

Lecture 2.9: Progressive Politics, Labor, and WWI

- Politics and labor more concretely

Knights of labor replaced with American Federation of Labor (AFL)

- Era of industrial conflict
- Next prominent labor org
- Only focused on white, male, skilled laborers → change from knights who were opened to immigrant groups
- Because if there's skilled labor, you're the least replaceable → more negotiation power
- Union of the elite of working class
- Samuel Gompers → goal is to make unions seem less intimidating
 - Less stressed (less worry about things like Haymarket riot)
 - Push negotiation rather than striking
 - Person to person, group to group
 - Able to do to some degree, but only focused on most valuable laborers
 - Not worried about the children working in bad conditions

Industrial Workers of the World:

- More international focused labor group
- Known as the "Wobblies"
- Goal is to create one big labor group with women, children, immigrants, anybody really
- Divided by what skill/craft you're in, but in general working for all groups
- Mostly racially integrated
- Whole stance
 - Eroding "sexual, racial, and ethnic divisions"
 - Can't bring in like Chinese laborers for instance if we've allied with Chinese laborers too
- Two camps:
 - Socialists: Eugene Debs
 - They are working to make change within the system
 - Involved in politics, elections, and voting
 - Anarchists:
 - View political participation as caving to the system
 - Want to advance their cause by direct action → strikes, sabotage, demonstration, etc

Women's Unions:

- Major factor in this era and more successful in getting legislation passed
- Seen as needing more special protection
- And, wealthy women tend to be more in support of striking women
- Getting upper class allies always helps
- Some labor leaders thought if we can get people to pass laws for women, we can get laws passed for men later on
- Two groups:

- International ladies' garment workers union, 1900
 - Jewish and Italian women banding together
- Women's trade union league, 1903
 - Elite financial support
 - More access to publicity
 - Cross-class (not just middle and upper class support)
- Multiple successful strikes by women happening

Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, 1911:

- Big setback for laborers
- In NYC
- Multi-story factory making textile material
- Air is full of cloth particles
- Whole thing is full of cloth
- Fire codes that did exist were ignored (exits were blocked to prevent unauthorized breaks)
- No fire extinguishers/alarms
- When it caught fire, building just went up in flames, no way to get out because doors are all blocked
- Women in top floors either burn to death or jump out the window (this is front page news)
- People demand reform → that could've been somebody I know, this is not okay
- Finally get the creation of Bureau of Fire
 - Goal was to establish and investigate proper safety measures in workplaces for fire
 - Sprinklers, fire drills, fire extinguishers, etc
 - But also major tragedy → why did 150 women have to die for people to do something about it
- Takes a lot of effort for gov to do things
- Not completely sitting on their hands, though
- They pass....

Clayton anti-trust Act, 1914:

- This regulates monopolies
- If own all textile factories in NYC, then even if you were unhappy with factory conditions before the fire, where do you go? One of my other factories?
- Allows factories to get away with anything because theres minimized competition, you own all the other jobs somebody is qualified to do
- Four different bans
 - Charging different prices to customers
 - Non-complete clauses
 - If you were to buy something from a business, you would have to sign a contract that says you can't buy that product from any other business
 - Harmful mergers
 - Mergers are acquisition that would minimize competition again

- Having one person directing 2+ competing companies
 - One person can't have this power
- Three of these things were part of Sherman anti-trust
- Biggest difference between the two:
 - Gives gov authority to approve/block these mergers before they happen
 - Gov can say no, its not something that has to be undone later on
 - Enforceable and preventative compared to just reactive

Teddy!, 1901-09

- Not just foreign policy
- Was actually a wealthy NY reformer
 - Embodiment of progressive era
 - Part of republican party (not a lot of dem presidents rn)
- Used to serve as police commissioner, NYC
- Gov of NY
- Republican party didn't want him as pres
- They made him McKinley's running mate in 1900 election bc they wanted him out of the way
- Other people (political machines) didn't want him reforming things
- MK gets assassinated (less than a year into second term), then teddy becomes president
- He is not radical, despite his reputation (in the middle of conservative/reformist views)
- In terms of business:
 - Anti-monopoly, but differentiates between good and bad monopolies
- First pres to intervene on behalf of strikers in history of country
- Becomes very popular (teddy bear)
- Reelected in 1904 → significant popular vote win compared to narrow elections previously
- His successor that he handpicked: William Howard Taft

Taft, 1909-13:

- Tries to be moderate, but not super successful
- Get notes idk what happens here

Teddy hates him, launches a campaign against him:

- Starts the Progressive Party, 1912, but this is called the "Bull Moose" Party bc people think he's running around like bull moose
- Teddy with progressive party, taft with republican party, Wilson with democratic party
- This means republican votes are SPLIT
- DEMS WIN (obviously)
- Utah the only real one
- Democrat Woodrow Wilson (2nd since civil war) president my gosh

Wilson, 1913-21:

- 2 terms
- 1st president to marry in office

- First to hold a movie screening at the white house
- Big white supremacist → the movie glorified the KKK (Birth of Nation)
- That moral diplomacy thing
- Biggest issue: outbreak of WWI

US Neutrality:

- War breaks out in 1914 → Wilson first advocates for neutrality with a caveat
- When war breaks out, people need supplies, uniforms, etc
- Europe needs these things! Ask the US for it! US won't say no → we don't want to fight, but we want money! Business! Economic boom!
- Technically neutral, but selling supplies to UK and France
 - Bombs, weapons, etc, sometimes on passenger vessels
 - Which is why, in 1915, the Lusitania gets sunk by German submarines (1k+ passengers died including Americans)
 - Upsets a lot of people
- Ongoing debate → (because of this) we should attack, we should get involved, etc
- Americans die, people want to do something about it
- Massive debate over whether the US should get involved → people dying in the millions in Europe, over here, people are debating what to do
- Neutrality → biggest issue of 1916 election (hotter and hotter every week)

Election of 1916:

- Neutrality → biggest issue of 1916 election (hotter and hotter every week)
- Wilson runs on the slogan "he kept us out of war" → we'll keep being neutral
- And he wins, by a decent margin
- April of 1917 → he joins the war smh (literally two months in)

Joining WWI, 1917:

- Lots of factors that push Wilson
- Unrestricted submarine warfare (Germany resumes this in 1917) → won't check if it's a civilian ship
 - Enemy's ship, will just shoot it
 - People mad, hurting Americans
- Germany sends Zimmerman Telegram to Mexico → remember how US stole half your land, if you help us, we'll help you get your land back
 - US intercepts it
 - Mexico probably wasn't going to take them up on it, but it's scary because it's bringing war to US borders
- Bolshevik Revolution happens in Russia
 - Overthrows the czar → if a Russian autocrat is no longer in power, then Russia is out of the war and we can ally with UK and other people
 - We couldn't ally with Russia before because it's hypocritical to ally with an autocrat to fight for democracy
- Wilson pushing for safe democracy
- In April 6, 1917 → he convinces Congress to declare war

- House: 383-50
- Senate: 82-6
- Pretty popular decision

WWI and Free Speech:

- Free speech is major issue on home front
- Create Committee on Public Info → massive propaganda campaign, you must be loyal to the US, convince people to support war, threaten if you don't
- Two laws passed
 - Espionage Act:
 - Illegal to support enemies and hurt the US
 - Sedition Act:
 - Crime to speak against the war, draft, president, or anybody involved
- People get jailed for criticizing president, the US, etc
- Creates massive anti-German sentiment in the US
 - If you don't support, you suck

Wilson's Fourteen Points:

- People starting to talk about what happens after the war
- Famous speech outlining his ideas for a more democratic world
 - New boundaries based on self-determination
 - Ending secret treaties, access to the ocean, etc
 - All just realigning international borders really

Armistice:

- US fights in WWI for less than 19 months
- Lot of speculation that allies would have won even if the US hadn't gotten involved
- 1918 → Austria-Hungary sues for peace and abandon Germany
- Ottoman empire gone, Germany by itself
- They agree to an armistice on Nov. 11, 1918 (now veterans day)
 - End of the war, theoretically
 - What ends the war: Treaty of Versailles

Treaty of Versailles:

- War is ended, but have to figure out how to sort out the messes
- Wilson travels to Europe to negotiate but fails mostly
- Britain + France insisted that Germany pay reparations for all of the things they did on the war
 - 55 billion in 1921 dollars
 - Want to make A-H and Germany pay
 - Germany only ever pays of 9 bil and economy is in shambles to pay
- Some people gain independence, mostly in eastern Europe
 - Get lots of new countries, people breaking off, etc
- Many other countries did not gain independence
 - Ottoman empire (German ally)

- Carving up Ottoman empire or smth like that
- Ignore other colonized people
- Young Vietnam person (Ho Chi Minh) → asks for independence, but Wilson didn't respond
- Lays the ground for Vietnamese war
- Allies do agree to the League of Nations (weak)
 - But, people are scared to give up power
 - I don't want to give up decision making power
 - Wilson wants this, Senate says no
 - US rejects it, rejects Treaty of Versailles
- Wilson had a stroke → his wife and doctor hid it from the country
- Basically, Edith ran the country in 1920

Impact war has on labor:

- Initial joining of WWI benefits labor
- Huge economic boom → need people to make the supplies that are being sold and used
- Gov passes wage and price controls → because we need those workers! Be patriotic!
- Workers get a boost from this bc trying to keep up with production in war
- UNLESS, you're part of the IWW
 - They are firmly against WWI
 - Socialist org, should not be fighting wars for empires
 - They are viewed as traitors, suspicious, arrested under the Espionage Act
 - Gets beaten up essentially

The Red Scare:

- Even when war ends, there is major fear over socialism, communism, etc
- War ends, price and wage controls go away
- When wages and benefits get cut, workers strike, record-breaking amount
- Why should we go back to having less?
- IWW general strike that shut down the city of Seattle
- If you combine that with fear of the B Revolution, communism, etc, → worried about radical socialist/communist ideology
- We have to get rid of this
- Gov launches huge wave of deportation (mostly immigrants) who are suspected to have ties with socialism
 - "Palmer Raids"
 - If you are somehow associated with socialism + we are worried, we will deport you
 - Includes Americans stripped of citizenship
- Might be targeted based on ethnic background
- Sparks formation of ACLU in 1920
- Created to fight against people being stripped of citizenship