

OUTLINE

Chapter 18 The Progressive Era, 1900-1916

This chapter examines the many changes brought to the American economy and political system by Progressive reformers. Particular attention is given to the presidential administrations of Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson.

INTRODUCTION

I. AN URBAN AGE AND A CONSUMER SOCIETY

II. CHANGING IDEAS OF FREEDOM

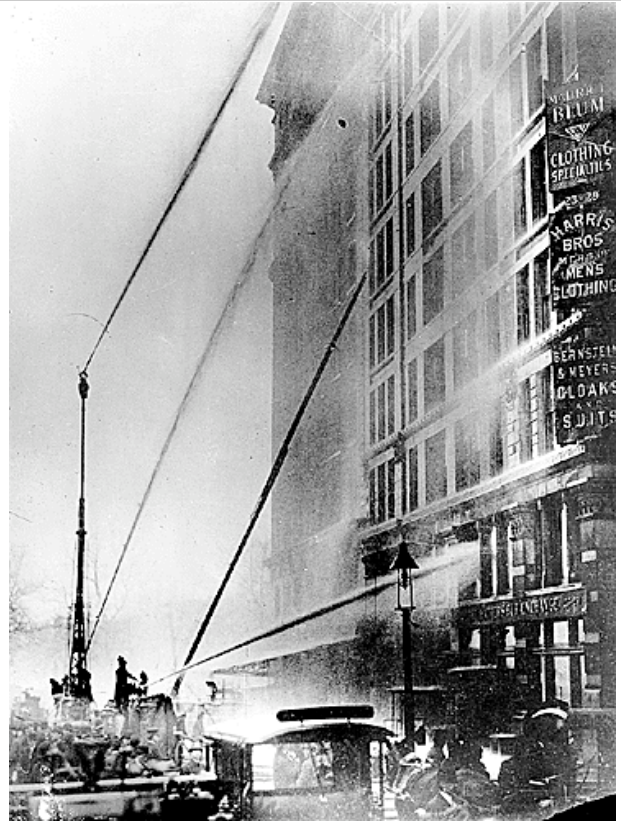
III. THE POLITICS OF PROGRESSIVISM

IV. THE PROGRESSIVE PRESIDENTS

INTRODUCTION

STORY:

In March 1911, a terrible fire broke out in a New York City garment factory, killing nearly 150 young female immigrant workers. As authorities investigated the fire, they discovered that working conditions in the factory had been unhealthy and unsafe. But the Triangle Shirtwaist Company was no better or worse than most factories of the era and the tragic fire there came to symbolize for a generation of Americans the need for major reforms in the industrial economy. These reformers, who called themselves Progressives, dramatically altered the shape of government, the economy, and the very meaning of freedom.



THEMES:

1. Reformers focused most of their attention on American cities because cities were, simultaneously, the centers of the worst poverty and of the greatest opportunity in the new industrial economy.
2. Progressivism included many strains of reform including concern for workers, for consumers, for women and children, and for the environment.
3. Women were key players in the Progressive movement and their participation produced new ideas about the role of women in society.
4. The three Progressive-era presidents were Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson. They expanded the role of government in regulating the economy and in protecting workers and consumers from the excesses of industrial capitalism.

I. AN URBAN AGE AND CONSUMER SOCIETY

FOCUS QUESTION: Why was the city such a central element in Progressive America?

A. Farms and Cities

1. For the last time in American history, farms and cities grew together
2. American agriculture entered what would later be remembered as its “golden age”
3. The city became the focus of Progressive politics and of a new mass consumer society
 - a. New York was the largest
4. The city captured the imagination of artists, writers, and reformers

B. The Muckrakers

1. A new generation of journalists writing for mass-circulation national magazines exposed the ills of industrial and urban life
 - a. Lincoln Steffens
 - b. Ida Tarbell
2. Major novelists of the era took a similar unsparing approach to social ills
 - a. Theodore Dreiser
 - b. Upton Sinclair



STUDY HINT

You should know why cities were the focus of the Progressives.

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muckrakers

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Upton Sinclair,
The Jungle

C. The Immigrant City

1. Between 1901 and 1914, 13 million immigrants came to the United States
 - a. Ellis Island
2. Asian and Mexican immigrants entered in fewer numbers

D. The Immigrant Quest for Freedom

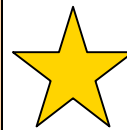
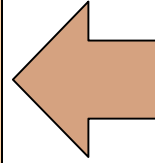
1. Progressive-Era immigration formed part of a larger process of worldwide migration set in motion by industrial expansion and the decline of traditional agriculture
2. Like their nineteenth-century predecessors, the new immigrants arrived imagining the United States as a land of freedom
 - a. Some immigrants were “birds of passage,” who planned on returning to their homeland
3. The new immigrants clustered in close-knit “ethnic” neighborhoods

E. Consumer Freedom

1. The advent of large department stores in central cities, chain stores in urban neighborhoods, and retail mail-order houses for farmers and small town residents made available to consumers throughout the country the vast array of goods now pouring from the nation’s factories
2. Leisure activities also took on the characteristics of mass consumption

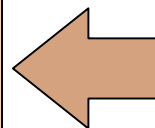
STUDY HINT

You should be able to describe why immigrants came to America and what their lives were like in American cities.



STUDY HINT

You should be able to give examples of consumer freedom.



a. Vaudeville

F. The Working Woman

1. Traditional gender roles were changing dramatically as more and more women were working for wages

a. Married women were working more

2. The working woman became a symbol of female emancipation

3. Charlotte Perkins Gilman claimed that the road to women's freedom lay through the workplace

4. Battles emerged within immigrant families of all nationalities between parents and their self-consciously "free" children, especially daughters

G. The Rise of Fordism

1. Henry Ford concentrated on standardizing output and lowering prices of automobiles

2. Ford revolutionized manufacturing with the moving assembly line

3. Ford paid his employees five dollars a day so that they could buy his car

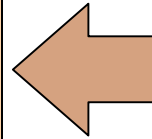
H. The Promise of Abundance

1. Economic abundance would eventually come to define the "American way of life," in which personal fulfillment was to be found through acquiring material goods



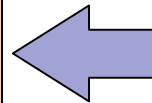
STUDY HINT

You should be able to describe how women were affected by industrialization.



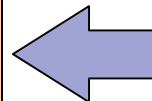
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Charlotte Perkins Gilman



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Fordism



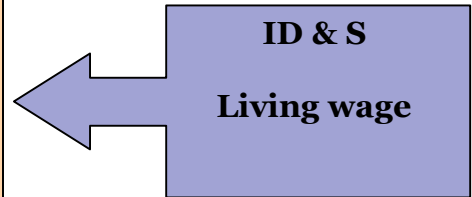
2. The desire for consumer goods led many workers to join unions and fight for higher wages

I. A Living Wage

1. Earning a living wage came to be viewed as a “natural and absolute” right of citizenship

a. Father John A. Ryan

2. Mass consumption came to occupy a central place in descriptions of American society and its future



II. CHANGING IDEAS OF FREEDOM

FOCUS QUESTION: How did the labor and women's movements change the meaning of American freedom?

A. The Varieties of Progressivism

- A. Progressives wished to humanize industrial capitalism
- B. Industrial Freedom
 - 1. Frederick W. Taylor pioneered "scientific management"
 - a. Eroded freedom of the skilled workers
 - 2. White-collar workers also felt a loss of freedom
 - 3. Many believed that unions embodied an essential principle of freedom—the right of people to govern themselves

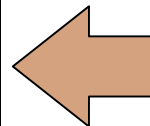
C. The Socialist Presence

- 1. The Socialist Party brought together surviving late-nineteenth-century radicals
- 2. Socialism flourished in diverse communities throughout the country
 - a. New York
 - b. Milwaukee
- 3. Eugene Debs was socialism's loudest voice



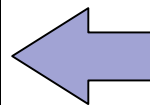
STUDY HINT

You should be able to identify the key Progressive ideas about freedom.



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Eugene V. Debs



D. AFL and IWW

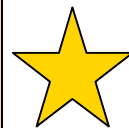
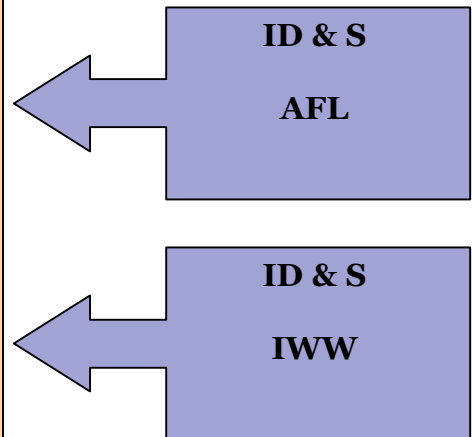
1. The AFL sought to forge closer ties with forward-looking corporate leaders willing to deal with unions as a way to stabilize employee relations
2. A group of unionists who rejected the AFL's exclusionary policies formed the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)
 - a. William "Big Bill" Haywood

E. The New Immigrants on Strike

1. Immigrant strikes demonstrated that while ethnic divisions among workers impeded labor solidarity, ethnic cohesiveness could also be a basis of unity
2. Lawrence strike demonstrated that workers sought not only higher wages but the opportunity to enjoy the finer things of life
3. New Orleans dockworker strike showed interracial solidarity
4. Ludlow strike ended soon after many strikers were killed

F. Labor and Civil Liberties

1. The courts rejected the claims of labor
2. Like the abolitionists before them, the labor movement, in the name of freedom, demanded the right to assemble, organize, and spread its views



G. The Free Speech Fights

1. Labor had to fight to get the right to assemble and speak freely

H. The New Feminism

1. Feminists' forthright attack on traditional rules of sexual behavior added a new dimension to the discussion of personal freedom
2. Heterodoxy was part of a new radical "bohemia"
3. The lyrical left made freedom the key to its vision of society

I. The Rise of Personal Freedom

1. Issues of intimate personal relations previously confined to private discussion blazed forth in popular magazines and public debates
 - a. Sigmund Freud

J. The Birth Control Movement

1. Emma Goldman lectured on sexual freedom and access to birth control
2. Margaret Sanger placed the issue of birth control at the heart of the new feminism
3. The birth control issue became a crossroads where the paths of labor radicals, cultural modernists, and feminists intersected

STUDY HINT

You should be able to describe the key aspects of the new ideas about personal freedom.

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**Margaret
Sanger**

III. THE POLITICS OF PROGRESSIVISM

FOCUS QUESTION: In what ways did Progressivism include both democratic and antidemocratic impulses?

A. Effective Freedom

1. Progressives assumed that the Modern era required a fundamental rethinking of the functions of political authority
2. Drawing on the reform programs of the Gilded Age and the example of European legislation, Progressives sought to reinvigorate the idea of an activist, socially conscious government
3. Progressives could reject the traditional assumption that powerful government posed a threat to freedom because their understanding of freedom was itself in flux
 - a. John Dewey

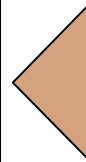
B. Progressive Politics

1. State and local governments enacted most of the era's reform measures
2. Gilded Age mayors Hazen Pingree and Samuel "Golden Rule" Jones pioneered urban progressivism
3. The most influential Progressive administration at the state level was that of Robert M. La Follette, who made Wisconsin a "laboratory for democracy"



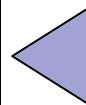
STUDY HINT

These 3 points about Progressive ideas about freedom are important to remember.



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**Robert M.
La Follette**



C. Progressive Democracy

1. Progressives hoped to reinvigorate democracy by restoring political power to the citizenry and civic harmony to a divided society
2. But the Progressive Era also witnessed numerous restrictions on democratic participation
 - a. Voting was seen more as a privilege for a select few

D. Government by Expert

1. The impulse toward order, efficiency, and centralized management was an important theme of Progressive reform
 - a. “Mastery” required applying scientific inquiry to modern social problems

E. Spearheads for Reform

1. Organized women reformers spoke for the more democratic side of Progressivism
2. Jane Addams founded Hull House in Chicago
3. The “new woman” was college-educated, middle-class and devoted to providing social services
4. Settlement houses produced many female reformers

STUDY HINT

You should be able to identify some of the ways in which Progressivism expanded democracy and some of the ways in which it restricted democracy.

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Jane Addams

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Settlement houses

F. The Campaign for Suffrage

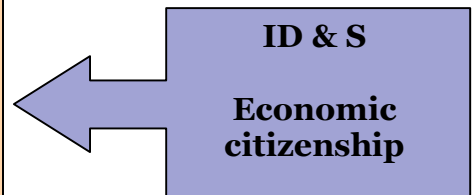
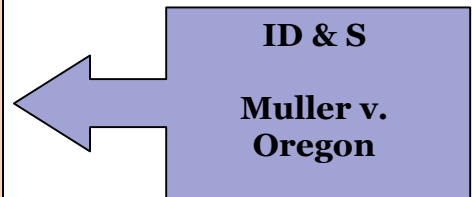
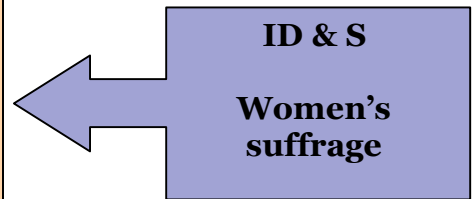
1. Campaign for women's suffrage became a mass movement
2. By 1900, over half the states allowed women to vote in local elections dealing with school issues

G. Materialist Reform

1. Ironically, the desire to exalt women's role within the home did much to inspire the reinvigoration of the suffrage movement
2. Muller v. Oregon upheld the constitutionality of an Oregon law setting maximum working hours for women
 - a. Louis Brandeis
 - b. A breach in liberty of contract doctrine

H. The Idea of Economic Citizenship

1. Brandeis argued that the right to government assistance derived from citizenship itself



IV. THE PROGRESSIVE PRESIDENTS

FOCUS QUESTION: How did the Progressive presidents foster the rise of the nation-state?

A. Theodore Roosevelt

1. Roosevelt regarded the president as “the steward of the public welfare”
2. The Square Deal attempted to confront the problems caused by economic consolidation by distinguishing between “good” and “bad” corporations

B. Roosevelt and the Trusts

1. Roosevelt used the Sherman Antitrust Act to dissolve Northern Securities Company
2. Roosevelt helped mine workers during a 1902 coal strike
3. Roosevelt improved the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) and regulated the food and drug industry

C. The Conservation Movement

1. Roosevelt also moved to preserve parts of the natural environment from economic exploitation
 - a. John Muir and the Sierra Club
2. Conservation also reflected the Progressive thrust toward efficiency and control

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Theodore Roosevelt

STUDY HINT

You should be able to identify the key policies of the Theodore Roosevelt Administration.



D. Taft in Office

1. Taft pursued antitrust policy even more aggressively than Roosevelt
2. Taft supported the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution
3. Progressive Republicans broke from Taft after the Ballinger-Pinchot affair

E. The Election of 1912

1. The election was a four-way contest among Taft, Roosevelt, Democrat Woodrow Wilson, and Socialist Eugene V. Debs
 - a. It became a national debate on the relationship between political and economic freedom in the age of big business

F. New Freedom and New Nationalism

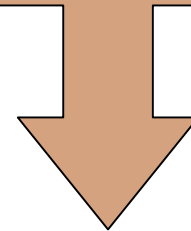
1. Wilson insisted that democracy must be reinvigorated by restoring market competition and freeing government from domination by big business
2. Roosevelt called for heavy taxes on personal and corporate fortunes and federal regulation of industries including railroads, mining, and oil
3. The Progressive Party platform offered numerous proposals to promote social justice

G. Wilson's First Term

1. Wilson proved himself a strong executive leader

STUDY HINT

You should know the candidates and the basic issues in the Presidential election of 1912.



2. With Democrats in control of Congress, Wilson moved aggressively to implement his version of Progressivism

- a. Underwood Tariff
- b. Clayton Act

3. Wilson abandoned the idea of aggressive trust-busting in favor of greater government supervision of the economy

- a. Federal Reserve system
- b. Federal Trade Commission

STUDY HINTS

You should be able to identify the key policies of the Woodrow Wilson Administration.

