

Chapter 28 (14th)

Progressivism and the Republican Roosevelt

1. Progressive Roots

1. When the 1900's dawned, there were 76 million Americans. 1 out of 7 were foreign-born.
2. A new reform movement immediately began, led by "**Progressives**". Their goals were to stop monopolies, corruption, inefficiency, and social injustice.
 1. The method of the progressives was to strengthen the state—to give more powers to the government. Their over-arching goal was to use the government "as an agency of human welfare."
3. Roots of Progressivism began with the Greenback Party (1870's) & the Populist Party (1890's). A modern industrial society seemed to call for more government action and to take a step back from pure, *laissez-faire* capitalism.
4. Writers used the power of the pen to make their progressive points.
 1. **Henry D. Lloyd** wrote *Wealth Against Commonwealth* (1894) which struck at the Standard Oil Company.
 2. **Thorstein Veblen** wrote *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) criticizing people who made money seemingly for money's sake. He spoke of "predatory wealth" and "conspicuous consumption."
 3. **Jacob Riis** wrote *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) about the lives of the poor. He wanted to divert attention from America's infatuation with how the rich live and show the life of squalor in the New York slums. This book would influence Teddy Roosevelt, a future New York police commissioner.
 4. **Theodore Dreiser** made his points through his realist fiction. In *The Financier* (1912) and *The Titan* (1914) he criticized promoters and profiteers.
5. Other causes gained steam during the Progressive era.
 1. Socialists, influenced by strong European governments, called for more government action in the U.S. and started gaining votes in the ballot box.
 2. Advocates of the "social gospel" (Christian charity) called for helping the poor.
 3. Female suffragists also called for social justice, as well as the right to vote. They were led by **Jane Addams** and **Lillian Wald**.

2. Raking Muck with the Muckrakers

1. Around 1902, a new group of social critics emerged—the **muckrakers**. They typically exposed what they saw as corruption or injustice in writings. Favorite outlets for the muckrakers were liberal, reform-minded magazines like *McClure's*, *Collier's*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Everybody's*.
 1. They were called "muckrakers" first by Teddy Roosevelt. It was a derogatory term, him being unimpressed with their tendency to focus on the negatives and "rake through the muck" of society.
2. The muckrakers were very active and prolific...
 1. **Lincoln Steffens** wrote "The Shame of the Cities" (1902) which exposed city corruption in cahoots with big business.
 2. **Ida Tarbell** wrote an exposé in *McClure's* that laid bare the ruthless business tactics of John D. Rockefeller and the Standard Oil Company. Some thought she was just out for revenge because her father's business had been ruined by Rockefeller. But, all of her facts checked out.
 3. **Thomas Lawson** exposed the practices of stock market speculators in "Frenzied Finance" (1905-06), published in *Everybody's*. (He'd made \$50 million himself playing the market.)
 4. **David Phillips** wrote "The Treason of the Senate" (1906) in *Cosmopolitan*. He said that 75 of the 90 U.S. senators represented big businesses rather than the people. He backed up his charges with enough evidence to also impress Teddy Roosevelt.
 5. **John Spargo** wrote *The Bitter Cry of the Children* (1906) exposing, and critical of, child labor.
 6. **Ray Stannard Baker** wrote *Following the Color Line* (1908), the still-sorry life for Southern blacks.
 7. **Dr. Harvey Wiley** criticized patent medicines which were largely unregulated, habit-forming, and normally did more bad than good. He and his "Poison Squad" used themselves as guinea pigs for experiments.
3. Muckrakers were loud about the ills, but didn't offer cures. To the muckrakers, the cure for societal ills was democracy. They had no faith in politicians leading the charge, but wanted to get the story out to the public. Muckrakers believed that the public conscience would eventually remedy the problems.

3. Political Progressivism

1. The progressives generally came from the middle class. They felt somehow sandwiched between the big business trusts and tycoons on the top and the immigrant, working class on the bottom.
2. Progressives pushed for a variety of political reforms to help their cause. They favored and generally got the following accomplished:
 1. The **initiative** where voters could initiate laws, rather than waiting and hoping a legislator might do it.
 2. The **referendum** where voters could vote proposed bills into law, circumventing unresponsive legislator's altogether.

3. The **recall** where voters could remove elected officials rather than waiting for his term to expire. The thought was, "We voted them in, we can vote them out."
 4. The **secret ballot**, called the **Australian ballot**, to help get a true vote and avoid intimidation at the polls.
 5. The direct election of senators by the people. At the time, U.S. senators were chosen by state *legislators*, not the people. This became reality in 1913, with the **17th Amendment**.
 6. And female suffrage. This would have to wait a bit longer (until 1920).
4. Progressivism in the Cities and States
1. Progressivism really got its start and took off on a more local level rather than national.
 2. Galveston, TX successfully used the city-manager system. The idea was to use professional people trained in their field of city management, rather than using "friends" of a corrupt mayor or city boss. The result was much greater efficiency and other cities took note of Galveston.
 3. Local Progressives cracked down on "slumlords," rampant prostitution, and juvenile delinquency.
 4. Wisconsin was the Progressive leader for states. Led by **Gov. Robert "Fighting Bob" LaFollette**, Wisconsin was able to grab power back from the big businesses and return it to the people.
 1. Other states took note & attacked trusts, railroads. Including Oregon and California (led by Gov. Hiram Johnson). Gov. Charles Evan Hughes, of New York, took on the wrongs of gas & insurance companies.
5. Progressive Women
1. Women were an indispensable catalyst in the Progressive army. They couldn't vote or hold political office, but were active none-the-less. Women focused their changes on family-oriented ills such as child labor.
 2. Court decisions impacted women.
 1. The Supreme Court case of **Muller v. Oregon** (1908) said that laws protecting female workers were indeed constitutional. The case was successfully argued by attorney **Louis Brandeis** saying women's weaker bodies suffered harmful effects in factory work.
 1. This victory, however, came with a cost to women. Brandeis' own argument of weaker female bodies would later be used to keep women out of certain "male" jobs.
 2. A loss occurred in the case of **Lochner v. New York** (1905). In the case, the Supreme Court struck down a 10-hour workday for bakers.
 3. Women reformers gained speed after the **Triangle Shirtwaist Company burnt down in 1911, trapping and killing 146 mostly young, women workers**. The tragedy gained much attention and gave the women momentum.
 1. The public outcry prompted many states to pass laws regulating hours and conditions in such "sweatshops" and to pass workers' compensation laws.
 4. Alcohol had long been under fire by women. During the Progressive era, temperance would reach its peak.
 1. **Francis Willard**, founder of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) got 1 million women to join the cause against alcohol. The WCTU was joined by the Anti-Saloon League. They were well-organized and well-financed.
 2. Many states and counties went "dry." In 1914, 1/2 of Americans lived in dry areas.
 3. The movement culminated in 1919 with the **18th Amendment** (AKA **Prohibition**) that banned alcohol's sale, consumption, and possession.
6. TR's Square Deal for Labor
1. President Roosevelt had been moved by muckrakers and the Progressives' ideals. He pursued the "three C's": (1) control of the corporations, (2) consumer protection, and (3) conservation of natural resources.
 2. A strike took place in 1902 at coal mines of Pennsylvania. The workers called for a 20% pay increase and a reduction of work hours from 10 to 9 hours.
 1. Coal supplies dwindled and the nation felt the effects of the coal shortage so TR called in strike workers to the White House. Roosevelt was not impressed with the strike leaders.
 2. Roosevelt finally threatened to use federal troops to operate the mines. At this threat, the owners agreed to go to arbitration. The workers were given a 10% increase and the 9 hour day. The workers' union, however, was not officially recognized for bargaining.
 3. Roosevelt called Congress to form **Dept. of Commerce & Labor**, which split in half ten years later.
 1. The Bureau of Corporations would investigate interstate trade and become important for breaking up monopolies during the "trust-busting" days.
7. TR Corrals the Corporations
1. The Interstate Commerce Commission (1887) had been designed to regulate railroads but it was proving to be ineffective. Therefore, it was decided more needed to be done.
 1. Congress passed the **Elkins Act** in 1903. It banned and prosecuted rebates awarded by railroads.
 2. **Hepburn Act restricted free passes** handed out by railroads (usually to press to ensure good reports).
 2. Teddy Roosevelt nurtured the reputation of a trust buster. TR concluded, however that there were "good trusts" and there were "bad trusts." The bad trusts had to go.
 1. TR's most noteworthy target was the **Northern Securities Company** run by **J.P. Morgan** and James Hill.
 1. TR busted up Northern Securities (his decision was upheld by the Supreme Court). Busting J.P. Morgan's outfit angered Wall Street but this high-profile bust furthered TR's trust buster image.
 2. In all, Roosevelt attacked some 40 trusts, including busting the beef, sugar, fertilizer, and harvester trusts

3. Despite his reputation as a trust buster, TR allowed the "good trusts" to survive. He believed his actions against the bad trusts would prevent the good ones from going astray.
4. William Howard Taft, who succeeded Roosevelt, would actually be more of a trust buster than TR. Taft actually busted *more* trusts than TR.
 1. Another example occurred over the U.S. Steel Company. U.S. Steel wanted to acquire the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company. TR had said that the move of this good trust would be okay, but Taft felt otherwise. Roosevelt was very angry over Taft's reversal of his position.

8. Caring for the Consumer

1. **Upton Sinclair** wrote *The Jungle* about the meat packing industry's horrible conditions. Sinclair's goal was to reveal the plight of the workers. But, the real effect was to gross out America and initiate action in Congress.
 1. His book motivated Congress to pass the **Meat Inspection Act** (1906). Henceforth meat would be inspected by the U.S.D.A.
 2. The **Pure Food and Drug Act** was also passed. Its goal was to ensure proper labeling of food and drugs and to prevent tampering.
2. These acts would help Europe to trust American meat and thus help exports..

9. Earth Control

1. Americans had long considered their natural resources inexhaustible. By about 1900, they were realizing this was not true and that conservation was needed. Acts of Congress began preserving the land...
 1. The first conservation act was the **Desert Land Act** (1877). It sold desert land at a cheap rate on the promise the land would be irrigated.
 2. The **Forest Reserve Act** (1891) gave the president permission to set aside land as parks and reserves. Millions of acres of old-growth forests were preserved under this authority.
 3. The **Carey Act** (1894) gave federal land to the states, again on the promise of irrigation.
2. Teddy Roosevelt's presidency truly started a new era in conservation. Roosevelt was a consummate outdoorsman, was very concerned about the nation's timber and mineral depletion, & started conservation movements with action.
 1. Others helped Roosevelt in the push to conserve, notably conservationist and Division of Forest head **Gifford Pinchot** and naturalist **John Muir**, the most well-known spokesman for Mother Nature.
 2. TR got **Newlands Act** (1902) passed to begin massive irrigation projects out West. The Dam (on Arizona's Salt River) & dozens of other western dams created reservoirs to water, and bring life to, the arid land.
 3. TR wanted to save the trees. By 1900, only 1/4 of the nation's once-vast virgin trees still stood.
 1. Roosevelt set aside 125 million acres of forest land (3 times the acreage of his 3 predecessors). Large quantities of land were also set aside for coal and water reserves. Purely as an example, he had no White House Christmas tree in 1902.
3. The public shared TR's concern and passion for nature.
 1. **Jack London's** novels became popular, such as *The Call of the Wild* about Alaska's Klondike gold rush.
 2. Outdoorsy organizations emerged, such as the Boy Scouts of America and the Sierra Club (whose goal was/is conservation).
4. The **Hetchy Hetch Valley** of Yosemite National Park exposed a philosophical rupture amongst the conservationists.
 1. Hetchy Hetch was a beautiful Gorge that John Muir and the Sierra Club wanted to save. San Francisco wanted to dam it up for the city's water supply. In this case, TR sided with the city.
 1. Notably, TR and Muir were good friends, but TR was a pragmatist—always seeking a practical solution over an idealized solution.
 2. The division was clearly shown. The question asked, "Should land be simply set aside and untouched forever?" as John Muir advocated. Or, "Should the land be wisely managed for man's benefit?", as Teddy Roosevelt advocated.
 2. The federal government gave San Francisco the okay to dam up the valley. Roosevelt's policy of "multiple-use resource management" was set. The policy tried to use the land for recreation, reservoirs (for drinking, irrigating, water recreation), saw-then-replant logging, and summer stock grazing.

10. The "Roosevelt Panic" of 1907

1. Theodore Roosevelt was loved by the people, witnessed by the "Teddy" bear. Conservatives thought of him as unpredictable due to his Progressive ways they meddled the government into businesses.
 1. After winning his election in 1904, he announced he would not seek a third term. This cut his power a bit since everyone then knew he'd be out in four years.
2. The economy took a sudden and sharp downturn in 1907. Wall Street was pounded, banks were run, suicides went up, and there were many Wall Street "speculators" were indicted on sneaky dealings.
 1. As any economic downturn, the president was blamed, justly or not. Conservatives, especially, charged Roosevelt's meddling in business fouled up the cogs of the economy & called it "**Roosevelt Panic**."
 2. The Panic did reveal the need for a more elastic currency supply. In other words, the banks needed reserves to release into circulation if times got tough.
 1. Congress passed the **Aldrich-Vreeland Act** (1908) authorizing national banks to release money into circulation.
 2. This law/action paved the way for the monumental **Federal Reserve Act** (1913).

11. The Rough Rider Thunders Out

1. In 1908, TR was still very popular. He used his popularity to endorse a candidate that had similar policies as himself—**William Howard Taft**.
 1. Taft was a big fellow and very likable. The old saying was that "everybody loves a fat man" and in Taft's case the saying seemed to fit.
 2. The Democrats put forth William Jennings Bryan yet again. Bryan also painted himself as a Progressive.
 3. Riding on TR's popularity, Taft won the election easily, 321 to 162 in the electoral.
 1. Socialist Party candidate **Eugene Debs** (Pullman Strike fame) garnered a surprise 420,000 votes.
2. After the election, TR went to Africa on a hunting safari. His exploits were much followed and he returned as energetic as ever, still only 51 years old.
 1. TR's legacy was to begin to tame unbridled capitalism. He wasn't an enemy of business, but brought it under control. He sought the middle-ground in between the "me alone" idea of pure capitalism and the "father knows best" ideas of a government that controls people's lives.
 2. Other parts of his legacy include: (1) increasing the power of the presidency, (2) he initiated reforms, and (3) he showed that the U.S. was a world power and thus held great responsibilities.

12. Taft: A Round Peg in a Square Hole

1. At first, Taft seemed just fine. He was likable, seemed capable, had a solid background in experience.
2. Tricky problems soon bogged him down. TR had been able to work through problems due to his force-of-personality and political instincts.
 1. Taft took a hands-off approach toward Congress which did not serve him well.
 2. He was a mild progressive only, more inclined toward the status quo than reform.

13. The Dollar Goes Abroad as Diplomat

1. President Taft encouraged a policy called "**Dollar Diplomacy**" where Americans invested in foreign countries to gain power.
 1. Wall Street was urged to invest in strategic areas, especially the Far East and Latin America.
 2. The Dollar Diplomacy policy would thus strengthen the U.S. and make money at the same time. Whereas TR had used the in-your-face Big Stick policy, Taft used the sneakier Dollar Diplomacy policy.
2. A Dollar Diplomacy mishap occurred in China's Manchuria region.
 1. Taft wanted to buy Manchuria's railroads from Russia and Japan, then turn them over to the Chinese. This would keep the Open Door policy open, and strengthen the U.S.'s position in China.
 2. Russian & Japan blocked Sec. of State **Philander Knox's** deal. Taft suffered a Dollar Diplomacy black eye.
3. Latin America was a busy spot for the Dollar Diplomacy policy. The Monroe Doctrine forbade Europe from intervening, so the U.S. did.
 1. The U.S. invested heavily in Honduras and Haiti, thinking they may become trouble spots.
 2. Ordering Europe to stay away from Latin America, and investing heavily there, meant the U.S. now had a vested interest and shouldered responsibility there.
 1. Several flare-ups required the U.S. to intervene militarily including Cuba, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua (for 13 years).

14. Taft the Trustbuster

1. Taft was more of a trust buster than Roosevelt; Taft brought 90 lawsuits against trusts during his 4 years in office
2. Perhaps his most noteworthy bust was the Standard Oil Company. The Supreme Court ordered it broken into smaller companies in 1911.
3. The U.S. Steel Company was under fire from Taft, even though Roosevelt had agreed to let the company survive as one of his "good trusts." When Taft sought to break it up, Roosevelt was furious at his successor's actions.

15. Taft Splits the Republican Party

1. Two main issues split the Republican party: (1) the tariff and (2) conservation of lands.
2. On the tariff, old-school Republicans were high-tariff; New/Progressive Republicans were low tariff.
 1. Taft, as the mild Progressive, had promised to lower the tariff. As president, he sought to do just that, if only a small reduction.
 2. **Sen. Nelson Aldrich** added many *increases* to the bill while it was in the Senate. When passed and signed by Taft, the **Payne-Aldrich Bill** actually broke his campaign promise and angered many.
 1. Pres. Taft even unwisely named it "the best bill that the Republican party ever passed."
 3. In actuality, the Payne-Aldrich Bill split the Republican party.
3. On conservation, old-school Republicans favored using or developing the lands for business; new/Progressive Republicans favored conservation of lands.
 1. Taft did set up the Bureau of Mines to manage mineral resources. This was a "Progressive-ish" move and likely a popular one.
 2. However, Taft's involvement in the **Ballinger-Pinchot quarrel** (1910) was unpopular.
 1. Sec. of Interior **Richard Ballinger** said that public lands in Wyoming, Montana, and Alaska would be open for development.
 2. Chief of Forestry **Gifford Pinchot** was critical of the decision. Apparently siding with Ballinger, Taft fired Pinchot—an unpopular move.

4. The Republican party split became apparent in the 1910 Congress election.
 1. In the election, the old-school Republicans and new/Progressive Republicans split the vote, thus the Democrats won heavily in the House of Rep's.
 2. Socialist **Eugene Berger** of Milwaukee won seat in Congress, again, showing movement toward Socialism.

16. The Taft-Roosevelt Rupture

1. The Republican split turned differing opinions to different parties. The National Progressive Republican League began in 1911. Sen. Robert La Follette ("Fighting Bob" of Wisconsin) seemed destined to become their candidate.
2. T. Roosevelt was so upset at Taft's policies that he dropped hints he'd be interested in running again for president.
 1. He finally said, "My hat is in the ring!" arguing that he hadn't wanted three *consecutive* terms as president.
 2. La Follette was brushed aside and Roosevelt was named as the Progressive Republican.
3. The Taft-Roosevelt showdown came in June of 1912 at the Republican convention. Both men vied for the Republican nomination.
 1. As the sitting president, Taft was nominated as the Republican candidate for 1912.
 2. Roosevelt wasn't done, however. TR would simply run on his own as a third party candidate.