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How did the role of government change during the Progressive Era?

Source: Victor Joseph Gatto/ Museum of the City of New York

CHAPTER 18

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Watch the Video *Critical Visions, Ch*

Creating a Democratic Paradise

The Progressive Era, 1895–1915

Female employees of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, many recently arrived from Italy and Eastern Europe, worked on sewing machines 6 days a week, 12 hours a day, makin blouses. On March 25, 1911, a fire engulfed the top floors of the building that housed th factory in New York City's Lower East Side. As bundles fell to the street, onlookers belo assumed that workers were throwing their best cloth out the window to save it. They so realized their mistake. Female workers were jumping by twos and threes to escape the flames. In the end, 146 women and men perished.

The memories of this horrific scene never left 18-year-old Victor Gatto, who stood o the corner and watched as women plunged directly onto the pavement. In 1944 Gatto, a self-taught artist, painted *Triangle Fire: March 25, 1911.* His painting depicted a woman plunging to her death past unprepared firefighters atop ladders too short to reach the victims above. On the ground indifferent police officers stand near the neat row of shroud-covered corpses that lined the sidewalk.

By the time Gatto provided this visual indictment of the government's inability to protect workers, Americans' expectations of their government had radically changed. This new vision took hold during the Progressive Era, partially in response to events like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. In Gatto's painting the immense stone buildings tower above the lifeless workers, the artist's way of representing the complete domination of big business over labor at the beginning of the twentieth century. On the day of the fire, employers had locked the workshop doors from the outside to prevent the women from stealing materials or leaving early. With the doors bolted and flimsy fire escapes collapsing under the weight of fleeing workers, the windows offered the only means of escape for the rest.

To many Progressive Era reformers, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire illustrated the tragic consequences of capitalist exploitation and the government's lack of interest in the plight of workers. Middle-class activists championed an array of reforms that envisioned using local, state, and federal governments to protect Americans from the greed and indifference of big business. Their agenda aroused considerable criticism, but Progressives, aided by three reform-minded presidents, Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson, found enough common ground to construct cross-class alliances that sought to end exploitive business practices and class conflict. Progressive-led coalitions also tackled pressing political and social issues. From the mid-1890s to the mid-1900s, Progressives transformed the role of government in American society and laid the foundation for the liberal reform movements of the twentieth century.

"We have reached the point in our history when we realize that the nation has tremendous social, economic, and industrial problems."

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, 1912

The Progressive Impulse

The tide of reforms that swept across America at the turn of the twentiet century had its roots in a range of middle-class concerns. Middle-class dismay over the dismal living and laboring conditions for most working-class people turned to alarm as strikes and the appeal of socialism increas The Progressives had unprecedented success building alliances that transcended class and political party affiliation, winning the support of three consecutive presidents. Dramatically reshaping the nation within a decade, the Progressive vision of an activist government that used regulation to safeguard the public challenged the prevailing laissez-faire notion that the government should not interfere with market forces.

The Angst of the Middle Class

At the dawn of the twentieth century, middle-class Americans looked around the nation and did not like what they saw. The upper 2 percent of the population controlled the nation's banks and industry. Even worse during the Gilded Age (see Chapter 17), they flaunted their prodigious wealth by leading pleasure-filled lives replete with mansions, yachts, and private art collections. The upper class embraced an ethos of individualism that made each man responsible for his and his family's wealth or poverty. "Failures which a man makes in his life are due almost always to some defect in his personality, some weakness of body, mind, or character, will, or temperament," proclaimed John D. Rockefeller, the billionaire titan of Standard Oil. In the nineteenth century many middle-class Americans had uncritically echoed these same sentiments. Increasingly, however, these words rang hollow as the middle class watched the rich discard the tenets of self-discipline, frugality, and charity that had prevented individualism from turning into outright selfishness.

Big business came of age at the turn of the century, as huge conglomerates began to dominate the economy. Smaller busines many run by middle-class proprietors, found it in creasingly difficult to compete with these immens corporations. From 1897 to 1904 a wave of busine mergers reduced 1,800 firms to just 157 in key eco nomic sectors. Leading captains of industry vertically integrated businesses to control the producti and distribution of their products from start to fin ish (see Chapter 16). Industrialists also integrated horizontally to eliminate competition from companies manufacturing similar items. Through such measures Rockefeller created the Standard Oil Tru and eventually produced and distributed 90 percen of refined oil in the United States, giving him the sole power to set prices for consumers and making him the richest man in the country.

American factories employed a large wage-earning working-class population whose members had little chance of improving their circumstances, no matter how hard they worked. More than half (**18.1**) of the nation's population toiled at manual labor in mines, factories, docks, and farms owned by others. Low wages, seasonal layoffs, sickness, an workplace accidents created a life filled with insecurity for most workers. "Father, does everyone in America live like this?" asked an 11-year-old Russian Jewish immigrant, "Go to work early, come home late, eat and go to sleep? And the next day again work, eat, and sleep?" For most of the nation, the answer was a painful "yes."

Farm Laborers 12.6%
Professionals 4%
Farmers 21%
Proprietors 3.8%
Managers/officials/clerks 6%
Sales Workers 3.6%
Craft Workers and Operatives 25%
Domestic and Service Workers 11%
Industrial Laborers 13%

18.1 Occupational Distribution, 1900 America was a primarily working-class society during the Progressive Era.

What economic challenges did the nation face at the end of the nineteenth century?

Large corporate bureaucracies also employed middle-class clerks whose ranks grew from 4 percent of the working population in 1900 to 8 percent by 1920. Most earned enough to maintain an acceptable middle-class lifestyle, but the middle class worried that the growing divide between the "haves" and "have-nots" put them in a precarious position. Press reports focusing on the dire living and working circumstances of the working class aroused middle-class sympathies, but fear motivated them to act as well.

The popularity of radical political ideologies, unions, saloons and dancing halls within working-class neighborhoods—each in its own way offering the promise of a better, easier life—alarmed the middle class. The classless paradise without private property championed by working-class radical leaders horrified most middle-class professionals, who owned their own homes and businesses. This 1912 image of state militia confronting a parade of striking textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, underscored the reality that strikes often turned violent (**18.2**). This photo's suggestion of an imminent clash between troops enforcing martial law and defiant workers offered visual evidence to middle-class Progressives that class tensions were tearing the nation apart. While sympathetic to labor unions' demands, middle-class Progressives valued law and order. They wanted to find a way to end both industrialist exploitation and the steady stream of strikes that disrupted their daily lives.

18.2 Troops and Striking Workers Face Off, Lawrence, Massachusetts 1912
When the governor proclaimed martial law to prevent mass union rallies, protesting workers took to the streets carrying large American flags. Middle-class Progressives hoped their reforms would end strike-related violence, like the mayhem threatening to unfurl in this scene.

Progressives aspired to change other aspects of working-class culture as well. They deplored what they saw as the twin evils of drink and prostitution rampant in working-class neighborhoods. In the Progressive imagination the relentless pursuit of pleasure by both the upper class and the working class signaled the overall moral decay of American society.

The Progressive Vision

Glaring problems on both sides of the class divide—an idle and exploitive upper class on one side and an increasingly radicalized and impoverished working class on the other—threatened the middle-class vision of what life in America should offer. *Progressivism*, a broad term used to describe a shared philosophical approach rather than a formal organized movement, provided an answer to this threat.

Like the Populists (see Chapter 17) and Socialists, Progressives formed their own political party to advance their agenda. Theodore Roosevelt, for example, made a failed bid to regain the presidency by running as the candidate of the short-lived Progressive (Bull Moose) Party in 1912. Mainly however, Progressives, built cross-class political coalitions that transcended party lines. Lacking the wealth that the upper class possessed, or the sheer numbers that gave the working class tremendous economic clout, the middle class needed the support of other classes for their reforms to succeed.

Women played a particularly visible and active role in Progressive causes. Female settlement house workers (see Chapter 17) and women's civic club members, usually white, middle class, and college educated, embraced the notion of "municipal housekeeping," the Progressive conviction that women could not adequately protect their children without help from the government. Female trade unionists agreed, but they also wanted to empower female

Read the Document *Eugene V. Debs, "The Outlook for Socialism in America" (1900)*

How did a mix of sympathy and fear spur middle-class interest in reform?

workers by organizing unions to improve wages and working conditions. Tragedies like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire brought these diverse female factions together, even winning support from appalled upper-class women. In the wake of the fire, this cross-class female coalition focused on bolstering city safety regulations, but only the labor activists emphasized the need for unions to end employer exploitation.

One particularly effective cross-class female alliance lobbied for legislation to ensure that mothers had clean, disease-free milk for their children. These women succeeded in their quest for local laws that prevented distributors from using chalk to make dirty milk appear white. They successfully rallied for mandatory pasteurization to kill germs, and for milk to be transported in refrigerated containers. Female-led reform campaigns also injected new energy into the suffrage movement.

> "Children need pure milk and good food, good schools and playgrounds, sanitary homes and safe streets."
>
> A female trade-union activist on why women needed the vote

Many middle-class female Progressive reformers and working-class labor organizers became convinced that without the right to vote, women lacked an essential tool they needed to keep themselves and their families safe. The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) achieved notable successes between 1910 and 1917, winning the right to vote in Washington, California, Arizona, Kansas, Oregon, and New York. Defeats in other states, however, convinced the NWSA to seek a constitutional amendment guaranteeing all women the right to vote, a campaign that succeeded in 1920 (see Chapter 20).

In a general sense the Progressives wanted to turn America into a middle-class paradise where economic security, education, health, and civility flourished. The tradition of Christian charity also helped shape the Progressive agenda. In the 1880s, Protestant ministers like Josiah Strong began preaching the Social Gospel, the religious belief that Christians had a responsibility to create an ethically sound and morally upright society. The settlement house movement, begun in the spirit of Christian charity, became the incubator for strategies Progressives developed to attain these goals. As th confronted the problems of the poor at Hull Hou a settlement house in a Chicago immigrant neigh borhood, Jane Addams and Florence Kelley articu lated the middle-class values that would form the cornerstone of the Progressive ethos.

Foremost among these was an emphasis on ho the environment, as well as individual traits, shape the lives of the poor. Progressives argued that poo living and working environments created many of the social problems troubling the nation. Exhibitin a typical Progressive faith in the scientific method, Addams and Kelley compiled a statistical portrait of disease, over-crowding, and crime in their Chicago neighborhood that helped Hull House devise solutions to these problems.

Improving sanitation and garbage collection, creating playgrounds for children, eliminating saloons, limiting the hours spent at work, reducing workplace accidents—these were all ways to improve the environment in working-class neighborhoods so that individuals could flourish. Personal responsibility also remained a bedrock principle for Addams and Kelley. While offering more respec for immigrant cultures than many past reformers, Addams and Kelley still believed strongly in teaching immigrants the importance of thrift, temperance, and self-discipline—lifestyle changes that som immigrants resisted.

Finally, Progressives embraced a new vision of governmental power, one that Americans from many different walks of life challenged. Their notion that governmental regulation should protect workers and curtail the excesses of big business put them at odds with industrialists and unions. Industrialists embraced the laissez-faire ethos that they had the right to control their businesses as they saw fit without government interference. Unions also viewed potential government intervention with unease, mindful that during labor conflicts the government usually sided with industrialists. Labor leaders preferred using collective action, including strikes, to win concessions from industrialists. To socialists, who wanted to nationalize all major industries, the Progressive emphasis on regulation was too timid. Essentially the Progressives sought the middle ground between these competing views. They wanted to establish a balance that avoided the excesses of unfettered laissez-faire economics, unending class conflict, or complete government control of the economy. Their aim was notable—the creation of a socially just, capitalist America.

View the **Closer Look** *Triangle Fire: March 25, 1911*

Reining in Big Business

When three consecutive presidents—Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt, William Taft, and Woodrow Wilson—embraced components of the evolving Progressive reform agenda, Progressivism entered the mainstream with a vengeance. What to do about big business aroused considerable debate within Progressive circles. Progressives held competing visions of whether to regulate, dismantle, or accept the trusts, making it hard to rally public opinion around one clear solution. Presidents Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson devised differing regulatory and antitrust strategies to reform business practices, and openly disagreed on how to tackle the problem. Curtailing big business's access to the nation's environmental riches also provoked debate. Did business have the right to fully exploit the country's forests and water, or should these resources be preserved?

Roosevelt's Trust-Busting

Roosevelt enthusiastically supported turning the government into a "steward of the public welfare." While serving as New York City police commissioner from 1895 to 1897, Roosevelt had become friendly with pioneering photojournalist Jacob Riis (see Chapter 17). "The midnight trips that Riis and I took" to the tenements, Roosevelt later acknowledged, showed him "what overcrowding means, some hot summer night." Roosevelt's feats during the 1898 Spanish-American War made him a national hero, catapulting him into winning the New York governorship. In 1900, President William McKinley selected Roosevelt as his running mate for his successful reelection bid.

On September 5, 1901, anarchist Leon Czolgosz shot McKinley with a pistol wrapped in a handkerchief while the president was shaking hands at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. When McKinley died eight days later, the 42-year-old Roosevelt became the youngest president in American history. A robust man who appeared to be in perpetual motion dictating letters, lecturing visitors, playing tennis, or having pillow fights with his younger children in the White House, Roosevelt captured the public's affection. When Teddy Roosevelt saved a bear cub during a 1902 hunting expedition, a toymaker felt inspired to name a new children's toy after him, and so the teddy bear was born.

Like many Progressives Roosevelt believed that the country stood at a crossroads—either reform or face the end of democracy. He established his credentials as a Progressive reformer, and won public approval, by mediating the 1902 coal strike and filing suit against the Northern Securities and Standard Oil Trusts.

On May 12, 1902, 140,000 northeastern Pennsylvanian miners walked off their jobs. They demanded an eight-hour day, a 20 percent wage increase, and recognition of their United Mine Workers (UMW) union. The mine owners refused to negotiate. "'The public be damned,' appears to be their motto," decried one Illinois newspaper as coal shortages forced factories to close, and the poor began cooking food with oil-soaked asbestos.

President Roosevelt viewed the miners' predicament sympathetically. "I strongly favor labor unions," he declared. "If I were a wage worker in a big city I should certainly join one." Fearing widespread suffering and urban riots, Roosevelt threatened to use troops to take over the mines unless the owners agreed to let a government commission fashion an agreement. For the first time a president had stood up publicly against big business, winning him accolades in union circles. The resulting resolution reduced miners' hours from ten to nine and awarded them a 10 percent pay hike without forcing the owners to recognize the union. "I wish the capitalists would see," the president privately remarked, that the government-ordered compromise "is really in the interest of property, for it will save it from the danger of revolution."

Roosevelt also joined the Progressive campaign to remove the stranglehold that some trusts had on parts of the economy. In 1902, journalist Ida Tarbell began publishing a multipart series, "The History of the Standard Oil Company," in *McClure's Magazine*, a popular and influential middle-class news periodical. In her scathing critique Tarbell detailed the illicit deals that John D. Rockefeller had made with railroad companies to build his oil trust. Secret rebate

View the Image *Teddy Roosevelt as "Jack the Giant Killer" (1904)*

Why did Roosevelt's personality and behavior captivate the public?

agreements meant that Rockefeller paid considerably less than his competitors to ship oil. Many could not even get the railroads, which feared incurring Rockefeller's wrath, to transport their oil. Tarbell had firsthand experience with Rockefeller's cut-throat practices: They had bankrupted her father's oil business. She was convinced that Rockefeller's tactics would drive other small producers out of business, leaving a handful of industrialists in control of the economy.

The titans of industry offered a competing vision. There was nothing wonderful about economic competition, Rockefeller contended. Destructive price-cutting drove down wages, over-production created depressions, and duplication of services wasted valuable resources. Rockefeller defended his railroad agreements as beneficial to all concerned. Standard Oil got lower rates while the railroads received guaranteed freight. Preventing too much oil from flooding the market stabilized prices and kept men in all oil-related industries profitably employed. The richest man in America also disputed claims that trusts made economic advancement impossible for average Americans, noting that he needed intelligent and skilled men to run his subsidiaries.

President Roosevelt agreed with much of Rockefeller's assessment. "The corporation has come to stay," he conceded, acknowledging that the nation benefited from the economies of scale that "good" trusts offered. Nonetheless, Roosevelt maintained, the government needed to break up "bad" trusts when consolidation threatened the public interest. The president soon singled out the Northern Securities Trust for dissolution, earning a reputation for trust-busting by taking steps to break up the monopoly.

In 1901, the financier J. P. Morgan had joined with two other powerful trust-builders, James J. Hill and E. H. Harriman, to form the Northern Securities Trust. The new transportation conglomerate meant "that you can ride from England to China on regular lines of steamships and railroads without once passing from the protecting hollow of Mr. Morgan's hand," announced journalist Ray Stannard Baker. With his eye on the 1904 presidential election, Roosevelt filed an antitrust suit charging the Northern Securities Trust with violating the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act. A shocked Morgan rushed to the White House to broker a deal with the president. "If we have done anything wrong, send your man to my man and they can fix it up," suggested Morgan, an offer for a backroom deal that Roosevelt refused. In 1904, the Supreme Court upheld a Justice Department order to dissolve the Northern Securities Trust into independent railroad companies, earning Roosevelt public acclaim. After Roosevelt easily defeated the lackluster Democrat Alton B. Parker to win reelection in 1904, one newspaper called him "the most popular man that has come into public life within recent times."

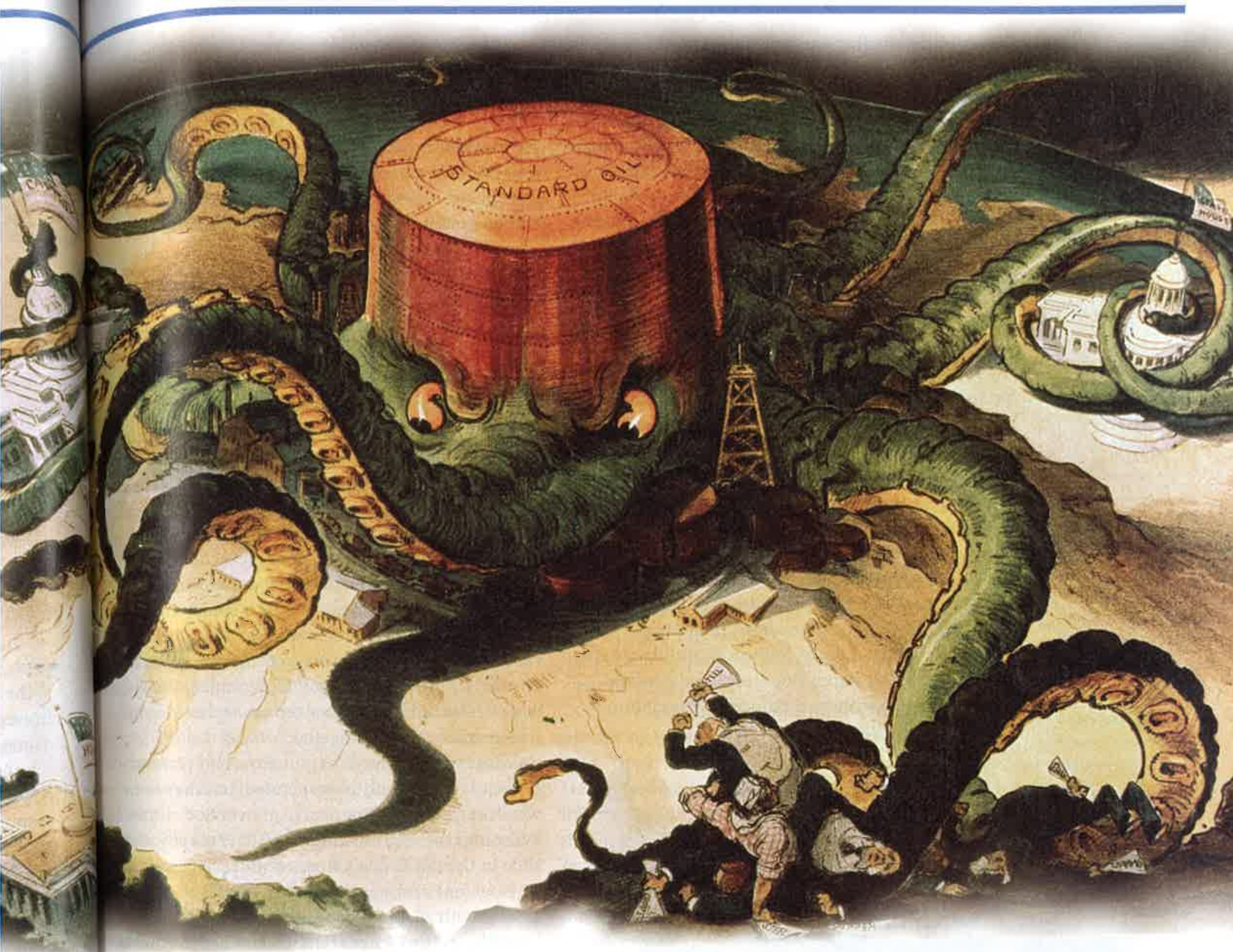
Standard Oil was next. In 1906 the Justice Department filed suit claiming that the trust had violated the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. This political cartoon (**18.3**) depicts Standard Oil as a frenzied octopus that has consumed the entire oil industry. Tentacles grasp overweight steel and copper businessmen in suits on one side and steamboats on the other, symbolizing how Standard Oil's control of the supply and price of oil strangled transportation and manufacturing industries. In the caricature state legislatures and Congress have succumbed to the monster's strength, and a leg now reaches for the White House.

When the Supreme Court finally ordered Standard Oil to dissolve in 1911, the justices avoided a blanket ruling that all trusts were illegal. The Court instead invoked a "rule of reason," stating that only unreasonable restraints of interstate trade violated the law. The Court's ruling aptly described ex-president Roosevelt's own trust-busting philosophy. Roosevelt launched highly visible assaults on the Northern Securities and Standard Oil Trusts. He did nothing, however, when Morgan bought Andrew Carnegie's steel empire in 1901 to create U.S. Steel, a trust that employed nearly one million workers.

Roosevelt balanced trust-busting with regulation to ensure that big business behaved responsibly. He strengthened the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), created in 1887 to address Western farmers' criticism of high railroad freight rates and rebates (see Chapter 17). By 1900, Supreme Court rulings

What competing visions did Roosevelt, the Supreme Court, and leading industrialists offer on the trust issue?

Read the Document *Louis Brandeis, from Other People's Money and How Bankers Use It (1913)*



18.3 Standard Oil's Tentacles
In this political cartoon Standard Oil is an octopus, consuming everything in its path.

had essentially stripped the ICC of real authority. During his second administration, Roosevelt reinstated the power of the ICC to regulate railroad monopolies, convincing a reluctant Congress to pass the 1906 Hepburn Act. Four years later the Mann-Elkins Act further bolstered the rate-setting powers of the ICC and put the telegraph and telephone communication industries under its purview as well.

Taft and Wilson: Competing Progressive Visions

Having promised not to run again for president in 1908, Roosevelt helped his secretary of war, William Howard Taft, secure the Republican nomination. Roosevelt believed that Taft would continué his efforts to create a stronger, regulatory federal government. The Democrats countered by nominating the fiery William Jennings Bryan for a third time (see Chapter 17), trying to siphon Progressive votes away from a tepid Taft. Roosevelt's tireless campaigning for his chosen successor undercut Bryan's claim that he was the only real Progressive in the race. The Republican campaign slogan, "Vote for Taft now, you can vote for Bryan anytime," reminded voters of Bryan's two previous attempts to win the presidency and portrayed him as a perennial loser. Taft won easily, handing Bryan his worst electoral defeat.

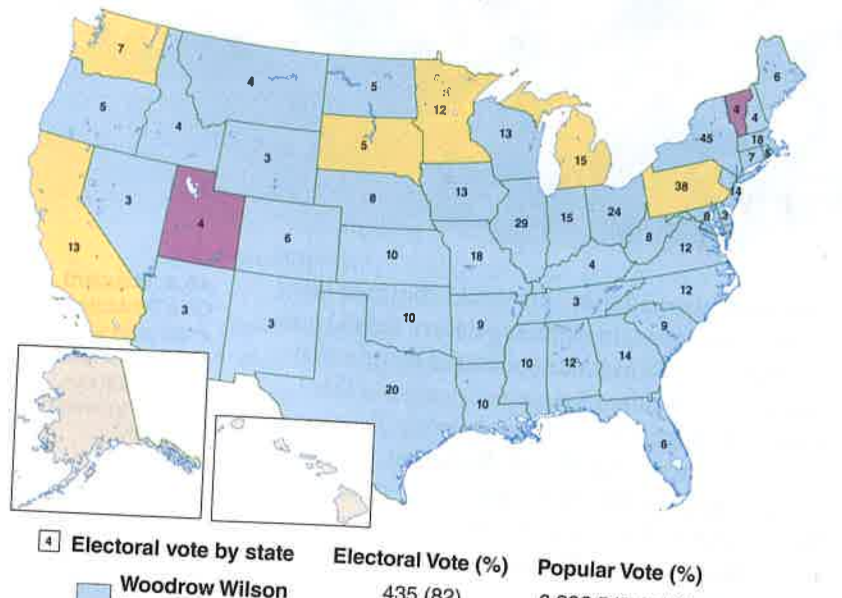
Once Taft became president important philosophical differences between Roosevelt and Taft emerged. Like Roosevelt, Taft had to work with a divided

View the Image *John D. Rockefeller Cartoon (1901)*

How did exposés and caricatures in the popular media shape public views of Standard Oil?

Republican party that controlled Congress. Roosevelt had sided with the Progressive faction, while Taft gravitated to the conservatives. Unlike Roosevelt Taft viewed the president as an executor of law and protector of existing social institutions, not someone who spearheaded new reforms. A stickler for the law, Taft proved less willing than Roosevelt to make any distinction between good and bad trusts, filing more antitrust cases over four years than Roosevelt had in eight. Taft's decision to file charges against U.S. Steel enraged Roosevelt, who saw it as a personal attack on his earlier choice to leave this "good" trust alone.

Unhappy with his successor Roosevelt decided to run for president again in 1912. When Roosevelt's bid for the 1912 Republican nomination failed (the party renominated the incumbent Taft), Republican Progressives bolted and formed the short-lived Progressive (Bull Moose) Party, which nominated Roosevelt as their presidential candidate. The split in Republican ranks offered the Democrats an opportunity to capture the presidency for the first time since the election of 1892. They nominated New Jersey Governor Woodrow Wilson, a Virginia-born politician with Progressive ideals. In contrast to the divided Republican Party, Wilson's candidacy kept the Southern base happy and prevented Progressively inclined Northern Democrats from joining the Progressive Party.



18.4 1912 Presidential Election Results Strong third-party challenges from the Progressive Party and Socialists split the national vote four ways, but Democrat Wilson prevailed to win the presidency in 1912.

Electoral vote by state	Electoral Vote (%)	Popular Vote (%)
Woodrow Wilson *(Democrat)*	435 (82)	6,296,547 (41.9)
Theodore Roosevelt *(Progressive)*	88 (8)	4,118,571 (27.4)
William H Taft *(Republican)*	8 (0)	3,486,720 (23.2)
Eugene Debs *(Socialist)*	0 (0)	900,672 (6.0)

Taft, Roosevelt, and Wilson supported diff degrees of federal activism, competing views t gave voters a clear choice in the election of 191 Taft was willing to zealously enforce existing P gressive reforms but had no intention of initiat new ones. Roosevelt embraced a governing phi phy that he called "New Nationalism," a vision emphasized increased federal regulation and w spread political reform. In contrast to Roosevel who wanted to regulate but not destroy big bus Wilson's "New Freedom" promised to restore a competitive marketplace where small businessm and farmers thrived.

The 1912 slate also included Socialist Party candidate Eugene V. Debs, a railway trade unio leader who had become a socialist after being jai during the Pullman Strike of 1894 (see Chapter Formed in 1905 the Socialists had won numerou cal elections and grown to over 100,000 dues-pa members. Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson believed t with regulations in place (although each favored different amounts of regulation), capitalism woul operate more fairly. Debs offered a competing vie He proposed transferring ownership of existing railroad, oil, and steel trusts to the government to ensure fair prices and wages. Government-run mo nopolies would be the first step toward ending the free-market system altogether.

Most voters agreed that the time had come to reform how the economy operated, but they overwhelmingly chose Progressivism over Socialism. Wilson won the presidency in 1912 (**18.4**) by a lan slide in the Electoral College, while receiving only 41.9 percent of the popular vote. Roosevelt came in second with 27.4 percent of the popular vote, followed by Taft's 23.2 percent. Over 900,000 Americans, 6 percent of the electorate, voted for Debs. Nearly 70 percent of those who voted cast their ballots for Wilson or Roosevelt, a resounding public endorsement of Progressive principles and reforms.

Once he entered the White House, President Woodrow Wilson went beyond trust-busting to weaken monopolies. He accepted the Democratic orthodoxy of cutting the tariff so foreign businesses could market lower-priced goods in the United States, thereby creating a more competitive marketplace where smaller businesses could thrive. By 1913, most industrialists had dropped their longstanding opposition to lowering the tariff. The heads of Singer Sewing Machines, Eastman Kodak, and U.S. Steel believed that other nations would reciprocate, allowing American captains of industry to conquer foreign markets as well. Wilson offset the lost tariff

What clear philosophical differences separated the four candidates in the 1912 presidential election?

revenue (which the government needed to fund its operations) with the first federal income taxes, now constitutional thanks to the newly ratified Sixteenth Amendment (1913). Only people making more than $4,000 a year paid federal income taxes (less than one percent of the population) at a time when many workers felt lucky to make $1,000 a year.

Wilson also tried to help small businesses by improving the flow of credit. Most small and big businessmen agreed with Wilson that the time had come to reform the country's chaotic banking system. They vividly remembered the Panic of 1907 when financial giant J. P. Morgan had used his own funds and those of other bankers to shore up the national banking system. The nation's 7,000 banks operated with complete independence, issuing all forms of currency, some backed by gold and silver, others backed by government bonds. No centralized authority existed to expand or contract the currency supply as the economy demanded, or to move money around the country to stave off panics.

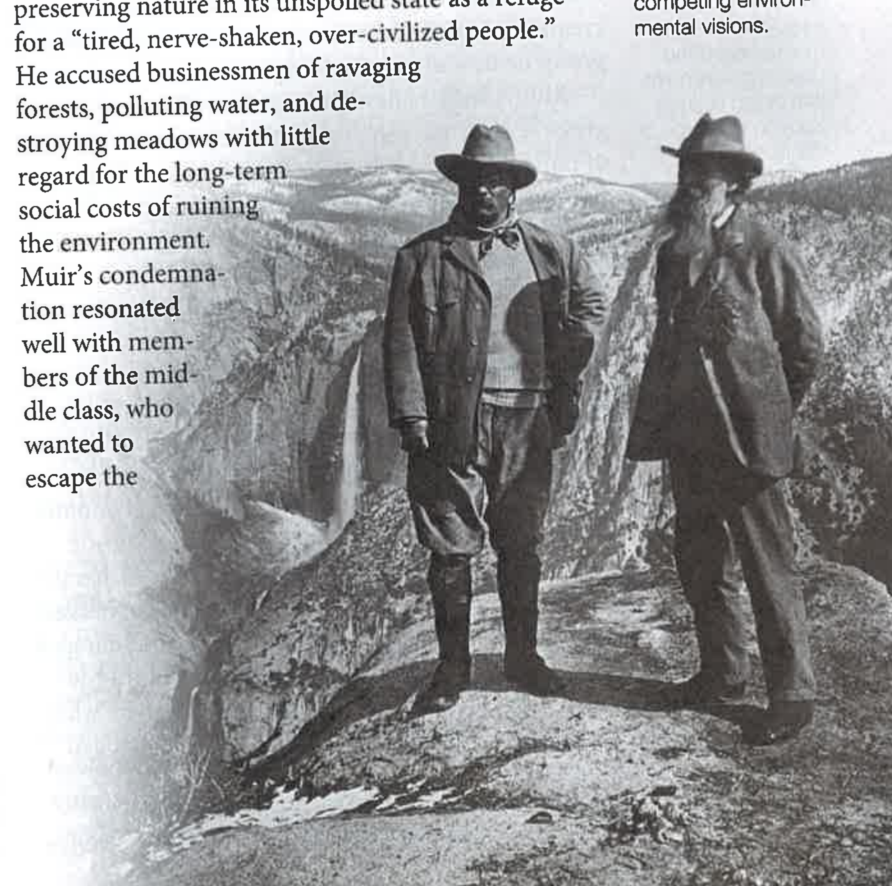
Conflicting visions soon arose over whether private financiers or the government should control the nation's financial institutions. Southern and Western Populists wanted a federally run banking system that would destroy the Wall Street "money trust." Eastern bankers likened government oversight to socialism. After much debate Congress passed the **Federal Reserve Act** (1913), creating a federally run Federal Reserve to serve as a "banker's bank" that held a portion of bank funds in reserve to help member banks in time of crisis. The Federal Reserve also set rates for business loans and issued a new national paper currency.

Wilson beefed up federal regulation of trusts as well. In 1914, the **Clayton Anti-Trust Act** prohibited interlocking directories, the practice of setting up shadow companies that appeared to compete but were actually run by the same board of directors. The law exempted trade unions from prosecution under the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act, eliminating a tactic that businessmen had used to undercut the labor movement. The Federal Trade Commission (1914) had the power to order companies to cease unfair trading practices, although its decisions were subject to court review.

Preservation versus Conservation

Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson prescribed differing amounts of regulation and federal activism to rein in the trusts. Business's access to the nation's forests, water, and minerals provoked another set of competing visions within Progressive circles. In 1867, John Muir suffered an eye injury that caused temporary blindness while working as a mechanic. After his eyes healed Muir walked 1,000 miles from Indianapolis, Indiana, to the Gulf of Mexico to rejuvenate his spirit. Like Muir, Roosevelt had turned to the revitalizing power of nature while recovering from personal tragedy when he retreated to his North Dakota ranch in 1884 after both his mother and 22-year-old first wife died on the same day in their New York City home. In 1903, President Roosevelt went camping with Muir in Yosemite, an area of the California Sierra Nevada Mountains filled with spectacular waterfalls, massive rock formations, and Giant Sequoia trees nearly 200 feet high and 3,000 years old. A photo of the pair on Glacier Point (**18.5**) before Yosemite Falls, the largest waterfall in North America, commemorated the trip. The two men dominate the frame, suggesting the power they had to decide the fate of such national treasures. This moment of unity was fleeting. Despite their mutual love of unspoiled forests, Muir and Roosevelt became formidable opponents who embraced different environmental visions.

Muir was a preservationist who championed preserving nature in its unspoiled state as a refuge for a "tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people." He accused businessmen of ravaging forests, polluting water, and destroying meadows with little regard for the long-term social costs of ruining the environment. Muir's condemnation resonated well with members of the middle class, who wanted to escape the



18.5 President Roosevelt and John Muir in Yosemite, 1903 Despite their camaraderie during a camping trip, Roosevelt and Muir embraced competing environmental visions.

View the **Map** *Interactive Map: Resources and Conflict in the West*

How did Wilson's economic vision and policies differ from those pursued by the Roosevelt and Taft administrations?

18.6 *Chief and his staff*, 1904
This image of Crow warriors riding away into the mist captured the prevailing sentiment that Indian cultures were on the verge of disappearing.

stress of urban life with holidays in the pristine wilderness. His influential writings led to the 1890 establishment of Yosemite as a national park and the creation in 1892 of the Sierra Club, an environmental group dedicated to preserving wilderness.

Muir's antibusiness message fit well with the Progressive determination to put the social good ahead of individual self-interest. Roosevelt agreed that a few unscrupulous entrepreneurs should not unfairly consume what belonged to the entire nation. To this end Roosevelt created 5 national parks, 18 national monuments, and bird reserves that placed millions of acres off-limits to development. The president parted company with Muir, however, by choosing to regulate, not ban, public access to other federally controlled lands, waterways, and mineral deposits. Roosevelt embraced a conservationist vision that tried to balance two goals: meeting present economic needs and conserving natural resources for future generations. When the U.S. Forestry Service Director Gifford Pinchot allowed timber companies to harvest trees in designated areas, the new regulations enraged both preservationists, who wanted all economic development to cease, and Western businessmen, who demanded unfettered access to federally controlled forests.

Taft was sympathetic to Western complaints that Roosevelt had overstepped his authority. When Taft fired Pinchot in 1910, Roosevelt and his Progressive followers took it as a sign that Taft had abandon conservation, deepening th split between the two form colleagues.

Environmentalists expressed great admiration for Native Americans' ecologically friendly farm ing and hunting practice fueling mainstream curio ity about Indian cultures at the turn of the century In 1900, photographer Edward Curtis began a 30-year multivolume ethnographic project entitle *The North American Indian*, which recorded images of 80 different India civilizations. Many India willingly participated in Curtis's photography project, proud of the beautiful portraits he took of them in their best festive dress. Curtis wanted to capture the variety and richness of Native American cultures before they completely disappeared. Considering himself a friend to the Indian, Curtis believed (like most of his genera tion) that to survive Native Americans needed to assimilate into mainstream American societ Curtis often photographed groups of Indians riding off into the distance (**18.6**) to symbolically convey the notion that, as Curtis wrote, "the Indians as a race, already shorn in their tribal strength and stripped of their primitive dress, are passing into the darkness of an unknown future."

Neither preservationists nor conservationists had any interest in reversing official policies of forced assimilation that divided collective reserva tion lands into individual farms, banned native languages, and sent Indian children to white-run boarding schools (see Chapter 15). Preservationists inadvertently hastened the demise of some Indian cultures by enticing Americans to visit national forests. Tourism undercut Indians' access to traditional hunting grounds so that their economic survival increasingly depended on selling crafts to tourists and charging them to see performances of native dances.

How did Americans disagree about the environment during the Progressive Era?

View the **Closer Look** *Images as Histo Envisioning a Vanishing Ra*

Competing Views on Transforming the Workplace

In 1900, the United States earned the questionable distinction of being one of the most strike-torn nations in the world. To end class conflict and introduce more social harmony, Progressives wanted to transform the workplace into an environment where workers labored a reasonable number of hours in safe conditions for decent wages. Industry and labor each presented a competing view that challenged the Progressive vision as they sought the upper hand in their decades-long class struggle.

Capitalist Visions of Industrial Harmony

Industrialists differed on how to rid the workplace of labor conflicts that interfered with the smooth operation of their businesses. The National Civic Federation brought together moderate industrialists and labor union leaders dedicated to seeking industrial peace through compromise. Ohio Senator Mark Hanna, who made his fortune in coal, argued that industrialists should turn labor into "the ally of the capitalist, rather than a foe." In return for a few minimal concessions, factory owners could demand that union leaders discipline their membership and keep workers on the job, thus ending the constant strife that permeated the industrial sector.

Hanna's voice was a decided minority. Most industrialists refused to compromise their authority. Staunchly antiunion they employed a host of methods to undercut unions. If forced to accept a union, they insisted upon an "open shop" that let workers choose whether to join a union, then used intimidation to stop workers from enrolling. Industrialists hired private security forces to spy on workers, fired identified union members, and put them on blacklists that prevented union members from getting another job. During strikes factory owners expelled families from company-owned housing and hired substitute workers (called scabs) to replace striking workers. To protect union members from these discriminatory industrialist policies and build strength, labor organizers fought to establish a "closed shop," which required all workers in the same company to join the union.

Other industrialists embraced benevolence to dissuade workers from organizing. Welfare capitalism, the notion of using benefits to gain workers' loyalty, aimed to improve worker morale and weaken interest in unions. Some large firms instituted free medical care, pensions, kindergartens, and even baseball leagues, but these services typically evaporated at the first sign of economic downturn. Unions did not want to leave it up to the employer to decide whether to offer benefits. They preferred using collective bargaining to negotiate a contractual agreement between workers and their employers that established such benefits as a permanent right.

The drive for efficiency, a goal that many Progressives shared, was another way that industrialists undercut workers' collective power. Henry Ford's innovations in automobile manufacturing demonstrated how industrialists could boost profits by reducing manufacturing costs. The son of a prosperous Irish immigrant farmer in Dearborn, Michigan, Ford built his first car in 1896 in a shed behind his Detroit home. Forming the Ford Motor Company, Ford introduced the Model T in 1908, a moment when 515 separate companies were manufacturing automobiles. Ford standardized parts and constantly improved machinery—innovations that let him produce more cars for less money. Ford passed these savings on to consumers, lowering the price of his "car for the great multitudes" from $825 in 1908 to $345 in 1916. By then Ford had captured half the market for new cars.

In 1914 Ford created headlines by offering male factory workers a five-dollar daily wage for nine hours of work (extended to female and male office employees two years later). Ford paid twice the standard wage rate, because he recognized that the common practice of paying workers subsistence wages limited the markets for many consumer goods. Ford wanted his workers to be able to afford his automobiles. Working nine instead of ten hours a day, Ford reasoned, reduced fatigue-induced mistakes and worker

What different methods did industrialists use to end labor conflict?

"The men do their work and go home—a factory is not a drawing room."

HENRY T. FORD on his rule prohibiting workers from talking to each other as they assembled automobiles

turnover, giving the company a loyal and experienced workforce. The moving conveyor belt in Ford's assembly lines (**18.7**) meant that workers no longer had to lift or move the chassis as they assembled a car. Ford admitted that he "could not do the same thing day in and out," but he condescendingly believed that the average worker "wants a job in which he does not have to think." To keep workers focused and productive, Ford prohibited sitting, talking, singing, or whistling in his factories. Fearful of losing their jobs, workers only dared to criticize Ford's iron control over the production process in private.

Ford's five-dollar/nine-hour-day came with strings attached. Ford instituted many reforms that Progressives sought because they made business sense, but he staunchly resisted government regulation and attempts to organize a union, retaining the right to make his own factory rules. Ford also firmly subscribed to industrialists' long-standing belief that they had the right, and the duty, to interfere in the private lives of their employees. For Ford this meant offering benefits only to employees who met certain moral criteria. Married men, for instance, had to live with their families. Thirty investigators working for Ford's Sociological Department visited workers' homes and sometimes imposed other requirements, such as mandatory English classes for immigrants. Gambling, excessive drinking, or having sexual relations with a prostitute were all grounds for dismissal. A Ford Motor Company investigator had to verify that a male worker was morally upright (and not trying to organize a union) before he and his family could move into a spacious two-story home built by the company.

18.7 The Assembly Line Ford's innovative mass production techniques included a well-lit and ventilated environment that relieved workers of backbreaking tasks. The assembly line also deadened the mind, as constant routine movements eliminated the need for decision making.

How much did Ford's innovations and paternalism benefit workers?

Read the Document *Frederick Winslow Taylor, "A Piece-Rate System" from* The Principles of Scientific Management *(1911)*

Progressives valued efficiency and expertise, and Frederick Winslow Taylor took the drive for efficiency further than Ford by popularizing **scientific management**, the effort to use scientific knowledge to maximize output and profit. Taylor used stopwatches to evaluate how long each part of the manufacturing process should take. He then outlined the steps laborers should replicate to lay bricks without any wasted energy, and determined the perfect shovel size and the exact amount of rest workers needed to lift the maximum amount of pig iron each day. After establishing the optimal time and method for a specific task, Taylor argued, industrialists could then fine or fire unproductive workers who failed to maintain an acceptable pace. Taylor admitted that his system, dubbed "taylorism," intentionally eliminated workers' independence and creativity. Each man, he asserted, must "grow accustomed to receiving and obeying directions covering details, large and small, which in the past have been left to his individual judgment."

Working-Class Labor Activism

The working class had long fashioned its own solutions to surviving difficult living and working conditions. Fraternal associations assisted those who lost their jobs or needed to bury a loved one, while urban political machines (see Chapter 17) secured voters' loyalty by helping families endure personal tragedies such as fires or illness. Meanwhile unions tried to negotiate better wages and shop floor rules for dues-paying members, but organizing the working class so it could speak with one voice proved impossible. Ethnic and racial prejudices kept the working class fragmented. Italian strikebreakers, for instance, had few qualms about walking across a picket line manned by Slavic strikers. The craft-based American Federation of Labor (AFL), led by Samuel Gompers, organized only skilled, mostly white workers, refusing to let unskilled laborers, women, or blacks into its unions. Only a handful of industrial unions like the UMW and International Longshoreman's Union adopted a big umbrella approach that organized all workers in one industry into the same union.

Middle-class Progressives supported many union goals but deplored their methods. Strikes continually disrupted normal life by shutting down railroad lines, street cars, and coal mines. Government regulation, they maintained, would improve workers' lives and ensure that the economy functioned smoothly. Nevertheless, many unions remained skeptical about relying on the government to solve their conflicts. The AFL preferred using its collective economic power to force industrialists to negotiate. Its members had unhappy memories of what happened when state or federal officials intervened in labor conflicts, as during the 1894 Pullman Strike.

The Roosevelt administration occasionally chose to aid labor, but Progressive Era courts nearly always favored industrialists. In 1908, the Supreme Court stopped workers from launching sympathy strikes or boycotts to support fellow workers, labeling them "restraints of trade" barred under the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act, a law originally intended to curtail the creation of business monopolies. Another 1908 decision allowed employers to fire workers who joined unions. Reducing government interference in labor conflicts therefore remained the AFL's primary goal.

Radical trade unionists rejected the AFL vision of working within the free market system. The **Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)**, formed in 1905, envisioned "one big union" that welcomed all workers regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, or skill, which would one day take over all means of production in the United States. "It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism," declared the founders of the IWW, whose members were nicknamed "Wobblies." The founding group included 75-year-old Mother Mary Jones, a tireless white-haired organizer for the UMW, and William D. "Big Bill" Haywood, an organizer for the Western Federation of Miners. Their drive to abolish private property and formal government struck many Progressives as anarchy. Government harassment of the IWW limited its formal membership to around 10,000.

The Progressives' Limited Progress

Employers had traditionally held employees responsible for workplace accidents, maintaining that workers knowingly accepted all job-associated risks. Carelessness caused most mishaps, they argued. Progressive organizations undertook detailed sociological studies to refute these self-serving generalizations. Lewis Hine's photographic investigation into the lives of injured Pittsburgh workers

Read the Document *Profiles: Samuel Gompers*

What conflicting visions divided working-class union activists?

18.8 An Injured Pittsburgh Worker Portraits of maimed workers helped generate a groundswell of support for state workers' compensation laws.

suggested that few were responsible for their accidents. This young man (**18.8**) had his leg crushed when he fell under a coal car in a Pittsburgh coal mine. The company paid the hospital expenses for his amputation, but nothing else. In the image a nicely dressed passerby avoids making eye contact with the injured boy who stands idle on the street, suggesting that the well-off preferred to ignore the plight of disabled workers. The boy's tidy appearance reveals an effort to maintain personal dignity while relying on private charity to survive. Studies like Hine's convinced many states to establish worker compensation programs that provided employer-funded disability payments and medical care to injured workers. As a result employers began paying more attention to workplace safety.

The drive to limit hours for male workers was less successful. Employers had traditionally maintained that as property owners they had the sole power to decide the terms of employment. In the 1874 Slaughter-House cases, the Supreme Court had ruled that a state could not deny individuals control over their own labor. Industrialists claimed that this decision granted individual workers the constitutionally protected right to negotiate wages, hours, and workplace rules. According to this line of reasoning, state laws or unions that tried to impose restrictions on individual workers violated their right to control their own labor.

The Supreme Court, however, proved willing to abridge this right to protect public health and safety. In 1898, the Court upheld an eight-hour day for Utah miners, deciding that guarding the health of workers engaged in a dangerous occupa tion served the public interest. Progressives failed in their efforts to extend these protections to the entire workforce. In ***Lochner v. New York*** **(1905)**, the Court ruled that unless long work hours direc jeopardized workers' health, the government coul not abridge an employee's freedom to negotiate hi own work schedule with his employer. This decisi is explored more fully in *Choices and Consequence Regulating Workers' Hours.*

Miserable and unsafe working conditions also persisted. The Colorado mining town of Ludlow sa along the Purgatory River, a telling name that suitably described what working in a mine was like. In Ludlow, the Rockefeller-owned mining company paid miners $2 a day in company-issued currency (called scrip) redeemable only in the company-run store. The mining company required that workers live in company-owned housing, and claimed no responsibility for accidents that killed 200 miners between 1904 and 1914.

In 1913, 12,000 miners, mostly Italian, Greek, and Serbian immigrants, went on strike to protest these conditions and demand company recognition of their UMW union. When the company expelled the strikers and their families from their homes, the workers erected tent cities in the nearby hills. After armed company detectives failed to dislodge the miners, the Colorado governor sent in state troops, whose wages Rockefeller agreed to pay. The **Ludlow Massacre** ensued on April 20, 1914 when troops set fire to one striking miners' camp, and thirteen women and children suffocated to death in a shallow underground shelter where they had sought refuge.

Throughout the nation outraged laborers temporarily put their ideological divisions aside to stage protest marches in every major city. The UMW issued "a call to arms," and hundreds of neighboring miners flooded into Ludlow to defend their comrades against the state militia. Faced with the prospect of all-out class war, the governor requested federal troops, and President Wilson immediately complied. Federal intervention left the union in tatters and Rockefeller free to run his mining town as he saw fit. Incidents like these convinced many unions that the Progressive proposal to rely solely on the government to solve their problems was not the answer. Throughout the twentieth century union folklore and songs used the memory of Ludlow to inspire workers to organize.

How effective were the different strategies that Progressives and unions employed to reform the workplace?

View the **Image** *Logo for the Industrial Workers of the World*

Choices and Consequences

REGULATING WORKERS' HOURS

Most city residents, especially tenement-dwellers who did not have ovens, bought their bread from bakeries. Bakers worked long hours in hot, poorly ventilated kitchens, sleeping and washing where they baked bread. In 1895, New York State passed a law that set sanitary standards and limited bakers to ten hours of work per day, 60 hours per week. Joseph Lochner, a bakery owner in Utica, challenged the law after New York fined him $50 for making an employee exceed these limits. The Supreme Court faced three choices when it heard the case in 1905.

Choices

1 A state could use its police powers to protect workers' health and safety.

2 A state could not limit an individual's right to buy or sell labor in nonhazardous occupations such as baking.

3 States had the right to enact any laws not expressly forbidden by the Constitution to promote the general well-being of society.

Decision

The Court ruled 5 to 4 that the Fourteenth Amendment, which declared that "no state shall … deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of the law," prevented states from using their police powers to regulate work that did not imperil the health or safety of the public.

Consequences

The decision curtailed Progressives' attempt to use regulation to transform the workplace. During the subsequent 32-year "Lochner" era, the Court struck down maximum hour, minimum wage, and child labor laws if no clear risk to the public existed. Dismayed Progressives noted that many state laws restricted an individual's ability to buy or sell labor, such as mandatory school laws or Sunday closures, to promote the general welfare. They also accused the Court of ignoring the disproportionate power that employers wielded over workers to set the terms of employment.

Continuing Controversies

Should the government limit work hours or set a minimum wage?
Lochner remained the law of the land until 1937, when the Supreme Court ruled that it was "reasonable" for Washington State hotel owners to pay female hotel maids the state-mandated minimum wage because the state had a right to protect its residents. Defining an acceptable standard for work and pay has been controversial ever since. Is a reasonable day's work six, eight, ten, or twelve hours? Does it matter if the work involves strenuous physical labor or is sedentary? Is it better for unions to negotiate the terms of employment or for the government to step in? How does regulating hours of work or setting a minimum wage hurt or benefit the general public? These are questions that Americans have debated for more than 70 years.

Lochner bakery

What competing views existed concerning a state's right to regulate the workplace?

Protecting Women and Children

Progressives never convinced unions to give up strikes, but together they demanded laws protecting women and children. Relying on mountains o sociological data and heart-rending photographs, female activists helped secure protective legislation that reduced the hours women worked and k children in school longer. Working-class men offered more resistance wh female reformers tried to make temperance the law of the land.

Women at Work

In 1908, Curt Muller, a laundry owner in Portland, Oregon, challenged a recent state law granting a ten-hour workday for female laundry workers. In making his case before the Supreme Court, Muller followed the same line of reasoning used in the *Lochner* case, arguing that the law deprived his workers of their right to control their own labor. He disputed the reformers' claim that scrubbing all day in a hot, wet workplace posed a serious risk to laundry workers' health. In its unanimous 1908 ***Muller v. Oregon*** ruling, the Supreme Court upheld maximum hour laws for female workers, accepting lawyer Louis Brandeis's argument that protecting women's reproductive health served the public good. "As healthy mothers are essential to vigorous offspring, the physical well-being of woman becomes an object of public interest and care in order to preserve the strength and vigor of the race," the Supreme Court declared.

Reactions to the ruling among women were mixed. Middle-class Progressive reformers and female trade unionists celebrated it as a victory for female workers, unperturbed by the Court's emphasis on the biological inferiority of women to men. Feminists who believed in total equality were disappointed with the ruling, creating a fissure in the women's movement that soon widened into an open split. The male-dominated AFL embraced the decision, believing it reduced employers' incentive to hire women instead of men. As if to prove this point, Muller responded by firing his female workers anc ing Chinese men to take their place.

Cross-class alliances between middle-class and working-class women flourished around other effc to help working women. In 1898, the National Cor sumers' League (NCL) formed to coordinate local sumer boycotts of department stores that mistreate their female clerks. The NCL made the long hours low pay endured by female working-class clerks th responsibility of every middle-class female shop per. The group soon expanded its boycotts t include stores that sold clothing made in sweatshops or with child labor. Compili "blacklists" of stores to boycott was ille so the NCL instead worked with femal garments' unions to create "white lists" shops with equitable labor policies wh socially conscientious women could shop without remorse.

18.9 Carry A. Nation Portrait and Hatchet Pin
Carry A. Nation cultivated her notoriety as a Bible-toting, ax-wielding saloon smasher by selling portraits and pins to her admirers.

Stamping Out Vice

Local and state reformers also took aim at alcohol, believing tha prohibition would improve women's lives by reducing dome tic violence and bolstering famil income. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU; se Chapter 17) viewed the saloon haven for gambling, prostituti corrupt city political machine and excessive alcohol consum tion. The WCTU crusade too a surprising turn on June 6, 1900, when a deeply religio 64-year-old woman named

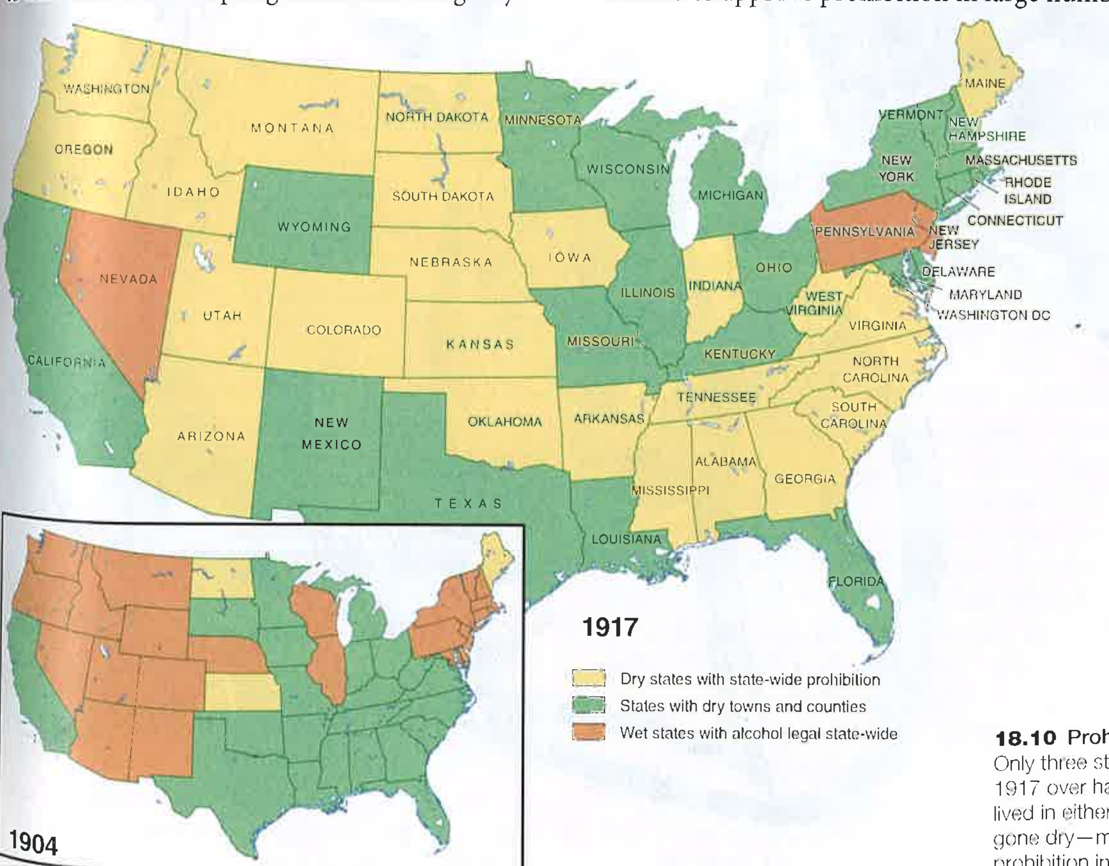
Why did the campaign for maximum work hour laws succeed for women, but fail for men?

Carry A. Nation strode into a southwestern Kansas bar with a bag of bricks and smashed the liquor bottles, glassware, and mirrors, then calmly left. Nation's tactics were extreme, but many Progressives shared her sense of urgency. Drinking was on the rise in America. From 1885 to 1900, beer consumption nearly doubled from 590 million to 1.2 billion gallons. Hundreds of inspired "Home Defenders" throughout the nation organized similar attacks on neighborhood bars, hoping to convince their communities to go dry. As her fame grew, Nation raised funds by selling miniature hatchet pins, her new weapon of choice (**18.9**), along with photos of herself holding her bible and hatchet. She spent time in jails from New York to Los Angeles publicizing the temperance cause before collapsing on a stage in 1911 and dying shortly thereafter.

Working-class men resolutely defended their freedom to drink, and many upper-class men were reluctant to give up a pleasure-based lifestyle that included ready access to alcohol. Attacking on multiple fronts the nonpartisan Anti-Saloon League, founded in 1893, and the WCTU established an effective coalition that included Progressives, rural Americans, and industrialists. Prohibitionists linked ridding the nation of alcohol to the broader Progressive desire to eliminate the corrupting influences of big-city political machines. Saloons, temperance advocates maintained, served as the headquarters where dishonest city politicians paid immigrants for votes and dispersed favors to supporters. Temperance advocates drew rural folk into the movement by addressing their concerns about the growing cultural influence of urban pleasures and the beer-drinking immigrants who lived in the cities. Molding their message to appeal to industrialists, temperance advocates blamed saloons for contributing to the nation's labor troubles by giving unions a place to meet and recruit.

> **"You refused me the vote and I had to use a rock."**
> CARRY A. NATION explains her saloon-smashing ways

Working through churches in the South and the West, the Anti-Saloon League and WCTU urged supporters to focus on making their state or county "dry" by banning the sale of alcohol. The "Prohibition 1904 and 1917" map (**18.10**) traces the rapid success of this strategy as the number of dry states grew from three to 23. Many western women had already secured the right to vote, and they flocked to approve prohibition in large numbers.



18.10 Prohibition, 1904 and 1917
Only three states were dry in 1904, but by 1917 over half the people in the country lived in either a state or county that had gone dry—momentum that led to nationwide prohibition in 1919.

Read the Document *Report of the Vice Commission, Louisville, Kentucky (1915)*

What diverse concerns about alcohol helped the temperance movement gain momentum?

Restoring Childhood

Middle-class Americans believed that childhood should be devoted to education and play, not work. This advertisement (**18.11**) from an 1898 Sears and Roebuck catalog portrayed the type of idyllic childhood that many middle-class families tried to give their children. In the ad an immaculately dressed young girl rides joyfully in the sunshine on a new bicycle, a portrait of health and happiness. The reality for working-class children offered a stark contrast. Census records revealed nearly 1.75 million children ages 10 through 15 worked in factories full time, a figure that did not include children employed in home sweatshops or on family farms.

To Progressives child labor epitomized the greed of employers who eagerly sent children into mining crevices where adults could not fit, used children to harvest crops in the Midwest, or dispatched an army of small

18.11 "Models of 1898" The middle class believed that children should engage in healthy and creative play, not work in dangerous and dreary factories.

What does this advertisement reveal about middle-class ideals of childhood?

boys to hawk newspapers in northern cities. Organized labor joined this crusade, certain that child labor drove down adult wages. Industrialists offered a competing vision, arguing that jobs provided valuable training for working-class children who needed to learn the importance of punctuality and hard work to become successful adult workers.

Many working-class families shared employers' beliefs that their children should work. In Chicago Hull House cofounder Jane Addams discovered that most immigrants, having worked themselves as children, found nothing wrong with putting their own children to work. "A South Italian peasant who has picked olives and packed oranges from his toddling babyhood, cannot see at once the difference between the outdoor healthy work which he has performed in the varying seasons, and the long hours of monotonous factory life which his child encounters when he goes to work in Chicago," she noted, adopting the Progressive tendency to gloss over the drudgery of farm work.

Rather than banning child labor, working-class parents often preferred making factories safer places for their children to work. They were not hard-hearted, but pragmatic. Child labor provided one-tenth of family income in the early twentieth century, and a family's survival often depended on children's meager wages. Recently arrived immigrant men, especially unskilled, non-English speakers, realized with dismay that their English-speaking children were more apt to be hired than they were. Children in these families became the breadwinners, while their fathers stayed at home. This reversal of normal family relations often created tensions within working-class households. "I left Europe and I was a man, and here I am a what?" lamented one Russian Jewish immigrant.

The drive to end child labor gained momentum when the National Child Labor Committee formed in 1904 to lobby for state and federal laws prohibiting child labor. The group hired photographer Lewis Hine to help them build a scientific, legal, and moral case against child labor. In one photo-story, Hine paired images of children who worked in two textile mills owned by the same company. The company's mill in Huntsville, Alabama, hired children as young as eight years old, Hine noted, while Massachusetts law prohibited the Lowell factory from employing children under the age of 14. The National Child Labor Committee presented such regional discrepancies as evidence that the nation needed a federal child labor law. *Images as History: Exposing the Evils of Child Labor*, page 550, explores Hine's images more fully.

The pervasiveness of child labor in the South particularly troubled him. In 1900, nearly 25 percent of the workers in Southern textile factories and cotton mills were white children ages 10 to 16. Some reformers viewed child farm work as a healthier alternative to long days in a factory. Hine disagreed. "The sunshine in the cotton fields has blinded our eyes to the monotony, overwork and the hopelessness of their lives," he wrote.

In 1916, President Wilson signed a law banning the interstate sale of products made by child labor that protected only about 150,000 industrial child laborers out of nearly 1.75 million. Two years later the Supreme Court sided with a father who argued that the law deprived him of his parental right to control his sons' labor and declared the law unconstitutional. Progressives responded by trying to amend the Constitution. In 1924 Congress approved an amendment giving the federal government the power to regulate child labor, but southern opposition to any curtailment of states' rights prevented its ratification. A nationwide ban on child labor did not come until the 1930s, when the Court upheld a New Deal federal child labor law.

Ultimately child labor declined as states began to mandate school attendance. Embracing the notion that all children had the right to an education, local women's groups pushed hard to ensure that their neighborhood schools received appropriate funding, provided free books, offered kindergarten, paid teachers adequately, and were equipped with satisfactory fire escapes. Throughout the Progressive Era school enrollments, the number of days in a school year, and money spent per pupil all rose.

Other Progressive endeavors also aimed to improve the lives of working-class children. The allure of pleasure and hunger at home sometimes became too strong for children, who resorted to stealing to meet their needs. "Most of these premature law breakers are in search of Americanized clothing and others are only looking for playthings," Jane Addams maintained. Some, she pointed out, were simply "eager to take home food or fuel which will relieve the distress and need they so constantly hear discussed." Reformers spearheaded the creation of a juvenile criminal system that focused on rehabilitating young offenders.

To keep young children safely off the streets when their parents went to work, Progressive activists established urban playgrounds with adult supervisors. To divert female teenagers from tempting dance halls and male adolescents from saloons or brothels, Progressives created local boys and girls clubs that included organized sports teams and art classes. Not every child appreciated becoming the object of reform. "I can't go to the playgrounds now," complained one 11-year-old boy. "They get on me nerves with so many men and women around telling you what to do."

Watch the **Video** *Video Lecture: What was the Progressive Education Movement?*

What obstacles did reformers face while trying to eliminate child labor?

Images as History

EXPOSING THE EVILS OF CHILD LABOR

Trained as a sociologist, photographer Lewis Hine took nearly 5,000 photographs as a staff photographer for the National Child Labor Committee from 1908 to 1918. Hine visited factories, canneries, textile mills, farms, and mines snapping photos and recording the experiences of each child, evidence the Committee used to argue that full-time work damaged children's health, deprived them of an education, and ruined their childhood. Hine often posed as a factory inspector or salesman to gain access to factories or mines. When a factory owner guessed his real purpose and refused to let him in, Hine took pictures of child laborers arriving at daybreak or leaving covered in grime. He carefully recorded the children's names, ages, and stories to counter industrialists' accusations that he staged his photos.

His notes for this image of a young girl tending machines in a South Carolina cotton mill read, "Sadie Pfeifer, 48 inches high, has worked half a year. One of the many small children at work in Lancaster Cotton Mills." Are Hine's photographs best understood as historical evidence, propaganda, or both?

Lewis Hine, "Sadie Pfeifer, Lancaster Cotton Mills, South Carolina"

How did the composition of this photograph reinforce Hine's message about child labor?

View the **Closer Look** *Images as History: Exposing the Evils of Child Labor*

Wise beyond their years, these tough-looking newsboys emulate their elders by learning to enjoy pipes and cigarettes. Newsboys also gambled, swore, and began visiting houses of prostitution at shockingly young ages.

Camaraderie among newsboys helped make a difficult and lonely job more enjoyable.

This photo of hardened newsboys warned that lacking a proper education, these boys contributed to the moral breakdown of society.

By innocently buying a daily paper from one of the hundreds of newsboys who hawked newspapers on city corners from dawn to dusk, the middle class helped perpetuate an insidious form of child labor.

Lewis Hine, "Newsies Smoking on a Monday Morning, St. Louis, Missouri, 1910"

The National Child Labor Committee distributed Hine's "Making Human Junk" poster nationwide to send the message that child labor ruined individual lives and hurt the entire society.

MAKING HUMAN JUNK

SMALL GIRLS AND BOYS WANTED

GOOD MATERIAL AT FIRST

THE PROCESS

THE PRODUCT

No future and low wages "Junk"

SHALL INDUSTRY BE ALLOWED TO PUT THIS COST ON SOCIETY?

The poster showed a group of healthy children entering a harsh and dangerous factory environment where they were powerless to control their own fates.

Appealing to middle-class self-interest, this poster suggested that sickly child workers contaminated the materials used to make clothing for the middle class.

Hine directly refuted industrialists' claims that work benefited children. "The object of employing children is not to train them, but to get high profits from their work," he wrote.

Long days in the mill turned children into broken pieces of industrial "junk" that factory owners discarded, burdening society with their care.

Lewis Hine, "Making Human Junk"

Did these images offer similar or different reasons to oppose child labor?

Reforming the Government

Progressives recognized that passing laws governing the workplace or protecting women and children was not enough. Ensuring their enforcement through the establishment of regulatory agencies required reforming how local, state, and federal governments functioned. Only then could the government become a positive force in workers' lives. Socialists agreed that the government should act, but ultimately wanted to give state and national governments control of all major industries.

Containing Socialism

Progressives discovered an unexpected ally in their drive to turn the government into a guardian that actively protected the public. Both Progressives and socialists championed the creation of city-run utilities to provide streetcar service, gas, water, and electricity. Progressives viewed such arrangements as an efficient way to deliver reliable, fairly priced public services to city residents, prevent disruptive strikes, and improve conditions for utility workers. Socialists believed that municipal-run utilities would become the opening wedge that led to eventual public ownership of railroads, mines, and banks.

> "I aimed at the public's heart, and by accident I hit it in the stomach."
>
> UPTON SINCLAIR laments America's reaction to his novel, *The Jungle*

In 1904, the novelist and socialist Upton Sinclair lived with workers in Chicago for nearly two months, learning firsthand about their work in the meatpacking industry. This experience became the basis for his novel, *The Jungle*, which told the story of a Lithuanian immigrant family, who came to America full of hope only to discover crushing poverty and horrific working conditions. Sinclair wanted his exposé to convince Americans that socialism offered the only way to end the rampant capitalist exploitation that ground down the working class. Instead readers focused on his vivid descriptions of rotten meat, workers' fingers, and rat excrement being tossed into the hopper to produce the sausage that Americans enjoyed each morning for breakfast. When a federal investigation confirmed Sinclair's account, the public demanded federal regulation to ensure that the nation's meat supply was safe. Faced with plummeting meat sales, packing-house owners understood that government certification of their meat as disease-free could help them regain consumer confidence. The Meat Inspection Act (1906) gave federal inspectors the authority to condemn meat unfit for consumption and established federal sanitary standards for meatpacking plants.

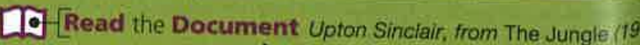
Reformers also wanted manufacturers of patent medicines to list their ingredients. Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, a widely popular patent medicine, circulated advertising cards (**18.12**) with images of rosy-cheeked children to create the impression that the company used the purest ingredients in its syrup. The flipside of this card touted the medicine as "a positive cure for all those painful complaints and weaknesses so common to our best female population," including headaches, depression, ovarian troubles, and menopause. In 1906, the **Pure Food and Drug Act** levied fines for mislabeling food or medicine. To their dismay many female temperance advocates who had avidly consumed Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound discovered that it contained 15 percent alcohol.

Ultimately the Progressive vision of government oversight prevailed over the socialist view of complete government control. Most cities balked at direct ownership of public utilities, preferring to create regulatory boards that set rules for the private companies that continued to run streetcars or gas lines. The subsequent improvement in city services reduced the appeal of socialism in many working-class neighborhoods.

Ending Government Corruption

Progressives knew that meaningful regulation required eliminating corruption within all levels of government. For an enticing bribe, city officials often

What importance did the socialist movement have during the Progressive Era?



LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S VEGETABLE Compound.

LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S
VEGETABLE COMPOUND
IS A POSITIVE CURE
For all those painful Complaints and Weaknesses so common to our best female population.

It will cure entirely the worst forms of Female Complaints, all Ovarian troubles, Inflammation, Ulceration, Falling and Displacements of the Womb, and the consequent Spinal Weakness, and is particularly adapted to the Change of Life.

It will dissolve and expel Tumors from the uterus in an early stage of development. The tendency to cancerous humors there is checked very speedily by its use. It removes faintness, flatulency, destroys all craving for stimulants, and relieves weakness of the stomach. It cures Bloating, Headaches, Nervous Prostration, General Debility, Sleeplessness, Depression and Indigestion.

That feeling of bearing down, causing pain, weight and backache, is always permanently cured by its use.

It will at all times and under all circumstances act in harmony with the laws that govern the female system. For the cure of Kidney Complaints of either sex, this Compound is unsurpassed.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is prepared at Lynn, Mass. Price, $1.00; six bottles for $5.00. Sent by mail in the form of Pills, also in the form of Lozenges, on receipt of price, $1.00 per box, for either. Send for pamphlet. All letters of inquiry promptly answered. Address as above.

No family should be without LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S LIVER PILLS. They cure Constipation, Biliousness, and torpidity of the Liver. 25 cents per box.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Blood Purifier.

This preparation will eradicate every vestige of Humors from the Blood, and at the same time will give tone and strength to the system.

It is far superior to any other known remedy for the cure of all diseases arising from impurities of the blood, such as Scrofula, Rheumatism, Cancerous Humors, Erysipelas, Canker, Salt Rheum and Skin Diseases.

SOLD BY ALL DRUGGISTS.

Compliments of [illegible] 169 High St. Holyoke, Mass.

18.12 Marketing Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound
Ads for the patent medicine promised to cure practically every ailment and restore youthful vigor.

proved willing to look the other way when businesses broke the law. Political parties sometimes stole elections, creating fictitious lists of voters that let individuals use multiple aliases to vote as often as they liked.

Progressives disagreed over how to eliminate corruption. One answer was to get rid of politicians and instead rely on nonpartisan commissions of experts or city managers to run city services. Over 400 municipalities turned to commission-style governance, an approach that reflected the broad faith placed in expertise during the Progressive Era. Other Progressives replaced the ward system that let each neighborhood select its own councilman with city councils elected at large. Voters expected their ward representative to "bring home the bacon," patronage that Progressives felt encouraged parochialism and corruption. Impoverished working-class residents offered a competing vision. Their ward representatives provided needed job opportunities or relief. *Envisioning Evidence: The Family Economy* (page 554) illustrates the hand-to-mouth existence for many working-class families. In the absence of a comprehensive social welfare system, the patronage-based ward system gave many working-class urban residents a way to survive hard times.

On the state level Progressives tried to reduce the power of corrupt political parties. Many states eliminated the practice of handing voters different colored ballots marked "Republican" or "Democrat" to stuff into the ballot boxes as party officials looked on. The secret ballot removed the threat of payback or shunning if one broke with the neighborhood party boss. Instead of letting party leaders choose candidates, some states introduced direct primaries that allowed party members to pick the candidates. A reform measure called the "initiative" provided a way, usually by gathering signatures on petitions, for the electorate to introduce legislation before state legislatures. The referendum put legislative proposals on the ballot, letting the voting public decide whether a measure became law. Finally, the recall used special elections to remove unpopular or corrupt officials from office before their term expired. Wisconsin, one of the most Progressive states, adopted all these measures under the leadership of Governor Robert Lafollette.

In 1906, journalist David Graham Phillips detailed the close ties between big business and federal senators in a series of magazine articles entitled "The Treason of the Senate." Phillips viewed this alliance as threatening to "the American people as any invading army could be." Roosevelt charged Phillips with exaggerating the extent of corruption and urged the "men with the muckrakes" to avoid stirring up needless controversy. Roosevelt's rebuke gave a new nickname to investigative journalists, "**muckrakers**." Subsequent corruption scandals solidified public support for the **Seventeenth Amendment (1913)**, which enabled voters, rather than state legislatures, to elect federal senators.

What reforms did Progressives introduce to improve the democratic process?

Envisioning Evidence

THE FAMILY ECONOMY

Stiff employer resistance to labor unions and the unions' tendency to organize only skilled workers meant that few workers could use collective bargaining to increase their wages. Instead, working-class families relied on themselves or, if the main breadwinner fell ill, on community charities to survive. This working-class family's expenses outweigh the income of one male wage earner, a common problem. Less than 3 percent of married women worked outside the home, but wives supplemented the family income by doing laundry for others or taking in boarders who paid for a room and meals. Putting children to work (at the expense of their schooling) helped families make ends meet even though children earned much less than adults. This responsibility never ended for some. Adult children continued to contribute to their family's financial well-being by delaying marriage or supporting aging parents who could no longer work.

	Monthly 1891 budget for a married laborer with a baby. Monthly income: $23.67	Monthly 1892 budget for a married accountant with no children. Monthly income: $66.50
Food	$6.51	$13.22
Rent	$9.02	$9.88
Furniture	$3.61	$0.30
Taxes and Insurance	$3.32	$7.11
Utilities	$2.94	$4.99
Sundries	$1.09	$2.10
Liqour and Tobacco	$0.66	$0.42
Medicine	$0.29	$0.27
Clothes	$0.21	$0.19
Dry Goods	$0.16	$2.45
Postage	$0.10	$0.00
Transportation	$0.08	$1.71
Reading Material	$0.00	$0.53
Total Expenses	$27.99	$43.17

The average laborer ate a more monotonous and less nutritious diet than a white-collar professional–consuming less meat, prepared foods (canned and dry goods), fruits, vegetables and sweets.

Buying life insurance from a local fraternal organization ensured that if the father died, the laborer's family could afford his funeral and survive in the short term.

The accountant drank and smoked less than the worker, leading to charges that the poor squandered their money.

The similar amounts paid for rent do not mean comparable living circumstances. The accountant's higher transportation costs indicate that he lived farther out of town, probably in a new suburb. The worker lived close to work, nearer to industrial pollution. High demand for tenement apartments meant landlords often charged laborers exorbitant rents.

The accountant had an extra $23.33 a month to save, or give to his aged mother, along with $931 in household goods (including musical instruments and jewelry) that he could sell if necessary.

This working-class family's expenses outweigh the income of one male wage-earner, a common problem. Less than 3 percent of married women worked outside the home, but wives supplemented the family income by doing laundry for others or taking in boarders who paid for a room and meals.

Source: *Michigan Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics.*Tenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics *(Lansing, MI: The Bureau, 1893), pp. 1043-1047.*

What do these budgets reveal about urban lifestyles?

View the **Closer Look** *Envisioning Evidence: The Family Economy*

18.13 **Hampton Institute Students Building a Staircase, 1900** Black educators distributed images of tidy black students working industriously to counter stereotypes that portrayed blacks as lazy or dangerous.

Accepting Separate but Equal

The Progressive campaign to remake the government into a champion of the common man did not include challenging the legal edifice constructed in the wake of the Supreme Court's 1896 "separate but equal" ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (see Chapter 14). By 1900, southern states had rushed to pass laws that formally segregated every public facility from railroad waiting rooms to cemeteries, parks, beaches, and water fountains. Use of poll taxes and literacy tests to disenfranchise blacks also exploded. When southern-born Woodrow Wilson took office in 1913, he let the heads of federal agencies segregate their offices.

African American leaders cultivated their own reform impulse during the Progressive Era. Unlike white Progressives black leaders had little faith that government would solve their social problems. The most prominent African American of the Progressive Era, Booker T. Washington, instead embraced self-help as the best way to end poverty among African Americans. Born a Virginia slave in 1859, after the Civil War Washington developed an almost fanatical desire to get an education, arriving penniless at the doorstep of Virginia's Hampton Institute, a vocational high school founded in 1868 to educate freed slaves and Indians. He passed his entrance exam—sweeping a floor—with flying colors. Hampton taught practical skills such as brick-making, blacksmithing, and shoemaking along with more traditional academic subjects like reading and math. This staged photograph (**18.13**) of a Hampton Institute carpentering class, taken 20 years after Washington attended, encapsulated the school's educational philosophy. The photo underscored that these perfectly groomed, hard-working, and well-trained students had the skills they needed to advance step-by-step up the ladder (in this case staircase) of success.

How does this photograph convey the Hampton Institute's educational philosophy?

Washington followed the Hampton model when he established his own school in 1881, the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama. A captivating orator, Washington popularized the notion that blacks should focus on economic advancement first, politics and civil rights later. Washington's apparent willingness to accept social segregation, as long as blacks and whites worked together toward their common economic goals, won him a large white following. Roosevelt even invited him to dine in the White House, the first African American to ever receive this honor—an invitation that provoked howls of protest throughout the South. Washington's private behavior, however, was often at odds with his public persona. Publicly he reassured whites that most blacks had little interest in demanding equality as long as they could prosper economically. Privately Washington helped fund court challenges to *Plessy v. Ferguson* and sent his own children to northern white colleges.

Washington believed that American race relations would gradually improve. Methodist Bishop Henry McNeal Turner offered a competing vision, telling blacks to immigrate to Africa. Black journalist Ida B. Wells-Barnett also disagreed with Washington. Rather than striving to prove their economic worth to whites, Wells-Barnett urged African Americans to use boycotts to win equal treatment from white-owned railroads. She also advocated armed resistance to lynch mobs. "A Winchester rifle should have a place of honour in every black home, and it should be used for that protection which the law refuses to give," she declared. Wells-Barnett began lobbying for a federal anti-lynching law after a white mob in Memphis, Tennessee, lynched three friends of hers who had opened a grocery store that drew customers away from white businesses. With her life threatened, Wells-Barnett moved to Chicago, where she worked with Jane Addams to prevent the segregation of city public schools and continued her anti-lynching campaign.

The most powerful challenge to Washington's vision came from the northern-born sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois, the first African American to attend Harvard University. Du Bois argued that individuals should receive the education that best suited them, regardless of their race. He emphasized that the African American community needed an educated elite of professionals and teachers, the so-called "Talented Tenth." Economic progress was not possible without the right to vote, Du Bois contended, pointing out that discriminatory laws made it difficult for black sharecroppers or craftsmen to get ahead. *Competing Visions: Seeking Racial Uplift* offers more detail on the debate between Washington and Du Bois. In 1909, Du Bois joined with Wells-Barnett and Jane Addams, among others, to establish the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). This interracial civil rights organization demanded an immediate end to racial discrimination, beginning a decades-long struggle for racial justice that would eventually overturn Jim Crow laws in the 1950s and 1960s.

Few white Progressives followed Addams's lead in denouncing racial discrimination. Most northern Progressives remained content to let the South handle the "race problem" as it saw fit. They essentially chose social peace over racial justice, asserting that segregation would quell racial conflict. "Good fences make good neighbors," declared southern Progressive leader Edgar Gardner Murphy.

"In all my teaching I have watched carefully the influence of the toothbrush, and I am convinced that there are few single agencies of civilization that are more far-reaching."

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON, noting the importance of personal discipline, hygiene, dress, and decorum to racial advancement

What alternatives did critics of Booker T. Washington offer to improve life for African Americans?

Watch the **Video** *Video Lecture: The Conflict Between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois*

Competing Visions

SEEKING RACIAL UPLIFT

In 1895, Booker T. Washington delivered his most famous speech, "The Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition Address," before an audience that was composed mostly of Southern whites. The speech proposed a compromise that accepted social segregation in return for white support of blacks' economic advancement. In 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois accused Washington of sending blacks down a path that ensured their permanent enslavement to white America. How does Washington take into account the racially hostile climate that prevailed in the South during the Progressive Era? Is Du Bois's criticism of Washington accurate?

In this passage from his 1895 "Atlanta Exposition Address," Washington outlines his plan for racial progress and peaceful race relations.

Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labour and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life.... No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top.

In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.... Nearly sixteen millions of hands will aid you in pulling the load upward, or they will pull against you the load downward. We shall constitute one-third and more of the ignorance and crime of the South, or one-third its intelligence and progress.

The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing. No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized. It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercises of these privileges. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera-house.

Charles Keck, *Booker T. Washington Lifting the Veil of Ignorance*

In this excerpt from his book, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Du Bois explains why Washington's ideas would not work.

Mr. Washington distinctly asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things,—

First, political power,
Second, insistence on civil rights,
Third, higher education of Negro youth,

and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South....

Is it possible, and probable, that nine millions of men can make effective progress in economic lines if they are deprived of political rights, made a servile caste, and allowed only the most meager chance for developing their exceptional men? If history and reason give any distinct answer to these questions, it is an emphatic *No*. And Mr. Washington thus faces the triple paradox of his career.

1. He is striving nobly to make Negro artisans business men and property-owners; but it is utterly impossible, under modern competitive methods, for workingmen and property-owners to defend their rights and exist without the right of suffrage.
2. He insists on thrift and self-respect, but at the same time counsels a silent submission to civic inferiority such as is bound to sap the manhood of any race in the long run.
3. He advocates common-school and industrial training, and depreciates institutions of higher learning; but neither the Negro common [elementary] schools, nor Tuskegee itself, could remain open a day were it not for teachers trained in Negro colleges, or trained by their graduates.

His doctrine has tended to make the whites, North and South, shift the burden of the Negro problem to the Negro's shoulders and stand aside as critical and rather pessimistic spectators; when in fact the burden belongs to the nation.

View the **Closer Look** *Competing Visions: Seeking Racial Uplift*

Was Washington a sell-out, as Du Bois implies, or a master strategist?

1901–1902

McKinley assassinated, Roosevelt becomes president
Progressivism gains presidential advocate

"The History of the Standard Oil Company" published
Exposé of oil trust stokes interest in trust-busting

1903–1904

Roosevelt and Muir camp together in Yosemite
They later champion competing conservationist and preservationist visions

Northern Securities Trust dissolved
Earns Roosevelt reputation as a trust-buster

1905

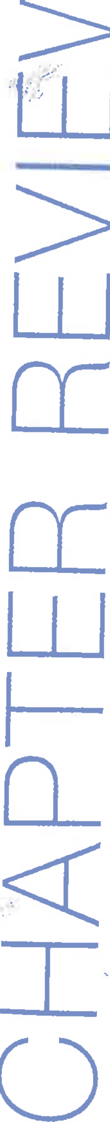
Lochner v. New York
Stymies Progressive effort to mandate set working hours and wages

Socialist Party of America and IWW formed
Unlike Progressives, Socialists and IWW emphasize working-class solidarity over reform

1906

Pure Food and Drug Act and Meat Inspection Act passed
Establishes new regulatory role fo[r] the federal government

"Treason of the Senate" expo[sé]
Reveals close ties between senat[ors] and big business



Review Questions

1. What social problems did middle-class Progressives identify at the beginning of the twentieth century? How did their solutions differ from those embraced by socialists and laissez-faire industrialists?
2. Why did the Progressive notion of an activist, regulatory government create controversy on both the right and the left?
3. How did visual images and investigative journalism transform Americans' views of poverty and corruptio[n]
4. What role did government, including presidents, the Supreme Court, and state and local governments, play during the Progressive Era?
5. In what ways did the Progressive reform agenda succeed? How did it fail?

Key Terms

Federal Reserve Act (1913) The act creating a federally run Federal Reserve to serve as a "banker's bank" that held a portion of bank funds in reserve to help member banks in time of crisis, set rates for business loans, and issued a new national paper currency. 539

Clayton Anti-Trust Act (1914) The act prohibited interlocking company directories and exempted trade unions from prosecution under the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act. 539

Scientific management The effort to use scientific knowledge to secure maximum output and profit. 543

Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) This group envisioned "one big union" that welcomed all workers regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, or skill, which would one day take over all means of production. 543

***Lochner v. New York* (1905)** A Supreme Court ruling that unless long work hours directly jeopardized workers' health, the government could not abridge an employee's freedom to negotiate his own work schedule with his employer. 544

Ludlow Massacre (1914) Colorado state troops set a striking miners' camp ablaze, killing thirteen women and children, an ac[t] that outraged laborers throughout the nation. 544

***Muller v. Oregon* (1908)** The Supreme Court upheld maximum hour laws for female workers because protecting women's reproductive health served the public good. 546

Pure Food and Drug Act (1906) Law levied federal fines for mislabeling food or medicine. 552

Muckrakers Progressive Era term for investigative journalists who wrote exposés on government and business corruption. 553

Seventeenth Amendment (1913) A constitutional amendment that enabled voters, rather than state legislatures, to elect federal senators. 553

1908–1909

Lewis Hine begins photographing child laborers
Nationwide campaign to ban child labor fails

Muller v. Oregon
Upholds maximum work hour laws for women

1911–1912

Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire
Shocking tragedy confirms need to reform workplace

Supreme Court announces "rule of reason" in breaking up trusts
Makes distinction between good and bad trusts

1913

Wilson allows federal agencies to racially segregate their offices
Reflects lingering impact of *Plessy v. Ferguson*

Sixteenth and Seventeenth Amendments ratified
Congress authorizes first federal income taxes and popular election of senators

1914

Ford announces nine-hour/five-dollar workday
Secures competitive advantage through benefits and assembly lines

Ludlow Massacre
Reveals potency of class conflict during Progressive Era

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Questions for Analysis

1. **What interpretation did this painting offer of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire?**

   View the **Closer Look** *Triangle Fire: March 25, 1911, p. 534*

2. **Why did these photographs arouse controversy?**

   View the **Closer Look** *Images as History: Envisioning a Vanishing Race, p. 540*

3. **How did Taylorism transform the workplace?**

   Read the **Document** *Frederick Winslow Taylor, "A Piece-Rate System" from* The Principles of Scientific Management *(1911), p. 542*

4. **What insights does Sinclair offer on workers' lives and food safety?**

   Read the **Document** *Upton Sinclair, from* The Jungle *(1905), p. 552*

5. **How did Washington and DuBois differ?**

   Watch the **Video** *Video Lecture: The Conflict Between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois, p. 556*

Other Resources from This Chapter

Read the **Document**

- *Eugene V. Debs, "The Outlook for Socialism in America" (1900), p. 533*
- *Louis Brandeis, from* Other People's Money and How Bankers Use It *(1913), p. 536*
- *Profiles: Samuel Gompers, p. 543*
- *Report of the Vice Commission, Louisville, Kentucky (1915), p. 547*

View the **Closer Look**

- *Images as History: Exposing the Evils of Child Labor, p. 550*
- *Envisioning Evidence: The Family Economy, p. 554*
- *Competing Visions: Seeking Racial Uplift, p. 557*

View the **Image**

- *Teddy Roosevelt as "Jack the Giant Killer" (1904), p. 535*
- *John D. Rockefeller Cartoon (1901), p. 537*
- *Logo for the Industrial Workers of the World, p. 544*

View the **Map** *Interactive Map: Resources and Conflict in the West, p. 539*

Watch the **Video** *Video Lecture: What was the Progressive Education Movement?, p. 549*