

How far behind was the U.S. in building a welfare state before 1914?

France-

1. 1899-1914-progressive income tax, public medical assistance to the elderly poor, maximum hours for a regulated work day

Germany-

1. 1880s social insurance
2. 1905-1911-reform, state socialism
3. 1890s to 1914—compulsory old age insurance

Great Britain

1. Rent set by commissions—Gladstone & Irish land reform 1881—what is a fair rent?
2. 1906-1914—Liberal Party-borrow old age pension idea from New Zealand, compulsory health insurance from Germany, Australian ideas about wage boards to set fair wages, progressive land and income taxes, unemployment offices from Germany, state-run unemployment insurance

Denmark, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada also had some advanced social policies

In the U.S. debates focused on:

How much power should states and the federal government have?

Should private businesses control transportation, water, gas, mines, roads, and later airwaves or should the public interest prevail?

Should employers have unregulated power to decide the safety of workplaces, the hours and wages, the right of workers to discuss workplace problems together and then bargain for better conditions and wages?

Social Darwinists and pro-business theorists argued for an absolute free market (federal government subsidies for railroad development were fine with them).

Reform Darwinists, progressives of several movements and beliefs, Social Gospel followers, settlement house workers, the Socialist Party and the Socialist Labor Party, and the Progressive Party argued for federal and state government intervention in defending public interest. They disagreed about how far the government should go.

TR as president—regulation of trusts, pure food, drug, meat guaranteed by federal regulation

TR in 1912-old age pension, unemployment insurance, minimum wage, suffrage, workmen's compensation, health insurance

