

Progressivism

Problems Brought About By Industrialization and Urbanization

Industrialization:

Big Business dominates the economy and **monopolies destroy competition;**

Big Business, with all its wealth and power, begins to **influence government and legislation.** A threat to democracy.

Big Business **exploits workers:** dangerous conditions(ex. Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire), low pay, long days, no sick days;

Problems cont.

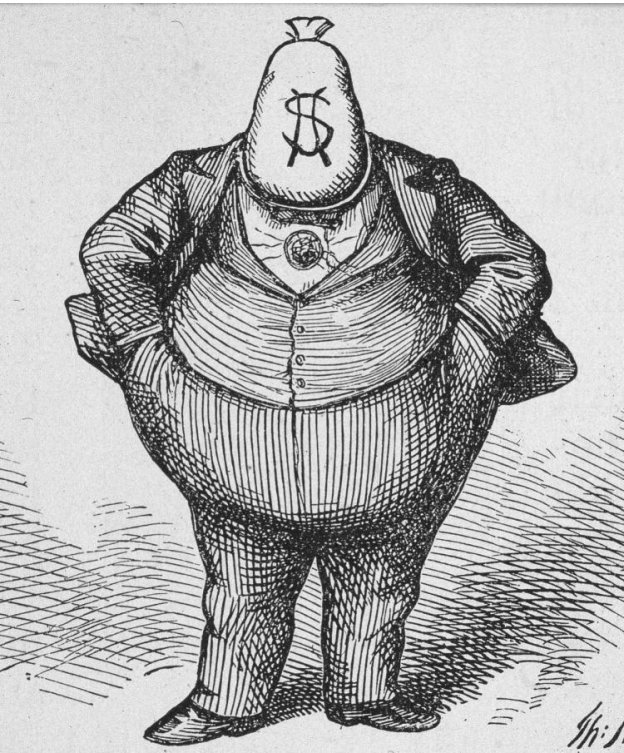
Urbanization:

- Overcrowded Housing – tenements
- Sanitation
- Inadequate Health Services
- Poor Schools
- Immigration
- Political bosses – Bosses were **heads of local political parties** and could be mayors; Bosses **helped people get jobs, housing and even loans**. In return, the boss expected these people to **vote for candidates he recommended**. Once the candidate was elected, the boss often took advantage of his contacts in government to steal from the public treasury or to make money in other illegal ways.

Boss Tweed

Let's stop them damn pictures. I don't care so much what the papers write about—my constituents can't read—but damn it, they can see pictures.

During the latter half of the 19th Century, William Marcy "Boss" Tweed was the poster boy for political corruption, and he is still considered one of the most notorious politicians in US history. He rose to power during a period when New York City was experiencing a huge influx of immigrants and needed to build many public works projects to cope with the increased demand for services. During the 1860s and early 1870s, Tweed and his cronies ran New York City and stole many millions of dollars of public money; by some estimates, as much as \$200 million. Tweed was the richest, the most powerful and the most corrupt politician of his day.



The Goals of Progressives

Progressives gained their name because their aim was to achieve progress by **correcting political and economic abuses** that had resulted from rapid industrialization and urbanization.

Progressives wanted to **use the power of government** to stop these abuses so that Americans could enjoy better lives. To achieve this, progressives felt they had to **reform government**, which had been **corrupted by big business and political “bosses.”**

Who were the Progressives?

Progressives were mainly educated **middle class** people from the big cities.

Among them were Republicans, Democrats, and Socialists, as well as people who joined a party called the Progressive Party.

They had **three goals in common**:

1. Less monopoly in business.
2. More democracy in government
3. Social justice for the poor

Progressive reforms will start to move the U.S. away from a laissez-faire economy to one in which **government regulations** prevented some of the abuses of economic power.

Progressive Political Reforms- Making Government More Responsive to the People

Initiatives. Voters could directly introduce bills in the state legislature and could vote on whether they wanted a bill passed.

Secret Ballots. Voters were less subject to pressure and intimidation.

Direct Party Primaries. Special elections to choose candidates who would represent party members in the general election.

Direct Election of Senators. Senators to be directly elected by the people instead of being chosen by state legislatures.

Recall. Elected officials could be removed by voters in a special election.

Referendum. Voters could compel legislators to place a bill on the ballot for approval.

Spoils System

Much of government corruption resulted from the **Spoils System**. Under this system, **government jobs** were given not to the most qualified people, but to those who made contributions or worked for the winning party. Some Presidents began favoring the **merit system** as a way of awarding jobs. In **1883, Congress** passed a law creating a **Civil Service Commission**. Afterwards, jobs were awarded on the basis of how well people did on **special examinations**.

Monopolies

By 1909, a few large companies(1% of all US businesses) turned out 44% of the nation's manufactured goods. Progressives felt this was **unfair to small business people**, who often could not compete effectively against big business. Monopolies could also hurt the common people by **raising prices**.

Progressives **proposed new government regulations** as a way to fight monopolies and called for **stricter enforcement of antitrust laws**.

Legislation Requiring Safe Conditions for Workers

The **Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire** outraged many people, and not only Progressives. Investigations were held, **building codes** strengthened, **fire-safety laws** passed.

New laws forced factory owners to take more care to prevent accidents on the job. By 1914, three years after the Triangle fire, **36 new labor laws** had been put into effect in the **state of New York**.

The Muckrakers

Among the early Progressives who had the most influence were a group of **newspaper reporters and writers** known as muckrakers. They got this name because they “raked” through the muck(dirt) of American life in search of news.

The Muckrakers wrote about **people who suffered** as a result of industrialization. They also let the people know about the **dishonest and corrupt practices of people in government and big business.**

Hoped to **arouse indignation and move people** to demand changes in business, government and social conditions.

Some newspaper, magazine and television reporters **today** act as modern muckrakers, **exposing problems to help bring about reforms.**

Famous Muckrakers

- **Upton Sinclair**, in his novel The Jungle, described some of the unsanitary practices of the meat packing industry.
- **Ida Tarbell**, in her History of the Standard Oil Company, showed how Rockefeller's rise was based on ruthless business practices.
- **Lincoln Steffens** exposed corruption in city government in his book The Shame of the Cities.
- **Jacob Riis**, in his book, How the Other Half Lives, examined the conditions of the urban poor. Called attention to crime, drunkenness and despair in New York's poorer districts.
- **Frank Norris** wrote The Octopus, a fictional work that depicted the stranglehold of railroads over California farmers.

Urban Reforms

Jacob Riis Photos



Voting Rights for Women and the Temperance Movement

Voting Rights for Women

Voting rights for women, aka suffrage, started at Seneca Falls in 1848 and was carried forward by a number of middle class women.

In 1890, two of the pioneer feminists of the 1840s, **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** and **Susan B. Anthony** of New York, helped found the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) to secure the vote for women.

A **western state, Wyoming**, was the **first to grant full suffrage to women**, in 1869. By 1900, some states allowed women to vote in local elections, and most allowed women to own and control property after marriage.

Constitutional Amendment: The **Nineteenth Amendment in 1920** guaranteed women's right to vote in all elections at the local, state and national levels.

Alcohol as a Social Evil

Temperance Movement:

Excessive drinking of alcohol by male factory workers was one cause of **poverty** for immigrant and working class families. It was also a cause of **domestic abuse**.

The **Women's Christian Temperance Union** (WCTU) was formed in 1874. Advocating total abstinence from alcohol, the WCTU, under the leadership of Francis E. Willard of Illinois, had 500,000 members by 1898.

The **Antisaloon League**, founded in **1893**, became a powerful political force and by 1916 had persuaded 21 states to **close down all saloons and bars**.

Unwilling to wait for the laws to change, **Carry A. Nation** of Kansas created a sensation by raiding saloons and **smashing barrels of beer with a hatchet**.

Constitutional Amendment: 18th Amendment (Prohibition Law) 1919

The Progressive Presidents

Theodore **Roosevelt**, William **Taft** and Woodrow **Wilson** were presidents who **identified with the Progressive Movement**. They tried to use their Presidential powers to **introduce important reforms** to correct some of the problems created by industrialization.

President Roosevelt (1901-1910)

Theodore Roosevelt became President in 1901, when President William McKinley was assassinated. Roosevelt **believed that the President, as the only official who represented all the people, should act strongly in their interests.**

- Roosevelt **the “Trust-Buster.”** Roosevelt believed there were **good and bad trusts.** (Trusts were companies that joined together to limit competition.) **“Bad trusts” acted unfairly against the public interest.** For example, Roosevelt **broke up Rockefeller’s Standard Oil Company** because its control of the entire oil industry made it a bad trust.

Roosevelt did not break up very many trusts, but he established the idea that the federal government should **break up harmful ones.**

President Theodore Roosevelt cont.

Square Deal Legislation. Roosevelt promised Americans a “Square Deal.” This meant **fairness and equal opportunities**. In order to do this, he acted to

- **Protect Public Health.**

The **Pure Food and Drug Act** and **Meat Inspection Act** were passed in 1906 to **protect consumers**. They established government inspection of foods, meats and drugs sold to the public.

- **Regulate Transportation and Communication.** He **increased the powers of the Interstate Commerce Commission** to protect the interests of the public.
- **Protect the Environment.** Roosevelt was a great outdoorsman and loved hunting wildlife. He drew attention to the need to protect forests, wildlife and natural resources. He helped form the **National Conservation Commission**.

President Wilson

President Wilson used his powers as President to control big business and improve the living conditions of the American people.

Wilson persuaded Congress to pass several major laws favored by Progressives:

- **Graduated Income Tax (1913)**. A graduated or progressive income tax requires **people with higher incomes to pay a higher percentage** of their income in tax than people with lower incomes. Wilson introduced the **graduated Federal Income Tax** as a result of the passage of the **Sixteenth Amendment** to the US Constitution.

Wilson cont.

- **Regulate the Economy.** The **Federal Reserve Act (1913)** established 12 Federal Reserve Banks, to serve as “banker’s banks.” These banks lend money to other banks. The act regulated the banking industry by fixing the amount of money banks could lend.
- **New Anti-trust Legislation.** Under Wilson, the federal government took further steps to encourage more business competition. Congress passed the **Clayton Anti-Trust Act (1914)**, which outlawed many of the actions being used by some businesses to prevent competition.
- The **Federal Trade Commission**, a new federal agency, was created to enforce anti-trust laws and to protect consumers against unfair practices by business.

The Progressive Movement Comes to an End

In 1914, World War One began in Europe. The US entered the war in 1917. Womens' suffrage and "Prohibition" of alcoholic drinks were both passed just after the war. These were the final reforms of the Progressive Era.

The best progressive ideas had passed into law, and Progressivism lost much of its appeal.

The Constitution at Work

- **16th Amendment** (1913). Gave Congress the power to collect income taxes.
- **17th Amendment** (1913). Changed the election of US Senators from selection by state legislatures to direct election by voters.
- **18th Amendment** (1919). Prohibited the manufacture, sale, importation or transportation of alcoholic beverages. In 1933 it was repealed by the 21st Amendment.
- **19th Amendment** (1920). Gave women the right to vote.