

Progressivism

Reforming Industrial America

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The Spirit of Reform

- “Death” of Populism
 - Election of 1896
 - 1897- world market becomes more favorable for agricultural commodities
- Birth of Progressivism (late 19th – WWI)
 - Reform big business and restore competition
 - Reform political system
 - Social justice and welfare, primarily in urban areas
 - Rejuvenate social morals

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Who are the Progressives? What motivates and influences them?

- Not a cohesive movement (No single constituency, agenda, or unifying organization)
- Idealism
 - Religion
 - Federal Council of Churches (1908) aimed at “promoting the application of the law of Christ in every relation to human life.” (Social Gospel)
 - Channeled towards secular reform
 - Reject social Darwinism
- Faith in scientific investigation and management
 - Wisconsin Idea and Robert M. La Follette
 - “The close intimacy of the university with public affairs explains the democracy, the thoroughness, and the scientific accuracy of the state in its legislation.”
 - Scientific analysis of human activity offers solutions to waste and inefficiency – Taylor
 - Social sciences
 - Role of experts
- Belief in activist government
 - Regulate the economy
 - Not revolutionaries but reformers
 - Restore “free competition”
 - Solve social problems

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Social Reform: Cross-class cooperation and voluntarism to state programs

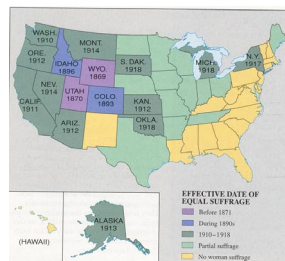
- Settlement Houses (400 by 1910)
 - Alternative to traditional charities
 - Middle-class and educated reformers
 - Women and professional alternatives
 - Immigrant or Racialized Communities
- National Consumers’ League (1899)
 - “White List” – consumer support of working conditions
 - Florence Kelley –protective legislation
 - 8-hour day limit for women
 - Ban on child labor under 14
 - *Muller v. Oregon* (1908) upheld 10 hour workday for women
 - Brandeis brief – sociological jurisprudence
- Public health
 - Educational lectures
 - Low-cost health services
 - State-provided services
 - Lillian Wald “The whole world is my neighborhood.”



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From Maternalism to Feminism

- Maternalist welfare – “social housekeeping” - saving women and children
 - Public assistance for women with dependent children (Ill. 1911)
 - Min. wage law for women (MA, 1912)
 - Children’s (1912) and Women’s (1920)Bureaus in the Labor Department
- Feminism (1914)
 - “We intend simply to be ourselves...not just our little female selves, but our whole big human selves.” Marie Jenny Howe, 1914
 - “Voluntary Motherhood” to “Birth Control” (1913)
 - Margaret Sanger
- Suffrage
 - State to National Amendment strategy



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Social Justice or Social Control?

- Temperance
- Home Protection
 - Social justice for women and children
 - Social control of men
- Pietists (moral absolutism) vs. ritualists
 - Ethnic/religious tensions
 - xenophobia
- Class divisions
 - Social control of working-class
- Anti-urban
 - Fear of unruly and vice-ridden urban centers

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Reforming Political Machines

- Ethnic, working-class loyalties
 - 1920, immigrants and children 60% of cities over 100,000
- Urban vice
- “Good Government” movement
 - City government by experts
 - City commission (at-large elections, dept. function)
 - City manager (appt. professional non-partisan manager)
 - Promoted by business and professional elites
- Efficiency and Social Welfare

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Political Machines as Reformers

- Triangle Shirtwaist Company (3/25/1911)
 - 146 died, 47 jumped
- International Ladies Garment Workers Union (1900) and Women’s Trade Union League (1903)
 - 1909 Uprising of the 20,000
- New York State Factory Commission
 - 56 laws dealing with fire hazards, unsafe machines, homework, and wages and hours for women and children
- Tammany Hall participation
 - From spoils to welfare legislation
 - Urban liberalism
- AFL
 - Voluntarism to political involvement
 - Expand base of concern



“A cousin of mine worked for the Triangle Shirtwaist Company and she got me on there in October of 1901. It was probably the largest shirtwaist factory in the city of New York then.... We started work at seven-thirty in the morning, and during the busy season we worked until nine in the evening. They didn't pay you any overtime and they didn't give you anything for supper money....The employers didn't recognize anyone working for them as a human being....If you went to the toilet and you were there longer than the floor lady thought you should be, you would be laid off for half a day and sent home. And, of course, that meant no pay. You were not allowed to have your lunch on the fire escape in the summertime. The door was locked to keep us in. That's why so many people were trapped when the fire broke out....After the 1909 strike I worked with the union....so I wasn't at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory when the fire broke out, but a lot of my friends were....It's very difficult to describe the feeling because I knew the place and I knew so many of the girls. The thing that bothered me was the employers got a lawyer....One hundred and forty-six people were sacrificed, and the judge fined Blank and Harris seventy-five dollars!” Pauline Newman, organizer for the ILGWU.

State Reforms and Regional Variations

- Strengthen Democracy
 - Initiative – direct vote on measures by petition
 - Referendum – voters decide on legislative bills
 - Direct primary – vs. party-nominated candidates
 - Recall – remove elected officials by popular vote
- West
 - Railroads, mining, timber, public utilities
 - Workers compensation
- South
 - Regulate railroads
 - Child labor and literacy
 - Jim Crow
 - Poll taxes, literacy requirements, “grandfather clauses” – Jan. 1, 1867

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African American Progressivism

- Northern Migration
 - 200,000 from 1900-1910
- Racial tensions in the North
 - D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915)
 - Reformation of KKK
- Niagara Movement (1906) and NAACP (1909)
 - Challenge accommodation
 - Advocate for political and civil equality
 - Higher vs. industrial education
 - Celebrate value of unique culture
- National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (1896)
 - Social welfare
 - Fill vacuum of disfranchised black men in South

W.E.B. DuBois



- Muckraking (exposure journalism)
 - Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890)
 - Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (1906)
- Focus public attention and moral outrage on excesses of industrialization
 - National constituency
 - Consumer Protection
 - Concern about social morals and poverty
- National Legislation
 - The Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act (1906)
 - Food and Drug Administration
 - Company cooperation
 - Mann Act (1910) and “white slavery”
 - Federal offense to transport women across state lines for “immoral purposes”

National Progressivism

“Gullible America will spend this year some seventy-five millions of dollars in the purchase of patent medicines. In consideration of this sum it will swallow huge quantities of alcohol, an appalling amount of opiates and narcotics, a wide assortment of varied drugs ranging from powerful and dangerous heart depressants to insidious liver stimulants; and, far in excess of all other ingredients, undiluted fraud. For fraud, exploited by the skillfullest of advertising bunco men, is the basis of the trade.”

Collier's, 1905

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Trust Busting

- T.R. (1901-1908) and the “bully pulpit”
- Protection of individualism and economic competition
 - not equal to anti-big business
- Litigation
 - 43 cases under Sherman Antitrust Act
 - Courts decide “good” and “bad”
- Administrative regulation
 - Hepburn Railway Act (1906)
 - Empower ICC to set max. rates on railroads
 - Clayton Antitrust Act (1914)
 - Amended Sherman Act
 - Exempted unions from being considered as trusts
 - Definition of unlawful practices left flexible, subject to the test of whether the effect “substantially lessened competition or tended to create a monopoly in any line of commerce”
 - Federal Trade Commission (1914)
 - Investigate companies and issue “cease and desist” orders against unfair trade practices that violated antitrust law
- Why do businesses cooperate?



“Twenty-two years ago there were no trusts....The example of the United States, the land in which individualism has been most conspicuously vigorous, may seem to suggest that the world is passing out of the stage of individualism and returning to that earlier stage in which groups of men formed the units of society. The bond of association was, in those early days, kinship, real or supposed, and a servile or quasi-servile dependence of the weak upon the strong. Now it is the power of wealth which enables the few to combine so as to gain command of the sources of wealth.” James Bryce, British author, 1905

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Who benefits from Progressivism?

- Election of 1912
 - Wilson won 42% of popular vote, but a landslide in electoral votes
 - Roosevelt runs as Progressive candidate, splitting Republican vote
- First Graduated Income Tax (up to 6%)
 - 16 amend. (1913)
- Federal Reserve Banks (1913)
 - 12 reserve banks regulated by central board in Washington
 - Cash reserves kept in FRB
 - “Fed” has control over credit expansion or contraction
- Who benefits?

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How to assess Progressivism?

- Era of social reform to ameliorate abuses of industrialization
- Promote creation of activist state
- Maternalist welfare programs
- Use techniques of incorporation
- Social Justice or Social Control?

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