

**Do-Gooders,  
Evolutionists,  
Racists**

The term "liberalism" is used to describe those intellectuals who held a different view from "conservatives" of the day.

Conservatives supported the rights of the aristocracy and king (i.e., supported tradition, ways of the past).

Liberals used science to support their beliefs.

Science brought the Enlightenment which revolted against traditional religion.

Liberals believed in a natural law that humans are the most advanced species due to their ability to communicate (i.e., make sense of symbols in the form of words)

The concept of symbols and symbolic interaction inspired social theory development in the 1900s

Eventually the liberals split into two competing groups based on two differing perspectives:

Belief in natural law  
(the evolutionists, supply and demand)

and

Belief in social reform (utilitarianism—the "Do-Gooders")

Evolutionists (e.g., Herbert Spenser, 1820-1903) equated society to the human body.

Society evolves from simpler to more complex. To a point where the many parts function together. Parts that are no longer needed die away.

All restraints are unnatural (e.g., gov't intervention, regulations, unions) and should be opposed

The social reformers (or utilitarian wing) recognized the many social ills of the day (poor working conditions in factories, child labor, poor health) and argued that government should intervene.

How might the social reformers view social stratification (such as division of society by income level and education) differently from evolutionists?

Do evolutionists view "war" as improving or inhibiting the human race?

How do the evolutionists' views provide a rationale for practicing racism?

Beliefs in natural laws of supply and demand suggest government not interfere with market economy

What are some reasons for and against this "laissez-faire" view?

What is the difference between social theory and social reform?

How are they related to one another?

Social theory develops explanations for human behavior.

Social reform applies theories for the "betterment" of society

Contribution of Americans to Liberalism:

No major contributors to social theory (except perhaps Sumner)  
The focus was on social problems

For example, Hull House in Chicago ministered to immigrants and professional women.

Graham Sumner, an American evolutionist, most noteworthy for his development of the idea of "mores" of a society.

Mores define what the society views as important (eg., what is important is relative to the times)

"Mores can make anything right"

American universities were moving from traditional curriculums to new specialties

The first sociology department was established in 1892 at the University of Chicago

Would you say "social reform" hinders or enhances the development of social theory?

Sociobiology:

--the systematic study of the biological basis for social behavior

--examines the social behavior of animals as well as humans

Thank you.