

Good example of reform darwinism essay

[Countries](#), [Germany](#)



1. NATURE OF OPPOSING FORCES OF SOCIAL REFORM AND WHITE SUPREMACY (1880-1900)

Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain identified the last years of the 19th century as “ Gilded Age”. At this time, population grew and economy boomed in the United States. In 1890, the earnings of Americans overran those of their counterparts in other countries. This was also a time when immigrants were allowed inside United States to balance the human workforce in large industries. Around twenty two million people are said to have migrated to the U. S. between 1880 and 1914. The Gilded Age and the first few years of the 20th century were a time of great social change and economic growth in the United States. The years between Reconstruction and the beginning of the new century saw rapid industrialization, urbanization, construction of transcontinental railroads, innovations in science and technology and rise of big businesses.

Railroads were the most important aspects in new industrialized economy. The railroad industry facilitated people with raw materials, finished products, food and made it possible to travel cross-country in a matter of few days, against the weeks and months required to travel just before the Civil War. With the help of railroads, millions of people migrated to urban America and by the end of 1900; nearly 40% of the population lived in rural areas. By 20th century, with the rise in industrialization, economic growth and migration of people, political leaders found it necessary to make laws to settle the social and economic problems that were growing along with the urban growth. Hence the Progressive movement was started. Progressives passed legislation to rein big business, combat corruption, protect the rights

of consumers, workers, immigrant and the poor. 1

White Supremacy is a belief and a promotion of belief that white people are superior to people with other racial backgrounds and therefore they should dominate over the non-whites in political and economic ways. White supremacy was dominant in the United States before the Civil war and many years after Reconstruction. In large areas, the whites held non-whites as slaves. In some parts, non-whites were restricted from entering government offices, prevented holding government jobs. Legislations were also made to prevent interracial marriages. The abolitionist movement of the 19th century tried to humanize the plight of African slaves in many ways. At the same time, racism was becoming widespread. It included not just African Americans, but also Native Americans, Mexican Americans and Chinese Americans. This kind of severe racism prevailed until the second half of the 20th century. White leaders considered Native Americans as obstacles to political and economic progress, in respect to the claims of natives' land and rights. Many white families migrated since they did not want to live with the blacks or non-whites. Between 1889 and early 1920s, nearly 50-100 lynching took place in a year. While blacks were mostly lynched, Jews, Asian Americans, Italian Americans were also lynched. Even in the North, blacks faced racism and discrimination when they competed for jobs with whites. 1

2. SOCIAL DARWINISM'S CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN THOUGHTS (1880-1920)

Social Darwinism is the application of Darwinism or the concept “ survival of the fittest” to everyday social situations. The general principle behind this theory is that, the strong will see their wealth and power increase while the

weak will see their wealth and power decrease. Social Darwinism is a term to given to various modern theories of society that emerged in England and United States in the 1870s. Social Darwinism concept originally started in Britain in the second half of the 19th century, when Darwin addressed natural selection specifically to people in the Decent of the Man in 1871. The Englishman most associated with Darwinism was Herbert Spencer, a sociologist. He used the term “ survival of the fittest” for the outcome of competitions between social groups. In U. S., Spencer became notable among many businesspersons and intellectuals. He argued that, through competition, social evolution would automatically achieve its prosperity and liberty in human history. The most prominent American Social Darwinist of 1880s was William Graham Sumner. He quoted in many places that there is no alternative for the theory of survival of the fittest. Many social Darwinism critics opposed this idea as they felt it dictated oppression on human race. However, many groups and political strategies branched out from the term Social Darwinism in 1900s. The two famous ones are Reform Darwinism and Laissez-faire Economics.

Few social reformers used Darwinism to receive stronger role for government and introduction of many new social policies. This reform was known as Reform Darwinism. Reform Darwinists argued that, new ideas and institutions should be catered to human beings in order to adapt to changing situations. In U. S., many people believed that their Constitution needs to be reformed according to the changes in the American society. The principles of evolution were used to justify sexist and racist ideas by most of the Reformers. This modified their belief about equality. Most extreme type of

reform Darwinism was called Eugenics, derived from a Greek word eugenav, meaning wellborn. Eugenists believed and claimed that some racial and social group- especially wealthy ones are “ naturally” superior to the minority groups. They proposed to control human species by making laws which forbid marriage between certain races or that restrict breeding for various social misfits. 3

LAISSEZ-FAIRE ECONOMICS:

Laissez-faire means “ let things alone” in French. Here some social Darwinists argued that government should not interfere with human competition by attempting to control the economy or solving social issues like poverty. Instead, they encouraged laissez-faire economic and political system. The principles of laissez-faire and free trade helped strongly to the growing number of robber barons of Industrial revolution. They demanded to be free from government regulations and taxations in order to make their businesses as per their own interests. However, this system led to increase the cases of abuse, especially child labor. More and more businesses combined to control production and price for the advantage of owners and hence competition was eliminated. State economic reforms and laissez-faire had to be reformed. Government controls were reasserted throughout the Western world. 3

3. AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND MAIN CAUSES FOR AMERICA’S INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD WAR I (1914-1917)

UNITED STATES’ “ NEUTRALITY” UNDER WILSON’S PRESIDENCY:

During presidency period, Woodrow Wilson encouraged Americans to look beyond economic interests and to set foreign policy in terms of morality, ideal and spread of democracy abroad. The U. S. had a strong precedent to keep themselves away from the European political entanglements. In a public session, Wilson announced that the United States “ must be neutral in fact as well as in name” and “ impartial in thought as well as in action”. As a neutral nation, United States traded goods like food, clothing, equipment, medicines and arms to both sides of the war. American ports were open for all powers as long as they were not used for military purposes. At first, both sides of war agreed not to interfere with the neutral shipping lines. However, in 1917, Germans made an unrestricted submarine attack on the ships causing huge number of casualties. Despite the official neutrality of U. S. a large increase in loans and exports to allies, led to an interest the Allied victory. Exports to Germany and its allies reduced significantly, while that to Britain and France increased. Disparities in trade between countries at war led to conflicts both domestically and internationally.

REASONS THAT LEAD AMERICA INTO WORLD WAR I:

On April 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson requested a declaration of war against Germany in a joint session of Congress. His reasons for declaring war were justified by citing that Germany has violated its pledge to suspend unrestricted submarine warfare in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean regions, and its attempt to include Mexico in an alliance against the United

States. Germany's submarine attack on passengers and merchants' ships in 1917 were the primary reasons behind the involvement of United States in the Great War. After the sinking of an unarmed French boat in the English Channel in 1916, Wilson threatened to sever the peaceful relations with Germany unless they refrained their submarine attacks. Agreeing to the terms and conditions, German government made "Sussex Pledge" in 1916. However, the situations had changed in 1917. The members of German navy convinced the military leadership to resume unrestricted submarine attacks to defeat Great Britain within 5 months. Germany's Chancellor also did not agree to the decision of resuming unrestricted submarine attacks, since it would mean violating "Sussex Pledge" and involving the United States into war on behalf of the allies. Despite of the warnings, German government resumed their submarine attacks, violating the "Sussex Pledge" 4

Another reason that led United States into World War I was the "Zimmerman Telegram". This is about the German government's attempt to create a secret alliance with Mexico against the United States. In 1917, British naval intelligence team decrypted a telegram from German Foreign minister Arthur Zimmerman to the German Ambassador in Mexico City, promising to help Mexico recover the states it ceded to U. S following the Mexican-American war, if Mexico helps Germany in the war. Hence, the violation of "Sussex Pledge" and the "Zimmerman Telegram" helped gain public support for the involvement of U. S. in the World War I. 4

4. BILL CLINTON- A NEW DEMOCRAT

INTRODUCTION:

In the politics of the United States, New Democrats are a group of centrist faction within the Democratic Party that was created after the victory of Republican George H. W. Bush in the 1988 presidential elections. New Democrats are identified with centrist social, culture, diverse and neoliberal values. They are represented by organizations such as New Democrat Network, the Senate and the House. Their political strategy is considered the third way, same as New Labor in U. K. The Third Way refers to various political positions, which try to restore right wing and left-wing politics by advocating a varying formulation for right-wing economics and left wing social policies.

WHAT CLINTON MEANT WHEN HE CALLED HIMSELF A “ NEW DEMOCRAT”?

Bill Clinton was the single Democratic politician of 1990s most identified with the New Democrats. When Clinton was running for the presidency election in 1991-1992, the Democratic Party was in the season of a major decline. Only one Democrat had been elected as president since 1964. This meant the Republicans have won five out of last six elections. Bill Clinton proclaimed himself as a “ New Democrat” in this context. By this, he meant that he was not a typical liberal democrat. Instead, he identified himself in the position of a centrist. Bill Clinton symbolically showed his freedom from the Democrats’ blacks by attacking a rapper for saying that there should be a week for blacks to kill the whites instead of one another. He led the fight to reform welfares, even though it was something that Democrats had fought hard when President Reagan tried to attack it. Through these kind of activities, Bill

Clinton proved that he and the Democratic Party have become more centrist and therefore worthy of being elected. 5

CONCLUSION:

Bill Clinton has challenged the understanding of linkages between presidential parties and economic outcomes. He campaigned as a New Democrat, and in the historic view, he has generally governed as one. He has emphasized the government's role in creating incentive structures and punitive procedures to direct private economic activity. Bill Clinton and his philosophy do not just create an ideological real estate in the middle of an ideological spectrum. However, the political realities of early to mid-1990s and New Democrat ideology may have come together to create a new economic philosophy. Perhaps this combination may be defined as “ New Democrat”. Clinton's New Democrat promises and the urgings of moderate economic advisors limited the activities of activist initiatives. An important part of the New Democrat ideology is focused on economy. During Bill Clinton's period, New Democrats were responsible for passing the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993. It imposed higher taxes on the wealthiest 1. 2% taxpayers and cutting down taxes on families receiving low-incomes. Tax cuts were also made available to 90% of small businesses. In addition to tax cuts, an official command was made to maintain the economy stable over the years, by controlling expenditures. 5

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