

The Political Spectrum

Instructions

- Fill in the bar across the top of the spectrum with the terms seen in the next slide.
- From then on, you will see each topic row by row, left to right. The left page will show first; then the right page.
- To study for the quiz, look at the information under each topic and think about which term it goes with. See instructions at the end of the slide show.

Political

Spectrum

Left wing

Moderate

Right wing

Radical

Liberal

Conservative

Reactionary

Change

Tradition/
Reform

Human Nature

Left wing

Radical

Liberal

Change

- “rad” = root;
change at the root
level
- System is corrupt;
must create new one

Example: weeds –
must pull them out
by the roots; plant
something new

Saying: “Start over from scratch”



“liber” = free (seeks liberties, rights)

- Change things; solve problems
- find new ways of doing things
- change within the system
- Change is good – the future can be
even better

Saying: “Don’t get stuck in a rut”

*Buzz words: Reform; Progressive;
Change = Progress*

Right Wing

Conservative

Reactionary

Change

- Conserve = protect, preserve
- Maintain the status quo; keep things the way they are (the present is good)
- Need good reasons to change

Saying: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!"

"React" – respond to change

- Regress (go back) to the way things used to be (the past was good)
- Hostile to change

Saying: "Back in the good ol' days..."



Left wing

Radical

Liberal

Views about
tradition
and
reform

Different traditions &
heritages are divisive
& dangerous

Therefore, include
all peoples by doing
away with
differences,
by force, if necessary

*Saying: "Religion is the
opiate of the people."*

Support diversity of all
groups

Therefore, willing to
question traditions and
heritage -- may see
some in need of change

Accept multiple cultures,
holidays, and/or lifestyles

Saying: "Can't we all get along?"

Become more inclusive

Right Wing

Conservative

Reactionary →

Views
about
tradition
and
reform

- Confidence in & love of tradition and heritage (in USA = WASP)
- Certain amount of conformity - “should do this”

*Buzz words: “Family values;”
“the American Way”*

- **Must** be part of the accepted “traditional” group
- If not, you are excluded, by force, if necessary

Deport, enslave, imprison, or eliminate excluded groups
ex.: the Holocaust,
“Ethnic cleansing,” genocide

→
Become more exclusive

Left wing

Radical

Liberal

Views
about
human
nature

Work to make all
people equal --
people will become
happy and not need
gov't

Until then, full
government control
to institute reform

Communes;
Communism

Optimistic – people are
basically good: controlled
by how they are *nurtured*

-Based on Enlightenment
ideals: “tabula rasa” or
“blank slate”

-People can be trusted and
can change – gov't should
make reform, education,
and social programs

Right Wing

Conservative

Reactionary

Views
about
human
nature

Pessimistic – people
are basically bad in
their ***nature: born
bad*** - can't reform a
person's nature

*Based on Biblical concept of
“original sin”*

-Favors fewer government
programs -- fears people
will abuse them

- Government's role should
be to rein in human nature

*More and
more social
control*



Police state
Dictatorship:
Fascism

- Rule by the
elite few;
hierarchy of
privilege
- Persecution of
excluded groups

Left wing

Radical

Liberal

Views
about
Authority
& personal freedom
(Role of
Gov't)

Ultimate goal:
everyone
is equal and
content --
No need for
gov't

For now, make
everyone equal (the
same) through force

No individuality –
you can't be different

*More and
more
eco-
nomic
control*

Favors personal
freedoms for the
masses – especially
in the areas of social
issues and First
Amendment rights

More social equality;
workers' rights;
regulate business for
the sake of society



Right Wing

Conservative

Reactionary

Views about
authority
and personal
freedom

Favors more
authority over the
masses

Fewer individual
freedoms, aside
from in business

Control social behavior
(protects tradition)

*More and
more
social
control*



Authoritarian
dictatorship;
Fascism -- complete
control

Remove
opposition
with force

(imprison, deport,
eliminate
opposition)

Left wing

Radical

Liberal



Gov't and

the Economy: Nationalize
industries

All property owned
by the state

“Collectivism” -
everyone works for
the common good
enslave, imprison or
eliminate those
who will not conform
(gulags -- work camps,
“purges”)

Gov't should regulate
business (labor laws,
environmental safety,
consumer standards, etc.)

Create gov't programs to help
the masses; taxes required
(price of doing business)

Capitalism accepted, with
restrictions

Right Wing

Conservative

Reactionary

Gov't and
Economy

Laissez-Faire capitalism:
Gov't leaves business alone

Decrease social welfare
& other gov't programs –
Small gov't is best:

- lighten regulations
- reduce taxes
- tax breaks for business

Exception: gov't
programs to help business
(tariffs, subsidies, recent
bailouts)

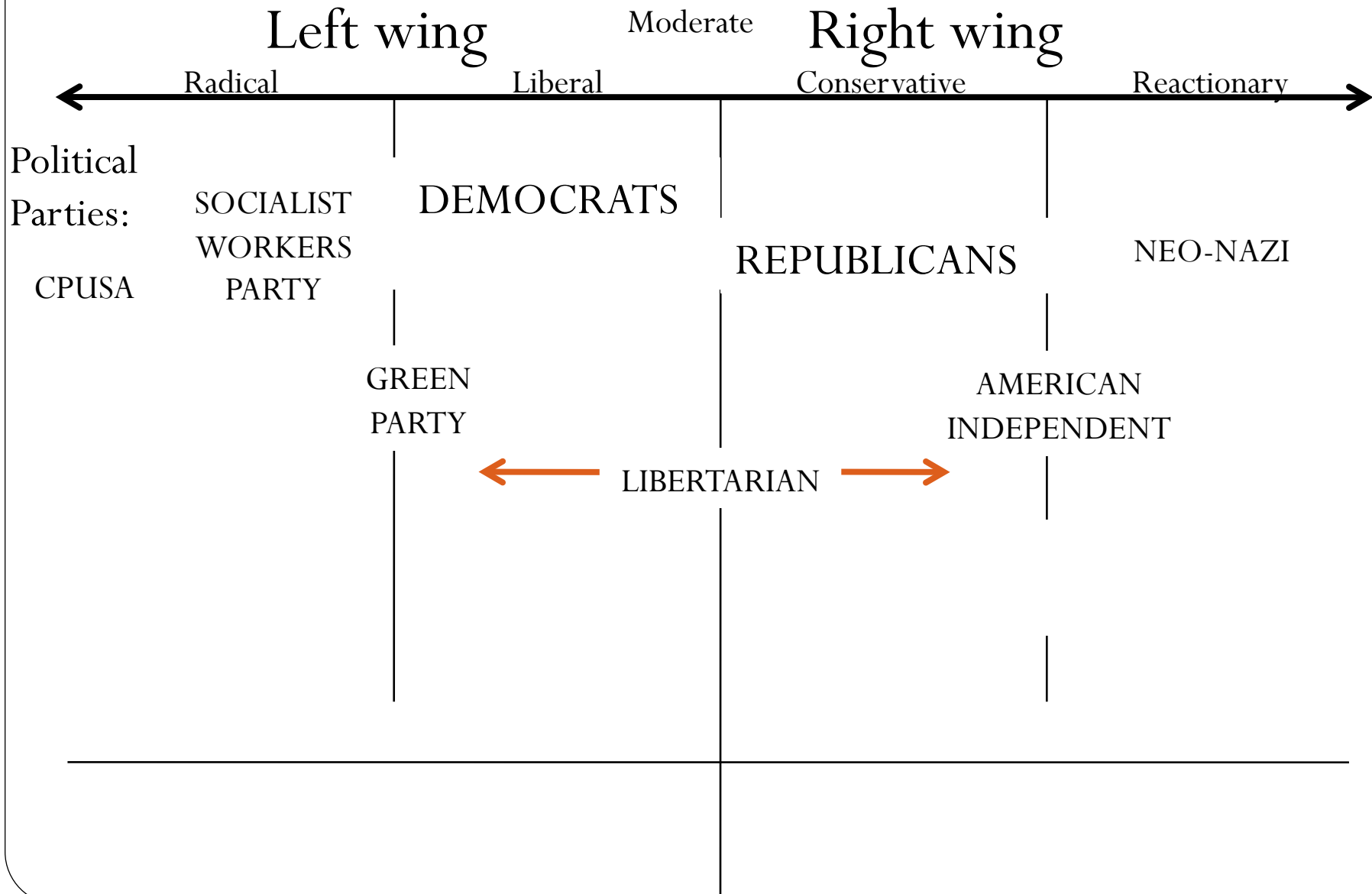
Symbiotic relationship
with big business

Big business and
fascist dictators can work
together -- very efficient
and mutually beneficial

Discriminatory laws
against social groups

ex.: Jews restricted from
certain jobs in Nazi
Germany; later made into
slaves

Political Spectrum



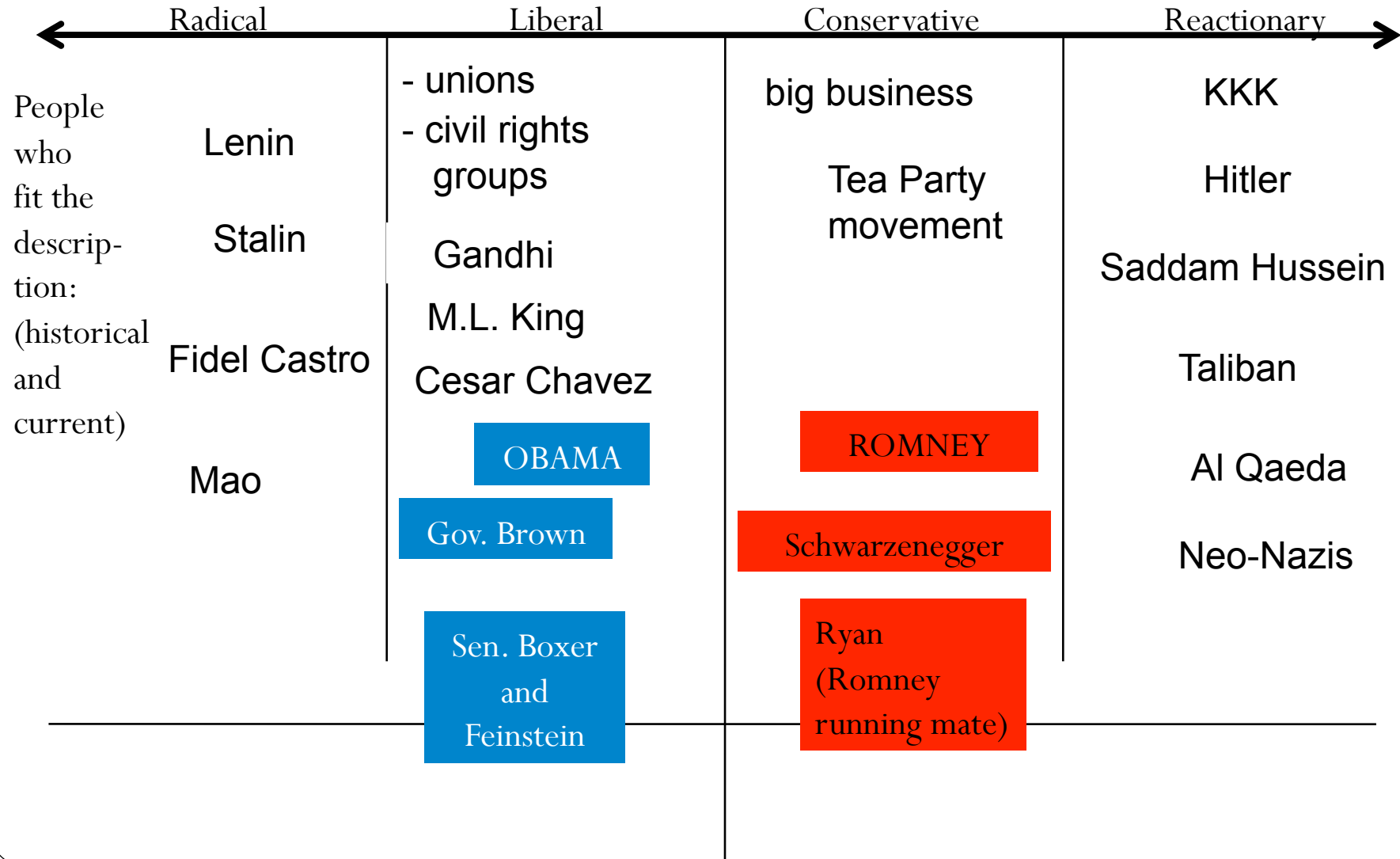
Political

Left wing

Spectrum

Right wing

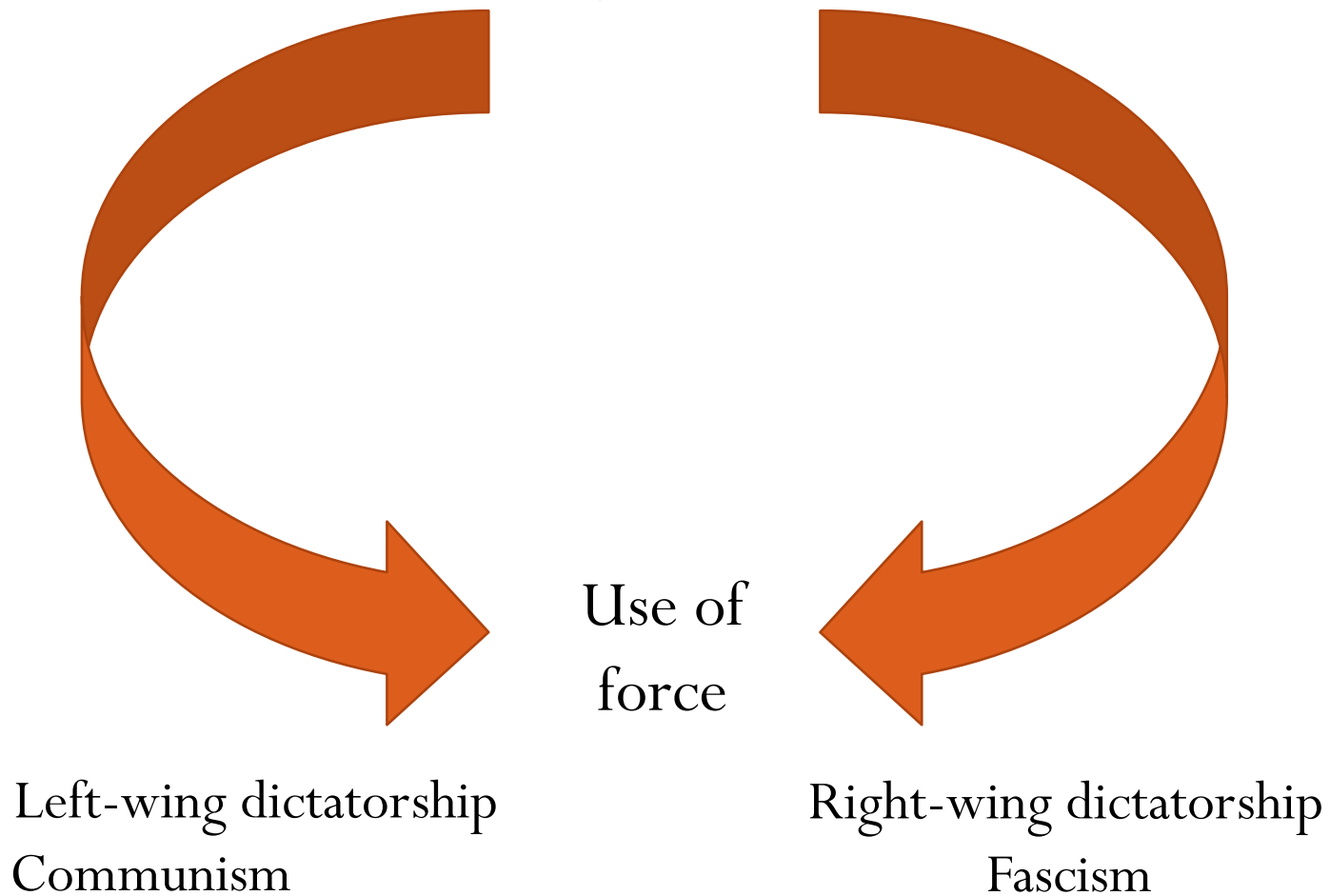
Moderate



Note

- You may notice that both the Radical and Reactionary positions on the spectrum use oppression and violence to enforce what they believe. The methods of the people on the extremes are often the same. So what makes them different and opposite?
 - The extreme right focuses on social control and a hierarchical view of who is accepted or not. Only the “in crowd” is accepted and all others are excluded.
 - The extreme left focuses on economic control and the intention of making everyone economically equal. They frown on individualism and impose collectivism.

In practice, the straight line of the spectrum is
really a curve



Instructions for quiz

- Memorize the positions of the 4 terms (Radical, Liberal, Conservative, Reactionary)
- The quiz will ask you to place those terms on a blank line (spectrum, continuum)
- Then study the information in the chart so you can identify which position might be taken by each
 - Example: you'll see "has an optimistic view of human nature; believes that people are basically good" – you would choose the letter for "liberal"