1.6

PROGRESSIVE ERA

Lecture Handout

**Key Terms:**

Progressives

Reform

Social injustice

Muckrakers

Hull House

Suffrage

Temperance Movement

Haymarket Riot

17th Amendment

Direct Primary

Initiative

Referendum

Recall

Eugene V. Debs

Pullman Strike

Sherman Anti-Trust Act

**Essential Questions:**

Who were the Progressives?

How did those involved in the progressive era contribute to American reforms?

What does it mean to be “progressive” why does it matter today?

**Origins of Progressive Reform**

The Progressive Era was a period of social activism and political reform in the United States that flourished from the 1890s to the 1920s. Progressives believed that things could be made better through government regulation of society.

* **WHEN?** “Progressive Reform Era” 1900-1920
* **WHO?** “Progressives”
  + Typically were white, urban middle-class: managers & professionals; women
* **WHY?** Address the problems arising from:
  + industrialization (big business, working conditions)
  + urbanization (slums, political machines, corruption)
  + immigration (ethnic diversity)
  + inequality & social injustice, which is unfair treatment or when people’s rights are being ignored. (women & racism)
* **WHAT** are their goals?
  + Democracy – government accountable to the people
  + Regulation of corporations & monopolies
  + Social justice – for workers, poor, minorities
  + Environmental protection—improving living conditions
* **HOW?**
  + Government (laws, regulations, programs)
  + value experts, use of scientific study to determine the best solution

**SOCIAL REFORM**

Muckrakers were reform-minded journalists who wrote largely for all popular magazines and continued a tradition of investigative journalism reporting. They often worked to *expose social ills and corporate and political corruption*.

* Jacob Riis – *How the Other Half Lives* (1890)
  + Photojournalist who published *How The Other Half Lives* in 1890
  + Documented appalling living conditions in New York City slums in the 1880s.
  + Exposing the slums to New York City’s upper and middle classes.
* Ida Tarbell – “The History of the Standard Oil Co.” (1902)
  + An investigative writer who studied Standard Oil and wrote a book in 1904.
  + She depicted John D. Rockefeller as miserly, money-grabbing, and viciously effective at monopolizing the oil trade.
* Upton Sinclair– *The Jungle* (1906)
  + Wrote the novel, *The Jungle* (1909)
  + The book depicts working class poverty, the absence of social programs, harsh and unpleasant living and working conditions, and a hopelessness among many workers.
  + Many readers were most concerned with his exposure of health violations and unsanitary practices in the American meatpacking industry during the early 20th century

Settlement Houses were a center for poor immigrants to receive help

* The Hull House was a settlement house for U.S. immigrants in Chicago founded by Jane Addams

Workplace & labor reforms

* + eight-hour work day
  + improved safety & health conditions in factories
  + workers compensation laws
  + minimum wage laws
  + unionization
  + child labor laws

Women and Suffrage

* Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) & Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902)
* Two of the first notable activists for women
* Advocated for equal rights of women and for suffrage, which is the right to vote
* Susan B. Anthony was arrested in Rochester, NY in 1872 for trying to vote
* Anthony and Stanton formed the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) in 1890
* Stanton was the president of the National Woman Suffrage Association for 20 years and worked closely with Susan B. Anthony.
* Alice Paul (1885-1977)
  + founded the National Woman’s Party
* fought for the “Equal Rights Amendment”
* 19th Amendment—gave women the right to vote
  + Ratified in 1920
  + The amendment gave women in all states the right to vote. However, women I some states were allowed to vote prior to 1920. In 1869, Wyoming became the first state to allow women to vote. Women in Oklahoma could vote in beginning in 1917.

Temperance Movement

* The Temperance Movement was a social movement against the consumption of alcohol. It will eventually lead to the 18th amendment which banned the sale, manufacture and distribution of alcohol in the United States, also known as prohibition.
* Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)
* Anti-Saloon League

**LABOR REFORM**

Haymarket Riot

* Took place in Chicago on May 4, 1886.
* The police clashed violently with labor movement protesters in Chicago
* This riot made labor unions look bad and the membership of labor unions declined

Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

* *What happened?* A fire started in a trashcan and spread to the entire building
* The fire caused the deaths of 146 workers
* 123 women and 23 men died from the fire, smoke inhalation, or jumping to their deaths
* Most of the victims were recent Jewish and Italian immigrant women 16-23
* One example of workplace reform from this incident? Doors in factories, businesses, schools, etc. must push out

What ended child labor?

* In 1916, the *Keating-Owen Act* was passed, but then was struck down 2 years later by the Supreme Court.
* In 1938, *Fair Labor Standards Act* was passed that guaranteed
  + 40 hour work week
  + No child labor
  + Minimum wage

**POLITICAL REFORM**

* Robert M. LaFollette
  + Progressive Wisconsin governor who attacked machine politics and pressured the state legislature to require each party to hold a direct primary.
  + “Nicknamed Mr. Progressive”
* 17th Amendment (1913)- direct election of U.S. Senators. Previously the state legislatures elected state senators
* Direct Primary-  An election in which voters choose candidates to run on a party's ticket in a subsequent election for public office
* Initiative- people have the right to propose a new law
* Referendum- When citizens vote on laws instead of the state or national governments. Allows voters to overrule a law.
* Recall- The people could possibly remove an incompetent politician from office by having a second election.
* THE PURPOSE OF THESE REFORMS?
  + The people should have more of a direct influence in their government

Socialism

* A political and economic theory of social organization that advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole.
* Socialist Party- dedicated to the welfare of the working class
  + Eugene V. Debs- socialist and labor reform leader
* Pullman Strike (1894)
  + This was a nonviolent strike which brought about a shutdown of western railroads
  + Took place against the Pullman Palace Car Company in Chicago in 1894, because of the poor wages of the Pullman workers
  + Eugene V. Debs is arrested during this strike
* Sherman Anti-Trust Act (1890)
  + Anti-monopoly U.S. legislation
  + Attempted to increase economic competitiveness
  + made it illegal for companies to seek a monopoly on a product or service

William Jennings Bryan & the "Cross of Gold” Speech

* William Jennings Bryan was a politician and three-time Democratic Party nominee for President
* Cross of Gold speech was a speech he delivered at the 1896 Democratic National Convention in Chicago to advocate for bimetallism, which he believed would bring the nation prosperity
* At the time, the Democratic Party wanted to standardize the value of the dollar to silver and opposed pegging the value of the United States dollar to a gold standard. The inflation that would result from the silver standard would make it easier for farmers and other debtors to pay off their debts by increasing their revenue dollars. It would also reverse the deflation which the U.S. experienced from 1873-1896.
* “You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns,”
* “You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.”

Consumer Protection

* Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* inspired major reforms in the Food and Drug industries
* Pure Food and Drug Act (1906)
* Meat Inspection Act (1906)

**ENVIRONMENTAL REFORM**

Theodore Roosevelt & Conservation

* Used the Forest Reserve Act of 1891
* U.S. Forest Service (1906)
* White House conference on conservation -1908
* National Parks
* John Muir- a Scottish-American naturalist, author, environmental philosopher and early advocate of preservation of wilderness.
  + Muir worked closely with President Theodore Roosevelt to preserve nature and create the National Parks