latter rejecting authoritarian political and economic structures, as well as being involved with [nation-building](/wiki/Nationalism).[[131]](#cite_note-131) The continental French version was deeply divided between *moderates* and [*progressives*](/wiki/Progressivism), with the moderates tending to [elitism](/wiki/Elitism) and the progressives supporting the universalisation of fundamental institutions, such as [universal suffrage](/wiki/Universal_suffrage), [universal education](/wiki/Public_education), and the expansion of [property rights](/wiki/Property).[[131]](#cite_note-131) Over time, the moderates displaced the progressives as the main guardians of continental European liberalism. A prominent example of these divisions is the German [Free Democratic Party](/wiki/Free_Democratic_Party_(Germany)), which was historically divided between [national liberal](/wiki/Liberal_nationalism) and [social liberal](/wiki/Social_liberalism) factions.[[132]](#cite_note-132) Before World War I, liberal parties dominated the European political scene, but they were gradually displaced by socialists and social democrats in the early 20th century. The fortunes of liberal parties since World War II have been mixed, with some gaining strength while others suffered from continuous declines.[[133]](#cite_note-133) The [fall of the Soviet Union](/wiki/Collapse_of_the_Soviet_Union_(1985–1991)) and the [breakup of Yugoslavia](/wiki/Breakup_of_Yugoslavia) at the end of the 20th century, however, allowed the formation of many liberal parties throughout Eastern Europe. These parties developed varying ideological characters. Some, such as the Slovenian [Liberal Democrats](/wiki/Liberal_Democracy_of_Slovenia) or the Lithuanian [Social Liberals](/wiki/New_Union_(Social_Liberals)), have been characterised as [centre-left](/wiki/Centre-left).[[134]](#cite_note-134)[[135]](#cite_note-135) Others, such as the Romanian [National Liberal Party](/wiki/National_Liberal_Party_(Romania)), have been classified as [centre-right](/wiki/Centre-right).[[136]](#cite_note-136) In the United Kingdom, the [Liberal Party](/wiki/Liberal_Party_(UK)) was founded in 1859 and was one of two major parties in British politics for that century, the other being the [Conservative Party](/wiki/Conservative_Party_(UK)). [William Ewart Gladstone](/wiki/William_Ewart_Gladstone) of the Liberals was Prime Minister four times. The party lost its influence in the early 20th century due to the growth of the [Labour Party](/wiki/Labour_Party_(UK)), and in 1988 it joined with the Labour splinter [Social Democratic Party](/wiki/Social_Democratic_Party_(UK)) to form the [Liberal Democrats](/wiki/Liberal_Democrats). Following the [general election of 2010](/wiki/United_Kingdom_general_election,_2010), the Liberal Democrats formed a [coalition government](/wiki/Coalition_government) with the Conservatives, resulting in party leader [Nick Clegg](/wiki/Nick_Clegg) becoming the [Deputy Prime minister](/wiki/Deputy_Prime_Minister_of_the_United_Kingdom) and many other members becoming ministers. However, the Liberal Democrats lost 49 of their 56 seats in the [2015 general election](/wiki/United_Kingdom_general_election,_2015), with their review of the result concluding that a number of policy reversals were responsible for their poor electoral performance.[[137]](#cite_note-137) Both in Britain and elsewhere in Western Europe, liberal parties have often cooperated with socialist and social democratic parties, as evidenced by the [Purple Coalition](/wiki/Purple_(government)) in the Netherlands during the late 1990s and into the 21st century. The Purple Coalition, one of the most consequential in [Dutch history](/wiki/History_of_the_Netherlands), brought together the progressive left-liberal [D66](/wiki/Democrats_66),[[138]](#cite_note-138) the [economic liberal](/wiki/Economic_liberal) and centre-right [VVD](/wiki/People's_Party_for_Freedom_and_Democracy),[[139]](#cite_note-139) and the social democratic [Labour Party](/wiki/Dutch_Labour_Party) – an unusual combination that ultimately [legalised same-sex marriage](/wiki/Same-sex_marriage_in_the_Netherlands), [euthanasia](/wiki/Euthanasia_in_the_Netherlands), and [prostitution](/wiki/Prostitution_in_the_Netherlands) while also instituting a non-enforcement [policy on marijuana](/wiki/Drug_policy_of_the_Netherlands).

### Americas[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|upright|Colour photo of Roosevelt as the](/wiki/File:Franklin_D._Roosevelt_TIME_Man_of_the_Year_1933_color_photo.jpg) [Man of the Year](/wiki/Time_Person_of_the_Year) of [*TIME Magazine*](/wiki/TIME_Magazine), January 1933 In North America, unlike in Europe and Latin America, the word *liberalism* almost exclusively refers to [social liberalism](/wiki/Social_liberalism) in contemporary politics. The dominant Canadian and American parties, the [Liberal Party](/wiki/Liberal_Party_of_Canada) and the [Democratic Party](/wiki/Democratic_Party_(United_States)), are frequently identified as being modern liberal or [centre-left](/wiki/Centre-left) organisations in the academic literature.[[140]](#cite_note-140)[[141]](#cite_note-141)[[142]](#cite_note-142) In Canada, the long-dominant Liberal Party, colloquially known as *the Grits*, [ruled the country](/wiki/History_of_the_Liberal_Party_of_Canada) for nearly 70 years during the 20th century. The party produced some of the most influential prime ministers in [Canadian history](/wiki/History_of_Canada), including [Pierre Trudeau](/wiki/Pierre_Trudeau), [Lester B. Pearson](/wiki/Lester_B._Pearson) and [Jean Chrétien](/wiki/Jean_Chrétien), and has been primarily responsible for the development of the Canadian [welfare state](/wiki/Welfare_state). The enormous success of the Liberals – virtually unmatched in any other [liberal democracy](/wiki/Liberal_democracy) – has prompted many political commentators over time to identify them as the nation's *natural governing party*.[[143]](#cite_note-143) In the United States, [modern liberalism](/wiki/Modern_liberalism_in_the_United_States) traces its history to the popular presidency of [Franklin Delano Roosevelt](/wiki/Franklin_Delano_Roosevelt), who initiated the [New Deal](/wiki/New_Deal) in response to the [Great Depression](/wiki/Great_Depression) and won an [unprecedented four elections](/wiki/List_of_Presidents_of_the_United_States). The [New Deal coalition](/wiki/New_Deal_coalition) established by Franklin Roosevelt left a decisive legacy and influenced many future American presidents, including [John F. Kennedy](/wiki/John_F._Kennedy), a self-described liberal who defined a liberal as "someone who looks ahead and not behind, someone who welcomes new ideas without rigid reactions ... someone who cares about the welfare of the people".[[144]](#cite_note-144) In the late 20th century, a [conservative backlash](/wiki/Conservatism_in_the_United_States) against the kind of liberalism championed by Roosevelt and Kennedy developed in the [Republican Party](/wiki/Republican_Party_(United_States)).[[145]](#cite_note-145) This brand of conservatism primarily reacted against the [civil unrest and the cultural changes](/wiki/African-American_Civil_Rights_Movement_(1955–1968)) that transpired during the 1960s.[[145]](#cite_note-145) It helped launch into power such presidents as [Ronald Reagan](/wiki/Ronald_Reagan), [George H. W. Bush](/wiki/George_H._W._Bush), and [George W. Bush](/wiki/George_W._Bush).[[146]](#cite_note-146) [Economic woes](/wiki/Financial_crisis_of_2007–2010) in the early 21st century led to a resurgence of social liberalism with the election of [Barack Obama](/wiki/Barack_Obama) in the [2008 presidential election](/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2008).[[147]](#cite_note-147) In [Latin America](/wiki/Liberalism_and_conservatism_in_Latin_America), liberal unrest dates back to the 19th century, when liberal groups frequently fought against and violently overthrew [conservative](/wiki/Conservatism) regimes in several countries across the region. Liberal revolutions in countries such as [Mexico](/wiki/Mexican_Revolution) and [Ecuador](/wiki/Liberal_Revolution_of_1895) ushered in the modern world for much of Latin America. Latin American liberals generally emphasised [free trade](/wiki/Free_trade), [private property](/wiki/Private_property), and [anti-clericalism](/wiki/Anti-clericalism).[[148]](#cite_note-148) Today, [market liberals](/wiki/Classical_liberalism) in Latin America are organised in the [Red Liberal de América Latina](/wiki/Liberal_Network_for_Latin_America) (RELIAL), a centre-right network that brings together dozens of liberal parties and organisations.

RELIAL features parties as geographically diverse as the Mexican [Nueva Alianza](/wiki/New_Alliance_Party_(Mexico)) and the [Cuban Liberal Union](/wiki/Cuban_Liberal_Union), which aims to secure power in Cuba. Some major liberal parties in the region continue, however, to align themselves with social liberal ideas and policies – a notable case being the [Colombian Liberal Party](/wiki/Colombian_Liberal_Party), which is a member of the [Socialist International](/wiki/Socialist_International). Another famous example is the Paraguayan [Authentic Radical Liberal Party](/wiki/Authentic_Radical_Liberal_Party), one of the most powerful parties in the country, which has also been classified as centre-left.[[149]](#cite_note-149)

### Other regions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[thumb|upright|In 2014,](/wiki/File:Raif_Badawi_cropped.jpg) [Saudi Arabian](/wiki/Saudi_Arabia) writer and the creator of the website *Free Saudi Liberals*, [Raif Badawi](/wiki/Raif_Badawi), was sentenced to 10 years in prison and 1000 lashes for "insulting Islam". In Asia, liberalism is a much younger political current than in Europe or the Americas. Continentally, liberals are organised through the [Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats](/wiki/Council_of_Asian_Liberals_and_Democrats), which includes powerful parties such the [Liberal Party](/wiki/Liberal_Party_(Philippines)) in the Philippines, the [Democratic Progressive Party](/wiki/Democratic_Progressive_Party) in Taiwan, and the [Democrat Party](/wiki/Democrat_Party_(Thailand)) in Thailand. Two notable examples of liberal influence can be found in India and Australia, although several Asian nations have rejected important liberal principles.

[In Australia](/wiki/Liberalism_in_Australia), liberalism is primarily championed by the [centre-right](/wiki/Centre-right) [Liberal Party](/wiki/Liberal_Party_of_Australia).[[150]](#cite_note-150) The Liberals are a fusion of [classical liberal](/wiki/Classical_liberal) and [conservative](/wiki/Conservative) forces and are affiliated with the [centre-right](/wiki/Centre-right) [International Democrat Union](/wiki/International_Democrat_Union).[[150]](#cite_note-150)[[151]](#cite_note-151)[[152]](#cite_note-152)[[153]](#cite_note-153)[[154]](#cite_note-154) In [India](/wiki/Liberalism_in_India), the most populous democracy in the world, the [Indian National Congress](/wiki/Indian_National_Congress) has long dominated political affairs. The INC was founded in the late 19th century by [liberal nationalists](/wiki/Liberal_nationalism) demanding the creation of a more liberal and autonomous India.[[155]](#cite_note-155) Liberalism continued to be the main ideological current of the group through the early years of the 20th century, but [socialism](/wiki/Socialism) gradually overshadowed the thinking of the party in the next few decades.

A famous struggle led by the INC eventually earned [India's independence from Britain](/wiki/Indian_independence_movement). In recent times, the party has adopted more of a liberal streak, championing open markets while simultaneously seeking social justice. In its *2009 Manifesto*, the INC praised a "secular and liberal" [Indian nationalism](/wiki/Indian_nationalism) against the nativist, communal, and conservative ideological tendencies it claims are espoused by the [right](/wiki/Right-wing_politics).[[156]](#cite_note-156) In general, the major theme of Asian liberalism in the past few decades has been the rise of democratisation as a method facilitate the rapid economic modernisation of the continent.[[157]](#cite_note-157) In nations such as Myanmar, however, liberal democracy has been replaced by [military dictatorship](/wiki/Military_dictatorship).[[158]](#cite_note-158) In Africa, liberalism is comparatively weak. The [Wafd Party](/wiki/Wafd_Party) ("Delegation Party") was a nationalist liberal political party in Egypt. It was said to be Egypt's most popular and influential political party for a period in the 1920s and 30s. Recently, however, liberal parties and institutions have made a major push for political power. On a continental level, liberals are organised in the [Africa Liberal Network](/wiki/Africa_Liberal_Network), which contains influential parties such as the [Popular Movement](/wiki/Popular_Movement_(Morocco)) in Morocco, the [Democratic Party](/wiki/Senegalese_Democratic_Party) in Senegal, and the [Rally of the Republicans](/wiki/Rally_of_the_Republicans) in Côte d'Ivoire.

Among African nations, South Africa stands out for having a notable [liberal tradition](/wiki/Liberalism_in_South_Africa) that other countries on the continent lack. In the middle of the 20th century, the [Liberal Party](/wiki/South_African_Liberal_Party) and the [Progressive Party](/wiki/Progressive_Party_(South_Africa)) were formed to oppose the [apartheid](/wiki/South_Africa_under_apartheid) policies of the government. The Liberals formed a [multiracial](/wiki/Multiracial) party that originally drew considerable support from [urban](/wiki/Urban_area) Blacks and college-educated Whites.[[159]](#cite_note-159) It also gained supporters from the "westernised sectors of the [peasantry](/wiki/Peasant)", and its public meetings were heavily attended by Blacks.[[160]](#cite_note-160) The party had 7,000 members at its height, although its appeal to the White population as a whole was too small to make any meaningful political changes.[[159]](#cite_note-159) The Liberals were disbanded in 1968 after the government passed a law that prohibited parties from having multiracial membership. Today, liberalism in South Africa is represented by the [Democratic Alliance](/wiki/Democratic_Alliance_(South_Africa)), the official opposition party to the ruling [African National Congress](/wiki/African_National_Congress). The Democratic Alliance is the second largest party in the [National Assembly](/wiki/National_Assembly_of_South_Africa) and currently leads the [provincial government of Western Cape](/wiki/Government_of_the_Western_Cape).

## Impact and influence[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

The fundamental elements of [contemporary society](/wiki/Modernity) have liberal roots. The early waves of liberalism popularised [economic individualism](/wiki/Free_market) while expanding [constitutional](/wiki/Constitution) government and [parliamentary](/wiki/Parliament) authority.[[161]](#cite_note-161) One of the greatest liberal triumphs involved replacing the capricious nature of [royalist](/wiki/Royalist) and [absolutist](/wiki/Absolute_monarchy) rule with a decision-making process encoded in written law.[[161]](#cite_note-161) Liberals sought and established a constitutional order that prized important individual freedoms, such as the [freedom of speech](/wiki/Freedom_of_speech) and [of association](/wiki/Freedom_of_association), an [independent judiciary](/wiki/Independence_of_the_judiciary) and public [trial by jury](/wiki/Jury_trial), and the abolition of aristocratic privileges.[[161]](#cite_note-161) These sweeping changes in political authority marked the modern transition from absolutism to constitutional rule.[[161]](#cite_note-161) The expansion and promotion of free markets was another major liberal achievement. Before they could establish markets, however, liberals had to destroy the old economic structures of the world. In that vein, liberals ended [mercantilist policies](/wiki/Mercantilism), royal monopolies, and various other restraints on economic activities.[[161]](#cite_note-161) They also sought to abolish internal barriers to trade – eliminating [guilds](/wiki/Guild), [local tariffs](/wiki/Protectionism), [the Commons](/wiki/Commons) and prohibitions on the sale of land along the way.[[161]](#cite_note-161) Later waves of modern liberal thought and struggle were strongly influenced by the need to expand [civil rights](/wiki/Civil_rights). In the 1960s and 1970s, the cause of [Second Wave feminism](/wiki/Second-wave_feminism) in the United States was advanced in large part by [liberal feminist](/wiki/Liberal_feminism) organisations such as the [National Organization for Women](/wiki/National_Organization_for_Women).[[162]](#cite_note-162) In addition to supporting [gender equality](/wiki/Gender_equality), liberals also have advocated for [racial equality](/wiki/Racial_equality) in their drive to promote civil rights, and a [global civil rights movement](/wiki/Civil_rights_movement) in the 20th century achieved several objectives towards both goals. Among the various regional and national movements, the [civil rights movement in the United States](/wiki/African-American_Civil_Rights_Movement_(1955–1968)) during the 1960s strongly highlighted the liberal efforts for [equal rights](/wiki/Social_equality). Describing the political efforts of the period, some historians have asserted that "the voting rights campaign marked ... the convergence of two political forces at their zenith: the black campaign for equality and the movement for liberal reform," further remarking about how "the struggle to assure blacks the ballot coincided with the liberal call for expanded federal action to protect the rights of all citizens".[[163]](#cite_note-163) The [Great Society](/wiki/Great_Society) project launched by [President](/wiki/President_of_the_United_States) [Lyndon B. Johnson](/wiki/Lyndon_B._Johnson) oversaw the creation of [Medicare](/wiki/Medicare_(United_States)) and [Medicaid](/wiki/Medicaid), the establishment of [Head Start](/wiki/Head_Start_Program) and the [Job Corps](/wiki/Job_Corps) as part of the [War on Poverty](/wiki/War_on_Poverty), and the passage of the landmark [Civil Rights Act of 1964](/wiki/Civil_Rights_Act_of_1964) – an altogether rapid series of events that some historians have dubbed *the Liberal Hour*.[[164]](#cite_note-164) Another major liberal accomplishment includes the rise of [liberal internationalism](/wiki/Liberal_internationalism), which has been credited with the establishment of global organisations such as the [League of Nations](/wiki/League_of_Nations) and, after World War II, the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations).[[165]](#cite_note-165) The idea of exporting liberalism worldwide and constructing a harmonious and liberal internationalist order has dominated the thinking of liberals since the 18th century.[[166]](#cite_note-166) "Wherever liberalism has flourished domestically, it has been accompanied by visions of liberal internationalism," one historian wrote.[[166]](#cite_note-166) But resistance to liberal internationalism was deep and bitter, with critics arguing that growing global interdependency would result in the loss of national sovereignty and that democracies represented a corrupt order incapable of either domestic or global governance.[[167]](#cite_note-167) Other scholars have praised the influence of liberal internationalism, claiming that the rise of [globalisation](/wiki/Globalisation) "constitutes a triumph of the liberal vision that first appeared in the eighteenth century" while also writing that liberalism is "the only comprehensive and hopeful vision of world affairs".[[168]](#cite_note-168) The gains of liberalism have been significant. In 1975, roughly 40 countries around the world were characterised as liberal democracies, but that number had increased to more than 80 as of 2008.[[169]](#cite_note-169) Most of the [world's richest](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal)_per_capita) and [most powerful](/wiki/Great_power) nations are liberal democracies with extensive [social welfare programmes](/wiki/Welfare_state).[[170]](#cite_note-170)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [Constitutional liberalism](/wiki/Constitutional_liberalism)
* [Friedrich Naumann Foundation](/wiki/Friedrich_Naumann_Foundation) is a global advocacy organisation that supports liberal ideas and policies.
* [Liberalism by country](/wiki/Category:Liberalism_by_country)
* [Muscular liberalism](/wiki/Muscular_liberalism)
* [Rule according to higher law](/wiki/Rule_according_to_higher_law)
* [*The American Prospect*](/wiki/The_American_Prospect) is an American political magazine that backs social liberal policies.
* [*The Liberal*](/wiki/The_Liberal) was a British magazine dedicated to coverage of liberal politics and liberal culture.

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

* [Liberalism](http://www.britannica.com/bps/additionalcontent/14/117903/liberalism) an article by [Encyclopædia Britannica](/wiki/Encyclopædia_Britannica)
* [Template:Cite SEP](/wiki/Template:Cite_SEP)
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