



Published on *Course-Notes.Org* (<http://www.course-notes.org>)

[Home](#) > Printer-friendly

Chapter 28 - Progressivism and the Republican Roosevelt

Progressivism and the Republican Roosevelt

I. Progressive Roots

1. In the beginning of the 1900s, America had 76 million people, mostly in good condition. Then before the first decade of the 20th century, the U.S. would be influenced by a "Progressive movement" that fought against monopolies, corruption, inefficiency, and social injustice.
 - The purpose of the Progressives was to use the government as an agency of human welfare.
2. The Progressives had their roots in the Greenback Labor Party of the 1870s and 1880s and the Populist Party of the 1890s.
3. In 1894, Henry Demarest Lloyd exposed the corruption of the monopoly of the Standard Oil Company with his book *Wealth Against Commonwealth*, while Thorstein Veblen criticized the new rich (those who made money from the trusts) in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899).
4. Other exposers of the corruption of trusts, or "muckrakers," as Theodore Roosevelt called them, were Jacob A. Riis, writer of *How the Other Half Lives*, a book about the New York slums and its inhabitants, and novelist Theodore Dreiser, who wrote *The Financier* and *The Titan* to attack profiteers.
5. Socialists and feminists gained strength, and with people like Jane Addams and Lillian Wald, women entered the Progressive fight.

II. Raking Muck with the Muckrakers

1. Beginning about 1902, a group of aggressive ten and fifteen-cent popular magazines, such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Collier's*, and *Everybody's*, began flinging the dirt about the trusts.
2. Despite criticism, reformer-writers ranged far and wide to lay bare the muck on the back of American society.
 - In 1902, Lincoln Steffens launched a series of articles in *McClure's* entitled "The Shame of the Cities," in which he unmasked the corrupt alliance between big business and the government.
 - Ida M. Tarbell launched a devastating exposé against Standard Oil and its ruthlessness.
 - These writers exposed the "money trusts," the railroad barons, and the corrupt amassing of American fortunes, this last part done by Thomas W. Lawson.
 - David G. Phillips charged that 75 of the 90 U.S. Senators did not represent the people, but actually the railroads and trusts.
 - Ray Stannard Baker's *Following the Color Line* was about the illiteracy of Blacks.

- John Spargo's *The Bitter Cry of the Children* exposed child labor.
 - Dr. Harvey W. Wiley exposed the frauds that sold potent patent medicines by experimenting on himself.
3. The muckrakers sincerely believed that cures for the ills of American democracy, was more democracy.

III. Political Progressivism

1. Progressives were mostly middle-class citizens who felt squeezed by both the big trusts above and the restless immigrant hordes working for cheap labor that came from below.
2. The Progressives favored the "initiative" so that voters could directly propose legislation, the "referendum" so that the people could vote on laws that affected them, and the "recall" to remove bad officials from office.
3. Progressives also desired to expose graft, using a secret ballot (Australian ballot) to counteract the effects of party bosses, and have direct election of U.S. senators to curb corruption.
 - Finally, in 1913, the 17th Amendment provided for direct election of senators.
4. Females also campaigned for woman's suffrage, but that did not come...yet.

IV. Progressivism in the Cities and States

1. Progressive cities like Galveston, TX either used, for the first time, expert-staffed commissions to manage urban affairs or the city-manager system, which was designed to take politics out of municipal administration.
2. Urban reformers tackled "slumlords," juvenile delinquency, and wide-open prostitution.
3. In Wisconsin, Governor Robert M. La Follette wrestled control from the trusts and returned power to the people, becoming a Progressive leader in the process.
 - Other states also took to regulate railroads and trusts, such as Oregon and California, which was led by Governor Hiram W. Johnson.
 - Charles Evans Hughes, governor of New York, gained fame by investigating the malpractices of gas and insurance companies.

V. Progressive Women

1. Women were an indispensable catalyst in the progressive army. They couldn't vote or hold political office, but were active none-the-less. Women focused their changes on family-oriented ills such as child labor.
2. Progressives also made major improvements in the fight against child labor, especially after a 1911 fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in NYC which killed 146 workers, mostly young women.
 - The landmark case of *Muller vs. Oregon* (1908) found attorney Louis D. Brandeis persuading the Supreme Court to accept the constitutionality of laws that protected women workers.
 - On the other hand, the case of *Lochner vt. New York* invalidated a New York law establishing a ten-hour day for bakers.
 - Yet, in 1917, the Court upheld a similar law for factory workers.
3. Alcohol also came under the attack of Progressives, as prohibitionist organizations like the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), founded by Frances E. Willard, and the Anti-Saloon League were formed.
 - Finally, in 1919, the 18th Amendment prohibited the sale and drinking of alcohol.

VI. TR's Square Deal for Labor

1. The Progressivism spirit touched President Roosevelt, and his "Square Deal" embraced the three Cs: control of the corporations, consumer protection, and the conservation of the United States' natural resources.
2. In 1902, a strike broke out in the anthracite coalmines of Pennsylvania, and some 140,000 workers demanded a 20% pay increase and the reduction of the workday to nine hours.
 - Finally, after the owners refused to negotiate and the lack of coal was getting to the freezing schools, hospitals, and factories during that winter, TR threatened to seize the mines and operate them with federal troops if he had to in order to keep it open and the coal coming to the people.
 - As a result, the workers got a 10% pay increase and a 9-hour workday, but their union was not officially recognized as a bargaining agent.
3. In 1903, the Department of Commerce and Labor was formed, a part of which was the Bureau of Corporations, which was allowed to probe businesses engaged in interstate commerce; it was highly useful in "trust-busting."

VII. TR Corrals the Corporations

1. The 1887-formed Interstate Commerce Commission had proven to be inadequate, so in 1903, Congress passed the Elkins Act, which fined railroads that gave rebates and the shippers that accepted them.
2. The Hepburn Act restricted the free passes of railroads.
3. TR decided that there were "good trusts" and "bad trusts," and set out to control the "bad trusts," such as the Northern Securities Company, which was organized by J.P. Morgan and James J. Hill.
 - In 1904, the Supreme Court upheld TR's antitrust suit and ordered Northern Securities to dissolve, a decision that angered Wall Street but helped TR's image.
4. TR did crack down on over 40 trusts, and he helped dissolve the beef, sugar, fertilizer, and harvester trusts, but in reality, he wasn't as large of a trustbuster as he has been portrayed.
 - He had no wish to take down the "good trusts," but the trusts that did fall under TR's big stick fell symbolically, so that other trusts would reform themselves.
5. TR's successor, William Howard Taft, crushed more trusts than TR, and in one incident, when Taft tried to crack down on U.S. Steel, a company that had personally been allowed by TR to absorb the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, the reaction from TR was hot!

VIII. Caring for the Consumer

1. In 1906, significant improvements in the meat industry were passed, such as the Meat Inspection Act, which decreed that the preparation of meat shipped over state lines would be subject to federal inspection from corral to can.
 - Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* enlightened the American public to the horrors of the meatpacking industry, thus helping to force changes.
2. The Pure Food and Drug Act tried to prevent the adulteration and mislabeling of foods and pharmaceuticals.
 - Another reason for new acts was to make sure European markets could trust American beef and other meat.

IX. Earth Control

1. Americans were vainly wasting their natural resources, and the first conservation act, the Desert Land Act of 1877, provided little help.
 - More successful was the Forest Reserve Act of 1891, which authorized the president to set aside land to be protected as national parks.
 - Under this statute, some 46 million acres of forest were set aside as preserves.
2. Roosevelt, a sportsman in addition to all the other things he was, realized the values of conservation, and persuaded by other conservationists like Gifford Pinchot, head of the federal Division of Forestry, he helped initiate massive conservation projects.
 - The Newlands Act of 1902 initiated irrigation projects for the western states while the giant Roosevelt Dam, built on Arizona's Salt River, was dedicated in 1911
3. By 1900, only a quarter of the nation's natural timberlands remained, so he set aside 125 million acres, establishing perhaps his most enduring achievement as president.
4. Concern about the disappearance of the national frontier led to the success of such books like Jack London's *Call of the Wild* and the establishment of the Boy Scouts of America and the Sierra Club, a member of which was naturalist John Muir.
5. In 1913, San Francisco received permission to build a dam in Hetchy Hetch Valley, a part of Yosemite National Park, causing much controversy.
 - Roosevelt's conservation deal meant working with the big logging companies, not the small, independent ones.

X. The "Roosevelt Panic" of 1907

1. TR had widespread popularity (such as the "Teddy" bear), but conservatives branded him as a dangerous rattlesnake, unpredictable in his Progressive moves.
2. However, in 1904, TR announced that he would not seek the presidency in 1908, since he would have, in effect, served two terms by then. Thus he "defanged" his power.
3. In 1907, a short but sharp panic on Wall Street placed TR at the center of its blame, with conservatives criticizing him, but he lashed back, and eventually the panic died down.
4. In 1908, Congress passed the Aldrich-Vreeland Act, which authorized national banks to issue emergency currency backed by various kinds of collateral.
 - This would lead to the momentous Federal Reserve Act of 1913

XI. The Rough Rider Thunders Out

1. In the 1908 campaign, TR chose William Howard Taft as his "successor," hoping that the corpulent man would continue his policies, and Taft easily defeated William Jennings Bryan; a surprise came from Socialist Eugene V. Debs, who garnered 420,793 votes.
2. TR left the presidency to go on a lion hunt, then returned with much energy.
 - He had established many precedents and had helped ensure that the new trusts would fit into capitalism and have healthy adult lives while helping the American people.
 - TR protected against socialism, was a great conservationist, expanded the powers of the presidency, shaped the progressive movement, launched the Square Deal—a precursor to the New Deal that would

come later, and opened American eyes to the fact that America shared the world with other nations so that it couldn't be isolationist.

XII. Taft: A Round Peg in a Square Hole

1. William Taft was a mild progressive, quite jovial, quite fat, and passive.
 - He was also sensitive to criticism and not as liberal as Roosevelt.

XIII. The Dollar Goes Abroad as Diplomat

1. Taft urged Americans to invest abroad, in a policy called "Dollar Diplomacy," which called for Wall Street bankers to sluice their surplus dollars into foreign areas of strategic concern to the U.S., especially in the Far East and in the regions critical to the security of the Panama Canal. This investment, in effect, gave the U.S. economic control over these areas.
2. In 1909, perceiving a threat to the monopolistic Russian and Japanese control of the Manchurian Railway, Taft had Secretary of State Philander C. Knox propose that a group of American and foreign bankers buy the railroads and turn them over to China.
3. Taft also pumped U.S. dollars into Honduras and Haiti, whose economies were stagnant, while in Cuba, the same Honduras, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua, American forces were brought in to restore order after unrest.

XIV. Taft the Trustbuster

1. In his four years of office, Taft brought 90 suits against trusts.
2. In 1911, the Supreme Court ordered the dissolution of the Standard Oil Company.
3. After Taft tried to break apart U.S. Steel despite TR's prior approval of the trust, Taft increasingly became TR's antagonist.

XV. Taft Splits the Republican Party

1. Two main issues split the Republican party: (1) the tariff and (2) conservation of lands.
 - To lower the tariff and fulfill a campaign promise, Taft and the House passed a moderately reductive bill, but the Senate, led by Senator Nelson W. Aldrich, tacked on lots of upward revisions, and thus, when the Payne-Aldrich Bill passed, it betrayed Taft's promise, incurred the wrath of his party (drawn mostly from the Midwest), and outraged many people.
 - Old Republicans were high-tariff; new/Progressive Republicans were low tariff.
 - Taft even foolishly called it "the best bill that the Republican party ever passed."
 - While Taft did establish the Bureau of Mines to control mineral resources, his participation in the Ballinger-Pinchot quarrel of 1910 hurt him. In the quarrel, Secretary of the Interior Richard Ballinger opened public lands in Wyoming, Montana, and Alaska to corporate development and was criticized by Forestry chief Gifford Pinchot, who was then fired by Taft.
 - Old Republicans favored using the lands for business; new/Progressive Republicans favored conservation of lands.
2. In the spring of 1910, the Republican party was split between the Progressives and the Old Guard that Taft supported, so that the Democrats emerged with a landslide in the House.
 - Socialist Victor L. Berger was elected from Milwaukee.

XVI. The Taft-Roosevelt Rupture

1. In 1911, the National Progressive Republican League was formed, with LaFollette as its leader, but in February 1912, TR began dropping hints that he wouldn't mind being nominated by the Republicans, his reason being that he had meant no third consecutive term, not a third term overall.
2. Rejected by the Taft supporters of the Republicans, TR became a candidate on the Progressive party ticket, shoving LaFollette aside.
3. In the Election of 1912, it would be Theodore Roosevelt (Progressive Republican) versus William H. Taft (Old Guard Republican) versus the Democratic candidate, whomever that was to be.

© 2010 Course-Notes.Org

*AP and Advanced Placement Program are registered trademarks of the College Board, which was not involved in the production of, and does not endorse this web site.

Source URL (retrieved on 04/15/2012 - 22:35): http://www.course-notes.org/US_History/Notes/The_American_Pageant_13th_Edition_Textbook_Notes/Chapter_28_Progressivism_and_the_Repu