

Introduction

In his 1909 book, *The Promise of American Life*, the progressive journalist Herbert Croly outlined a project of national activism so vigorous that he was willing to write: "If any critic likes to fasten the stigma of socialism upon the foregoing conception of democracy, I am not concerned with dodging the odium of the word."¹ Ten years later, the stigma of socialism was odious indeed. With revolutions occurring in Russia and Germany and with sweeping repression of the domestic left during the war, radicalism was greatly feared. In a 1919 editorial about the Paris Peace Conference, Croly denounced the Allied powers for imposing a punitive peace according to their economic interests. But he cautioned that "some of my readers may interpret the foregoing indictment of capitalism as a vindication of the economic determinism of Marxian socialism. That is precisely the opposite of what it is."² Croly was very clear about the relationship between his views and socialism, but that relationship had changed 180 degrees. Yet this was not the last time his views toward fundamental questions of property would change. In 1924, after a massive post-war strike wave and a seemingly irrational Red Scare, Croly endorsed Robert La Follette for president. In calling for a greater share for workers in management, he wrote, public opinion "does not sufficiently realize that the ownership of property brings with it a power over human life which in existing circumstances is certain to be abused and which, like Negro slavery, tends morally to impoverish both the beneficiaries and the victims of the institution."³ Was Croly simply idiosyncratic, or is it possible to make sense of these changes in his views, connecting them to the context in each of these three periods?

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Progressivism emerged at the conjunction of three critical transformations in American life: the rise of the integrated managerial corporation, the development of the administrative state, and the emergence of a professional middle class. Progressivism is traditionally thought of as the political ideology of that part of the middle class that sought to expand the powers of the state to manage, to mitigate, or to rectify the problems that accompanied the emergence of the large corporation. This book asks to what extent progressives were also responding to and influenced by those who opposed the state, capitalism, and the class structure altogether, and how progressives' views of them changed in relation to events.⁴

This book contends that ideas concerning radicalism were always an important part of progressivism. The distinction between them was not always clear, and at times there was significant overlap. The relationship was not a simple one—it changed over time, and it deserves to be explored in the same detail and sophistication as the much more meticulously researched relationship between progressivism and business.⁵ Moreover, the acceptable limits that progressives established regarding radical propaganda, organization, and strike behavior and the institutions they developed for managing these activities became established law and policy for the rest of the twentieth century and beyond.

It may seem like common sense today that progressivism is a very different thing from socialism. The idea that the two are related is more likely to be heard as a label than as a self-description.⁶ But in the years before the First World War, several important forms of symbiosis existed between these two broad categories of political thought. Progressives stressed participation of radicals in the institutions they created and open-mindedness toward radical ideas in the findings of those institutions. Progressives who disagreed sharply on how to regard prestigious captains of industry concurred on the importance of including socialists and syndicalists in investigations into the causes of industrial unrest and negotiated solutions to strikes. In addition, many progressives urged taking radicals' input seriously, leaving open the possibility of fundamentally changing capitalism. Progressives also engaged in significant ideological overlap and coalitional reform efforts with radicals. Prominent progressives considered themselves socialists early in the twentieth century and helped organize striking garment workers to achieve a form of union recognition and collective bargaining from 1909 to 1912. Such was the popular currency of radicalism that even Woodrow Wilson found it advantageous to describe himself as a radical when running for president in 1912.

This basic porousness, openness, and inclusion would change significantly during the First World War, especially after the Russian Revolution.⁷ Wartime

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stimulated an impetus for reform, creating an opportunity to erect such institutions as the National War Labor Board (NWLB) that fostered a near doubling in union membership. But it also generated pressures for progressives to draw a distinction between themselves and radicals. The exigencies of total war and the imminent threat of revolution changed deferred disagreements over ultimate ends into questions of immediate tactics. While craft unions such as the American Federation of Labor (AFL) cooperated with the Wilson administration to foster loyalty and to ensure production, the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) continued to strike in critical industries and the socialist Eugene V. Debs proselytized against the draft. Woodrow Wilson instituted a vast machinery for repression, presenting progressives with a choice of diminished influence or muted criticism. Few progressives were willing to identify themselves as radicals under these circumstances.

After the war, the coalition between progressives and radicals was revived, but in a different form. As wartime reforms were dismantled and employers exploited antiradicalism to mount an offensive against organized labor, progressives defended the rights of radicals on the front lines of labor struggle. Organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union laid out a defense of freedom of speech with an eye toward assisting labor unions, and progressives saw the mobilization of workers in the Farmer-Labor Party as a means to achieve a share for workers in management. Yet, while progressives moved back in the direction of their prewar radicalism, in the context of the Red Scare, they couched their defense of radicalism in the language of due process and individual rights. In terms of identity, they maintained a careful—and enduring—distinction between their own views and those of the radicals they wished to defend.

Historians have generally converged around two explanations for this on-again, off-again relationship between progressives and radicals.⁸ One is that progressives coopted radicalism, allying with radicals for a time before the war in order to achieve power, and then colluding in their repression in order to accomplish reforms during the war, with tragic consequences of conservative retrenchment afterward. A more recent interpretation is that progressives were really a version of radicals, either a form of European social democrats or a group bearing a fundamental affinity with radicals that was at times repressed but that ultimately reemerged. This book suggests that progressivism and radicalism were not always fundamentally similar, but that the place of radicalism within progressive thought followed an identifiable pattern depending on the circumstances. In the absence of war, revolution, and internal political violence and during times of economic recovery and conservative political economy, progressives stressed their common objectives with radicals

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and sought to form alliances to achieve common objectives. During times of intervention overseas and internal violence and when progressives found themselves in positions of power, progressives repressed their connections with radicals and did not identify themselves as such.

While both of these principal interpretations contain important elements of truth, it is important to stress several areas where this book diverges from them. The affinity of progressives for radicalism was not limited to the prewar period; a revival of prewar coalitions—in somewhat altered form—took place after the war. Moreover, the period of convergence was not without consequence for American political economy. Progressives took away several lasting influences from their relationship with radicals, perhaps the most important simply that capitalism as a system at the beginning of the twentieth century was so exploitative that it had to be changed, both as a matter of fundamental justice and as a means to reduce labor conflict. The ideas that workers deserved to participate in the management of business, that women, African Americans, immigrants, and unskilled workers should be included in labor unions, and that strikes should be understood as part of a larger cooperative effort all owed their origin in some degree to working-class radicalism. But in response to the disorder represented by radicalism, progressives also developed several influential methods for managing labor conflict and radical propaganda that are no less important a part of the influence of radicalism on progressive thought and the larger political economy. The apparatus for labor recognition and collective bargaining that would require labor unions to renounce wartime striking and revolutionary objectives would be revisited. And the “clear and present danger” doctrine, which allowed the federal government to limit political expression when necessary for the state to protect itself, remained the governing standard for free expression through the 1950s, and in the early twenty-first century seemed to be undergoing a revival.⁹ Via the mechanism of its influence on progressivism, radicalism was not marginal, but central to the development of twentieth-century American politics and governmental institutions. Radicals declined in number after the First World War, but they exercised an enduring and fundamental influence on American society. This book is an effort to demonstrate that influence.

Consolidation and Conflict

Perhaps the signature political concern of the Progressive Era was the emergence of big business. In Alfred Chandler Jr.’s telling, the large corporation developed primarily due to the innovations of management. Middle manage-

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ment was unknown “as late as 1840,” but by the First World War, the managerial corporation had become the dominant mode of American business.¹⁰ Techniques of supervision that emerged initially on the railroads were soon extended into distribution and production. At the end of the century, mass distribution was integrated with mass production, replacing the myriad traditional enterprises of the nineteenth century with a single structure that comprised all stages of the productive process from raw materials to delivery to the consumer under a single group of managers.¹¹

In several important respects, the state contributed to the emergence of the corporation. Capital flowed to those states with the most liberal incorporation laws, which permitted the narrowest limited liability and the broadest powers to own stock in other corporations.¹² Although each corporate charter ultimately rested upon these public enactments, courts increasingly regarded corporations as private property. Judges scaled back the power of the state under the common law to regulate corporations in any way that constituted a taking of property or a redistribution of economic power.¹³ Simultaneously, judges increasingly found an enforceable due process right of corporations not only to their tangible property but also to a “fair return” on their assets.¹⁴ Reasoning that employers had the right to the ongoing operation of their businesses, after 1885 judges increasingly granted injunctions to halt strikes, boycotts, and sympathy strikes.¹⁵

These changes had a highly disruptive impact on American life. In the cities, massive immigration, combined with the increasing restriction on the ability of governments to regulate the conditions of labor and housing, made for unprecedented conditions of poverty. Fifteen million people immigrated to the United States from 1890 to 1914, as population rose from about 63 million in 1890 to 92 million in 1910.¹⁶ Packed into crowded urban tenements, workers toiled for wages too low to support a family.¹⁷ To close the gap, families sent women and children out to work or took in contract manufacturing such as clothing or cigar-making.¹⁸ For rural and itinerant laborers, wages were lower still. While wages for manufacturing workers recovered after the 1873 Panic, by the 1890s the wages of common laborers had still not regained their 1872 level.¹⁹

In addition to new methods of production and distribution, management asserted new forms of control over labor, including authority over work rules, hiring, and firing.²⁰ Workers vigorously, and sometimes violently, resisted this abrogation of their traditional control of the pace and methods of their work. As population rose 50 percent, the number of strikes increased from about 500 per year from 1881 to 1885, to more than 1,000 per year from 1889 to 1900, to about 3,000 a year from 1901 to 1903.²¹ Many of these strikes, such

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as the 1877 railroad strike and the 1894 Pullman boycott, resulted in widespread violence and were met with the intervention of the armed forces.²²

In the context of this growing industrial unrest, the federal government expanded. The U.S. Army had only 30,000 troops in 1870, and as of 1877 the National Guard was in “virtual collapse.” In 1871 only 53,000 civilians worked for the federal government. After the 1877 strike, the National Guard grew to 100,000 troops by the end of the century, with 70,000 located in the Northeast where industry was the most highly concentrated. The federal government employed 256,000 civilians by 1901, and nearly half a million by 1917.²³ At the same time that the federal government was growing, as Robert Wiebe has described, the middle class was becoming professionalized. Such venerable organizations as the American Medical Association and the American Bar Association were formed or reorganized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, creating restrictive standardized requirements for professions that were at one time less clearly distinct from other forms of skilled work.²⁴

Progressivism and Radicalism

Progressivism was an effort to expand the capacities of the state to address the problems of class conflict, poverty, corruption, and immorality that accompanied the rise of big business.²⁵ Progressives pursued this objective by applying the standards of professional expertise to the work of government. In doing so, they wanted to preserve the efficiency of new techniques of management in business and at the same time to mitigate the effects of industrialization. In addition to calling for new state capacities, progressives were conscious of the involvement of the state in the economy and critical of the idea that the state could be truly uninvolved. They called for aggregating and harnessing these influences in the direction of greater efficiency and improved conditions for the poor.²⁶ Like liberal reformers of the 1870s and 1880s, such as E. L. Godkin and Grover Cleveland, progressives were opposed to open class conflict and to the revolutionary expropriation of private property.²⁷ They tended to favor associations with workers or cross-class alliances that would reduce class conflict rather than remove the distinction between the classes.²⁸

From different perspectives, historians have suggested that progressivism was either allied with big business or connected to European social democracy.²⁹ Both groups of authors are correct to point out reactionary and socialist elements within progressivism at certain times. This book suggests that part of what made progressivism distinct from conservatism and socialism was that it was flexible in response to events, drawing elements from both capi-

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talism and socialism to the extent they could be determined at a particular moment to produce the best outcome. Yet the parameters of augmenting the state, improving efficiency, and combating disorder remained fairly constant. More than an empirical fact, this dynamic quality was frequently observed by progressives themselves. The willingness to learn, to sample and to combine other ideologies, and to resist dogma were consistent and frequent emphases in progressives' thought and self-description.

Progressivism was also contested from within by different groups, a characteristic that caused one historian to urge giving up the entire enterprise of defining a single progressive movement.³⁰ Most of the recent works on the various movements that made up progressivism, however, have emphasized this contested and coalitional nature.³¹ It is useful to conceive of progressivism as a series of linked movements rather than as the platform of a single political group. The first area of progressivism dealt with in this book is national progressivism, which was devoted to large questions of political economy, such as whether to break up monopolies, how to regulate business and the condition of workers, and how to secure the rights of workers to join labor unions and bargain collectively. National progressivism incorporated the personnel of presidential administrations, the intellectuals and journalists who developed and debated national policy, and the officials who staffed the bureaucracies that studied and implemented policy. National progressivism was contested between those who saw regulation as a means to bring about a more predictable and harmonious method of labor relations, such as the members of the National Civic Federation (NCF), and those who sought to afford a more significant voice to workers.³² Trade unionists such as AFL leader Samuel Gompers and industrial unionists such as Sidney Hillman also forged links with national progressivism, particularly during the First World War.³³

A second area of progressivism dealt with extensively in this book is social reform. Centered and often living in the cities among the poorest immigrants, social progressives sought to regulate the conditions of housing, improve the conditions of labor through boycott campaigns and regulation, to restrict children's and women's labor, and to improve the child-raising practices of poor women. Social reform included traditional and conservative charitable women's groups as well as the more labor-oriented "social feminists" centered around the settlement houses, the National Consumers' League, and labor unions affiliated with the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL).³⁴ This group of reformers also incorporated the social insurance movement and overlapped with efforts to provide public municipal services.³⁵

A third area of progressivism discussed in this work is reform that had its roots in agrarian agitation and manifested itself in the West and in the

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insurgent republicanism of Robert La Follette. Stimulated by the anger of farmers toward eastern control of the banking and currency system, western progressives favored reduced tariffs; federal control over an eased currency; railroad rate regulation; and the initiative, referendum, and recall processes.³⁶ Western progressives play a secondary though significant role in this book because the syndicalist IWW found fertile soil in the exploitative conditions of the agricultural, logging, and mining industries. Prominent western progressives such as Robert La Follette also opposed intervention in the war and formed the rallying point for a postwar coalition with radicals.

A final area of progressivism dealt with in this work is electoral reform. Progressivism's relationship with democracy was complex. On the one hand, progressives sought the vote for women and direct participation through the initiative, the referendum, and the recall; on the other hand, they sought to reshape the electorate in the guise of reducing corruption through such means as the Australian ballot, voter registration, and literacy tests.³⁷ Adding further complexity, suffragists, especially in the South, sometimes argued that woman suffrage would reduce the influence of the black vote.³⁸ Some progressives favored restriction of black suffrage outright in order to reduce the violence associated with electoral fraud.³⁹ This book considers W.E.B. Du Bois's efforts to end disfranchisement and other progressives' reactions to it as well as the formative influence of Reconstruction on progressives' thought. But woman suffrage is largely outside the scope of this book.

Radicalism had several meanings in the early twentieth century, and at times the distinction between radicalism and progressivism was unclear. Several movements favored abolishing the state or capitalism, either through democratic or revolutionary means, altogether, but these movements can be delineated as a distinct group, even if at times its borders intersected with those of progressivism. The first of these movements was anarchism, which took important influences from the Russian intellectuals Mikhail Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin. Bakunin, who placed more emphasis than Marx on the individual acts of dispossessed and marginal persons other than workers, argued that revolution should do away with the state immediately rather than taking it over.⁴⁰ Peter Kropotkin argued that the state itself was responsible for competition, finding evidence for cooperation in biological evolution and among communal peasants.⁴¹ The best-known anarchists in the United States were the Russian immigrants Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman. Berkman, who shot Henry Clay Frick during the Homestead Strike in 1892, and Leon Czolgosz, who assassinated President William McKinley in 1901, gave anarchism a popular association with violence, although Czolgosz had only a brief involvement with anarchism, and Berkman's act was condemned

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by most anarchists. Goldman was influenced by Bakunin in America through her teacher Johann Most, although her main intellectual influence was Kropotkin.⁴² By the twentieth century, Goldman had personally renounced violence, but she continued to believe that it was inevitable in significant historical change and refused to denounce individual acts of violence, including Czolgosz's.⁴³

The second of these radical movements was syndicalism. While anarchism took the state to be the principal target of revolution, syndicalism challenged the fundamentals of private property directly at the workplace. The most important syndicalist organization in the United States was the IWW, founded in 1905 and reaching about 100,000 members on the eve of World War I.⁴⁴ The IWW arose out of the conditions of rawest exploitation in the company mining towns and lumber camps of the West and the garment industries employing women and children in the Northeast. The IWW appealed to workers that the AFL would not accept, such as African Americans, women, recent immigrants, and the unskilled, organizing them by industry rather than craft.⁴⁵ Following Marx, members of the IWW ("Wobblies") argued that capital represented the accumulated theft of workers' labor, and that the only way to end this exploitation was through the overthrow of capitalism and the seizure of productive property on the part of the workers. In the immediate term, Wobblies favored strikes of all kinds in order to achieve concrete gains for workers, but also to educate them about the truth of their situation and to build industrial unions. Ultimately, these strikes would culminate in the general strike, at which point all workers would simply lay down their tools, and employers would hand over the keys to the factory. Industry would then be run directly by the industrial unions Wobblies had built with advice from a group of technical experts. Because their objective was revolutionary, the IWW rejected the sort of contracts and closed-shop agreements sought by the AFL. The IWW also advocated sabotage, which included violence against persons under certain circumstances. But in practice, sabotage usually involved methods of passive resistance such as slow work, on-the-job striking, and disregarding instructions.⁴⁶

Beyond its numbers, the IWW loomed large in American culture because it deliberately expressed the worst fears of well-to-do Americans. Concentrations of capital on the scale and to the degree of the late nineteenth century were new, as was the dependency of most Americans on wages. Few doubted that the situation was volatile and could change abruptly and fundamentally. The Wobblies articulated the possible outcome if the massive strikes that periodically paralyzed the economy, their violence included, were to acquire a political consciousness.⁴⁷ Moreover, while the IWW did not commit violence

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as much as their image and rhetoric suggested, they did advocate violence.⁴⁸ Similarly, the assassination of McKinley made anarchists seem threatening out of all proportion to their numbers. It seemed that within America's midst lay conspirators willing to commit murder of even the most prominent public officials in order to bring about immediate revolution.

In 1907, Theodore Roosevelt famously condemned the secretary-treasurer of the IWW, William Haywood, as an "undesirable . . . citizen" for his alleged involvement in the murder of Idaho governor Frank Steunenberg.⁴⁹ But at its founding convention in 1908, the IWW consisted more of a gathering of socialists than syndicalists. Its characteristic syndicalist ideology did not fully emerge until after 1908.⁵⁰ Perhaps not coincidentally, it was after that date and after its involvement in several spectacular strikes in the eastern garment industry that the IWW seems to have attracted the sustained interest of the progressives discussed in this book. The focus is on events that generated general commentary among the progressives studied; hence many strikes involving the IWW are not discussed. In addition to the IWW, some prominent syndicalists, such as William Z. Foster, argued that the best way to accomplish revolutionary objectives was to build union power, even if those unions were explicitly conservative. Finally, among the black and white screwmen and longshoremen of New Orleans, Eric Arnesen has found a significant effort to achieve worker's control extending across trade and racial lines, approaching what he described as a "syndicalist impulse."⁵¹ But these southern workers did not appear to garner consistent commentary from the progressives analyzed in this study.

The third form of radicalism that is a focus of this book was socialism. As Nicholas Salvatore has described, socialism in the early twentieth-century United States was unusual in that it was refracted through the language of individualism, thanks to the intellectual contribution of Eugene V. Debs. While this work focuses on the change in progressive thought, it is important to remember that Debs's views developed over time in response to events as well. Debs's transformation from trade unionist to democratic socialist paralleled the transformation of the economy from competitive capitalism to state-managed industrial capitalism, and his speeches resonated with many Americans beyond those who chose his name on a ballot.⁵² Debs began his career as a railroad worker in 1870, but after losing his job following the Panic of 1873, he went to work for a local grocer as an accounting clerk. In 1875 he joined the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. Initially opposed to strikes, Debs began to change his views after critical strikes against Jay Gould's railroad empire in 1885 and the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad from 1888 to 1889. Debs began to believe strikes were sometimes

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necessary and became convinced of the need to organize workers across traditional craft lines. In April 1894, Debs's new union, the American Railway Union (ARU), staged a successful strike against the Great Northern Railroad, making it the most powerful railroad workers' organization in the United States.⁵³

Debs's position as a "national figure" standing for individual resistance against the combined power of the corporation and the state was catalyzed by his role in the 1894 Pullman boycott. The strike, which occurred when George Pullman cut the wages but not the rents for workers in his model company town, pitted the ARU against the most powerful organization of railroad owners, the General Managers' Association. The strike not only resulted in a labor injunction and the intervention of the U.S. Army but also the jailing of Debs and the nearly complete destruction of the ARU. After William Jennings Bryan's defeat in 1896, Debs publicly endorsed socialism.⁵⁴

For American socialism, Debs served as a vital unifying figure. His popularity enabled him, at times unwittingly, to overcome divisions between different groups that made up the Socialist Party of America, formed in 1901. Debs's understanding of socialism regarded the corporation as a revolutionary disruption and called for a restoration of traditional individual freedom by means of democratic public ownership. Not only did this formulation catch on more broadly in the United States than traditional Marxian interpretations, it seemed to many Americans at the time to be a realistic possibility.⁵⁵ As Ernest Freeberg has recently argued, before World War I, socialism as represented by Debs constituted a "live hypothesis."⁵⁶ Debs ran for president four times before the First World War, and his support grew along with party membership, the latter increasing from 10,000 in 1901 to 118,000 in 1912, and his vote rising to nearly a million in the four-way contest of that year.⁵⁷ In 1911, Socialists also held offices in 324 municipal governments.⁵⁸ At the 1913 AFL annual convention, unions controlling a third of the votes supported socialist leadership.⁵⁹

A final area of radicalism is revolution overseas. This book considers the influence of the Mexican revolution during the 1912 to 1914 period and the Russian Revolution after 1917 on progressives' views toward domestic radicalism and also the influence of these events and attitudes on U.S. foreign policy. These developments were indeed critical to the changed conception of radicalism within the United States among progressives and the population more broadly. But there is another story to be told in terms of revolutionary pressures in Germany and Russia during the years of American neutrality and the postwar revolutions in Europe that is beyond the scope of this book.⁶⁰

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Methodology

To a significant degree, this book consists of a study of Wilsonian progressivism because the progressives' approach to radicalism achieved lasting institutional realization under the Wilson administration. In particular, this work focuses on progressives who joined or supported the Wilson administration: the journalists Herbert Croly and Walter Lippmann of the *New Republic* and George Creel of the wartime Committee on Public Information (CPI), the politician and scholar Woodrow Wilson, the social reformers Jane Addams and Florence Kelley, the jurists Louis Brandeis and Felix Frankfurter, the intellectual and civil rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois, the labor lawyer Frank Walsh, and the labor economist Carleton Parker. But many of these progressives were also supporters of Theodore Roosevelt during his administration and in the election of 1912. Most also supported Robert La Follette in the 1920s.

As a political movement, progressivism not only sought to win votes and influence policy but also to formulate ideas that could potentially be adopted and work effectively as policy. This objective was at work in progressives' views toward radicalism just as it was in their views on other subjects such as business regulation, labor unions, and international affairs. There is nothing necessarily unprincipled or unethical about seeking to formulate effective policy—indeed, in most cases such efforts would be regarded as a simple matter of prudence and political savvy. Moreover, the policies that seemed achievable and effective changed depending on the circumstances, especially as progressives had opportunities to achieve power, encountered disorder, and took on the responsibility to carry out policy. This book is therefore a history of an aspect of progressivism: those ideas regarding radicalism that seemed to have a reasonable chance of being adopted, how and among whom they developed, and how those ideas changed as they achieved institutional materialization. It is simultaneously a history of the conditions that caused those ideas to change. And finally, it is a history of identity—what progressives thought of themselves, how they came to consider themselves radicals, and how they came to reject that label after a certain point.

As several authors have noted, it is not possible to write a history of all of progressivism.⁶¹ One could gather together as many statements toward radicalism as possible from the entire progressive universe and then assemble them into a narrative whole, but to do so could yield multiple narratives that stress one tendency within progressivism toward radicalism or another. These various narratives are all true in the sense that they have empirical evidence behind them, but they do not capture the changes over time that resulted

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from the pressures progressives faced as they attempted to articulate a view of radicalism that was usable in different circumstances. The approach in this book has been to trace the ideas of specific people as their ideas regarding radicalism changed over time. They did not always agree or speak with one voice—at all times there was a range of views. The effort has been to document shifts in that range, rather than to assert that one or another point of view represented the essential or true progressivism. The key finding is the path of those views—and the conditions guiding that path in one direction or the other—not so much the individual views themselves. To provide a useful counterpoint to the views of those who joined the government, several dissenters have been included: the journalist Randolph Bourne, the pro-Wilson socialist Upton Sinclair, and the socialist Helen Keller.

This approach is legitimate for two reasons. First, to a striking degree, progressives' proposals for reform were in fact achieved in the twentieth century. This impact is no less true with respect to their policy ideas regarding radicalism, and their views of radicalism were influential in shaping progressive approaches in other areas. Second, while the dynamic, "protean," character of pragmatism that progressives exhibited may have been characteristic of other political movements, it was an explicit element of progressivism, as historians of the subject have acknowledged.⁶² Progressives' dynamic and adaptive views toward radicalism are an important facet of this story that has not been fully appreciated.

The evidence for this study is the writings of progressives, which consist of three main kinds of sources: published books, articles, and speeches; government reports; and private correspondence. For the journalists, careful attention has been devoted to their public writings because these materials reflect the way that these writers wished to be characterized with respect to radicalism and how far they were willing to go in associating themselves with radical views. Influential private writings have also been consulted, particularly those of Louis Brandeis, Felix Frankfurter, Woodrow Wilson, and Frank Walsh, as well as their correspondence with other subjects of the book. This approach places the emphasis on what progressives themselves thought about radicalism, rather than attempting to draw an analytical comparison based on material similarities or subconscious influences.⁶³

State of the Field

For many years, the primary synthesis of progressivism remained the liberal consensus view of Richard Hofstadter, who argued that progressives were middle-class reformers trying to recover the social status that they had lost to

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the robber barons.⁶⁴ This approach was disputed by New Left historians such as Gabriel Kolko, who argued that progressives were in fact trying to smooth the operation of big business and reassure the public.⁶⁵ In the 1970s Peter Filene and Daniel T. Rodgers attempted to bypass this debate by saying that the very notion of a single progressive movement was flawed.⁶⁶ In subsequent years, however, Rodgers has argued that progressivism should be understood instead as a species of Atlantic intellectual movements, including social democracy.⁶⁷ Similarly, after echoing the New Left position, Martin Sklar has more recently called for focusing on the degree to which increased state control could be understood to move the economy in the direction of socialism.⁶⁸

Rodgers and Sklar have highlighted a question that has become increasingly influential in studies of progressivism: What is the relationship between progressivism and socialism? The most sustained analysis of this relationship was that by James Kloppenberg, who argued that progressivism formed a third way between capitalism and socialism.⁶⁹ Most authors, however, have suggested there was either a collaborative or antagonistic relationship between progressives and radicals. Several historians of women have emphasized the importance of radical thought in the reform work of women such as Florence Kelley or in the coalitions struck between working-class radicals and wealthy or middle-class progressives in reform organizations such as the WTUL, especially before World War I.⁷⁰ In a similar vein, labor historians such as Steven Fraser and Joseph McCartin have stressed the influence of socialists such as Sidney Hillman among progressive reformers or the receptivity of influential progressives such as Frank Walsh to radical involvement in key institutions.⁷¹ In a recent synthesis, Michael McGerr has argued that progressives themselves should be understood as radicals.⁷² Doug Rossinow has recently provided a detailed discussion of the left-liberal relationship, but while he discusses the decline of this relationship, his principal effort is to recover the forgotten connection between these groups.⁷³ Radicalism has had an enormous influence in American history, but to appreciate that influence, it is important to understand radicalism as it was understood at the time.⁷⁴ At the turn of the twentieth century, radicalism was to a significant degree understood in an anticapitalist sense. At times, progressives shared this view of themselves. But to conclude that progressives were always, if unwittingly, anticapitalist, is to substitute an analytic for a contemporary view of radicalism.

Some authors have stressed the repression of radicalism at the hands of progressives. In William Preston's analysis, progressives appear as part of an ongoing and escalating campaign of federal repression over the first third of the century.⁷⁵ Within women's history and labor history, key studies have

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described a process of cooptation, in which alliances between radicals and reformers or more moderate elements of the labor movement were foreclosed during the First World War.⁷⁶ The history of repression, including at the hands of the Wilson administration, has been most clearly told by historians of radicalism.⁷⁷

This book differs from these perspectives, first, in saying that there is no single way to characterize the relationship between progressivism and radicalism for the entire period. Whether the relationship was favorable or not favorable depends on the time period examined because the relationship changed in response to key events and circumstances. Moreover the relationship did not follow a straight-line process of transformation for the entire period. The relationship waxed and waned, and in the early 1920s, during the years of the Farmer-Labor Party, it had important similarities to the years before the war and during the agitation of the WTUL and the investigations of the Commission on Industrial Relations (CIR). Second, the book is intellectual history. It is similar to Kloppenberg's study in this respect, but it stresses the effect of events on progressives' ideas toward radicalism, including their own sense of identity.⁷⁸ Finally, it examines how these changing ideas toward radicalism affected progressives' implementation of policy not only toward radicals but in other areas of political economy and foreign policy.

The best studies to describe this relationship in its on-again, off-again character have been either labor history or the work of historians of progressivism who take a labor history perspective. Several works of labor history have provided insight into specific aspects of this relationship from the perspective of workers rather than intellectual history. Richard Greenwald discusses the genesis of the Wagner Act, which he attributes to a coalition of radicals and liberals that formed the New York State Factory Inspection Commission after the Triangle Shirtwaist fire.⁷⁹ Some historians of communism, such as James R. Barrett and Edward P. Johanningsmeier, while documenting the repression of radicalism during the war, also emphasize the revival of collaboration with progressivism in the 1920s and during the New Deal.⁸⁰ In a study of the New York suffragist Harriot Stanton Blatch, Ellen Du Bois describes the critical influence of Fabian socialism and alliances with radical women unionists.⁸¹ In a study of the Chicago Federation of Labor, Elizabeth McKillen discusses the opposition of Irish radicals to wartime cooperation with the Wilson administration because of its favoritism toward Britain and stresses postwar coalitions such as the Farmer-Labor Party and the Committee of Forty-eight.⁸² In a study of the Morgan bombing in 1920, Beverly Gage describes the closing of the border between progressives and the left, but stresses the continuity in progressives' defense of civil liberties.⁸³ This

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study is part of this new group of works that has placed the relationship with radicalism at the center of the story and has illuminated previously under-appreciated aspects of progressivism. However, it diverges from these studies in that it is an attempt to provide a general intellectual history of progressive views of radicalism, drawing to a significant degree on a similar labor history chronology.

In African-American history, David Levering Lewis has provided a detailed reconstruction of W.E.B. Du Bois's views of socialism and class—and his relationship to progressives. The chief contribution of this work is to situate Du Bois's evolving views toward radicalism in the context of other progressives'.⁸⁴ Eric Yellin has provided a close study of segregation with the Wilson administration, with connections to Wilsonian politics that this book attempts to extend.⁸⁵ Finally, there is a literature that describes the growth of the state as a motive in itself. Important books have dealt specifically with the growth of civil service reform, welfare and social insurance, the labor injunction, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).⁸⁶ This book is an effort to extend this analysis of the process of state building to the power to regulate dissent and manage class conflict and to comprehend how this power developed in relation to progressives' understanding of radicalism.

When the conditions are appropriate, a potential exists for coalitional politics between progressives and radicals to achieve shared objectives. To put on the agenda what in retrospect appears to have been reforms requires a willingness to accept the outsider status that framing an issue for the first time can bring.⁸⁷ Radicals can also mobilize large numbers of people to support proposals for reform because of their important role in organizing labor unions. But these coalitions are put under stress during times of internal violence and intervention overseas. When this work went to press in 2015, a presidency that attracted the support—and sometimes criticism—of a broad coalition including antiwar protestors, equal rights advocates, and supporters of economic reform seemed, much like the Wilson administration, to have elicited a conservative backlash. It therefore bears revisiting the successes and failures of similar reform efforts in the past.