Chapter 4 – The Progressive Era 1890-1920

Chapter Focus: What were the causes and effects of the Progressive Movement?

Section 1: The Drive For Reform

Focus: What areas did Progressives think were in the need of the greatest reform?

I. Origins of Progressivism – they came from all walks of life – various political groups, social classes, and races.

A. Shared Beliefs – all believed that industrialization and urbanization had created problems. They wanted local, state, and federal government to make changes to fix the problems. They used logic and reason as a way of making society more efficient. Many were motivated by religion

B. What they wanted – they couldn’t agree on what was most important.

Political reform: the right to vote, end corruption

Big business – monopolies and unfair business practices, fixing the Anti-Sherman Act

Class system – fix the unequal distribution of wealth, Living and working conditions, child labor, etc.

II. Muckrakers

A. What are they? Journalists who wrote about the real life.

B. Famous Muckrakers

1. Jacob Riis – photographer. How the Other Half Lives – pictures of the slums

2. Ida Tarbell – wrote about Standard Oil Company

C. Novelists – fiction that looked at the social problems. Created a new genre – the naturalist novel that showed the human misery and the struggles of the common man.

III. Progressives Reform Society – this was a result of the writings of many of the muckrakers.

A. Social Gospel – from the idea that Christianity should be the basis of social reform. It led to the push to end child labor and shorter workweeks, limit the power of trusts and monopolies

B. Settlement Houses – a community center that provided social services to the urban poor as a way to improve their lives. They provided day care, taught English, and helped Americanize immigrants.

1. Jane Addams – one of the most famous organizers of a settlement house. She created Hull House in Chicago. This was the forerunner to other settlement houses throughout the United States.

2. YMCA – goal was to promote Christian values while offering classes, dances, and sports to male urban workers.

C. Protecting Children –

1. Florence Kelly – leading proponent of protecting children. Led the charge to end child labor. Formed the National Child Labor Committee in 1902 which helped to create the U.S. children’s Bureau which still works today looking at issues facing children.

2. Keating Owens Act –the first national law that banned child labor. It was short lived however and was found unconstitutional in 1918 on the grounds that Congress could only regulate interstate commerce. But it led the way for many states to start making the changes. By 1938, Congress finally passed a federal law outlawing child labor.

D. Improving Education – many states started regulating how long children should be in school. The debate raged though on what they should be taught. As a result vocational skills were introduced as well as subjects such as history and biology.

E. Helping workers – working conditions were horrid during the time period.

1. Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire – 1911, 146 women were killed in a workplace fire. Some reasons were because there were no fire escapes, ladders didn’t reach that high, exits were locked. As a result NYC created new laws that would make things like this never happen again – doors had to open out, can’t lock doors, all must have fire escapes.

2. *Lochner v. New York* – many progressives pushed for changes and some came along, but many laws such as a 10 hour workday was deemed unconstitutional with this case. Citing Liberty of Contract meaning that the workers have the right to turn a job down if they wanted.

IV. Reforming Government – reformers realized that if society was to be changed, then the political process had to be changed first.

A. City Government – various forms of local governments were introduced.

1. Galveston or Commission plan - a natural disaster led to a new form of city government, that the mayor was replaced with a five member commission. Each in charge of a different part of rebuilding the city.

2. Manager – Council plan – they would hire a manager to oversee the day to day stuff. This ended the power of the political machines.

B. Election Rules

1. Direct Primary – traditionally the party leaders chose the candidates. This was changed when Robert La Follette of Wisconsin introduced the idea of the direct primary where the people were actually able to choose the candidates, again giving the people more of a say.

C. Increased citizen participation – the goal was to make sure that elected officials did what the people wanted. So three new reforms were introduced.

1. initiative – the people the power to put a proposed law directly on the ballot to be voted by the people.

2. referendum – allowed citizens to vote on laws that were passed by the legislation.

3. recall – voters the power to remove public servants from office before their terms expired.

4. 17th Amendment – direct election of senators

D. Progressive Governors – several new leaders were able to come into power in state and local governments.

1. La Follette – the Wisconsin Plan that introduced direct primaries, but also forced railroads to charge lower feeds and pay higher taxes, improved education, made factories safer.

2. Hiram Johnson – California ended the power of the Southern Pacific Railroad on state government. Also used the direct primary, initiative, referendum and recall.

Section 2: Women Make Progress

Focus: How did women of the Progressive Era make progress and win the right to vote?

I. Progressive Women Expand Reforms – by the 1900s, women wanted to do more than just be a wife and mother. They began working outside of the home and having opportunities they never had before, but it wasn’t easy.

A. Hardships – working outside the home had long hours in unsafe conditions. Their wages were handed over the their husbands. They worked in textile factories and as domestic servants. They had little education, unable to vote and were paid less than men for the same jobs.

B. As Reformers – a main goal was to reduce the working hours.

1. Muller v. Oregon granted women limited working hours based on Brandeis use of scientific testimony that it interfered with their reproductive services. Some women were happy because they were protected while others wanted to know why it was only them that were protected.

C. Florence Kelly – along with Children’s rights, she also fought for women’s rights. She helped found the

1. National Consumers League that gave special labels for those products that were created under fair labor practices. This is still in existence today. The NCL encouraged people to boycott any products not labeled as safe.

1. Women’s Trade Union League – tried to improve working conditions.. Both upper class and working class women worked together. They pushed for a minimum wage, 8 hr workday. They created the first worker’s strike fund to be used to support families of striking families.

D. Family Life

1. Temperance Movement – led by the Women’s Christian Temperance. They believed that alcohol led to men spending their incomes, neglecting their families, and abusing their wives. This was also a direct attack on many immigrant groups who used alcohol in their religious celebrations (Irish and Catholics) Eventually their work led to the passing of the 18th amendment.

2. Margaret Sanger – led a birth control movement believing that family life and women’s health would improve if they had fewer children. She founded the Birth Control League in 1921 to provide birth control information and various forms of contraceptives to women.

3. Ida B. Wells helped form the National Association of Colored Women. There forces was to help families gain success. They had programs to educate black women and provided day care to protect the children while the parents were at work.

II. Suffrage – the right to vote. This was not a new issue and women had been fighting for suffrage since the beginning of our country. In the 1860s women like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton had been fighting for federal legislation. It was not until the 1890s that suffrage got a new voice.

A. Carrie Chapman Catt

1. National American Women’s Suffrage Association – had a “winning plan” that included local action through the use of referendums as well as fighting for a national amendment. Her “society plan” used wealthy well educated women as well as women from all levels of society to promote suffrage in their own areas.

B. Opposition - not everyone was in favor of women’s suffrage. The National Association Opposed to Women’s Suffrage said that if women got the right to vote that it would take away from their ability to be good mothers and wives. Eventually it faded away.

C. Alice Paul – not all women wanted to wait. She was one of them and took a more active militant role in pushing for suffrage. After being kicked out of NAWSA she formed the National Women’s Party and picketed the white house during WWI using Wilson’s own words against him. At one point she and several others were arrested and went on a hunger strike. When the news got out, it helped push through the national amendment

D. 19th Amendment – gave women the right to vote. It was ratified in August of 1920.

Section 3: The Struggle Against Discrimination

Focus: What steps did minorities take to combat social problems and discrimination?

I. Social Reform or Social Control

A. Americanization – the premise of trying to make immigrants more American. Settlement houses were one place where this took place. They taught English, how to dress and what foods to eat. The belief was that it would make them more loyal and moral citizens.

B. Limits of Progressivism – Progressives were just like everyone else and did not see non whites as being fit to play a leading role in society.

1. Eugenics – pseudo science that said dark skilled people were less intelligent than whites. It legitimatized peoples prejudice.

2. Plessy v. Ferguson – separate but equal laid the ground work for Jim Crow laws that legalized the segregation of the races.

II. African Americans Demand Reform

A. Booker T. Washington – urged blacks to move slowly and prove their worth by working hard and that discrimination would eventually end.

B. W.E.B. DuBois –he thought the complete opposite. That it should be demanded. He believed in education as the way, not working the same jobs they did as slaves.

1. Niagara Movement – led by DuBois and Trotter, they denounced the ideal of gradual progress and teaching only trade skills. Urged that talented blacks should be taught history, literature, and philosophy so they could think for themselves.

D. NAACP – this came about after a riot in Springfield, Illinois that attempted to lynch two African Americans in the city jail. Founded by a combination of white and black reformers, the goal was to use the court system to guarantee the 14th and 15th amendment rights to African Americans. In the early years, the focus was on access to housing and professional jobs.

E. Urban League, created in 1911, they were organizations in urban areas that helped poor workers (the NAACP focused more on middle class). Did thinks like find jobs, buy clothes and books as well as send their kids to school.

III. Reducing Prejudice and Protecting Rights

A. Anti Defamation League – created to protect Jews from the growing anti-Semitism that was growing throughout the cities. They helped protect Jews and others against physical and verbal attacks, false statements and “to secure justice and fair treatment to all citizens alike”

B. Partido Liberal Mexicano – formed in Arizona by Mexican Americans. Very similar to the Urban league

C. Mutualistas – another group that helped Mexican Americans. They made loans and provided legal assistance. They had insurance programs for those too sick to work.

D. Society of American Indians – created by Carlos Montezuma. They protested federal Indian policy. He believed Native Americans should be able to preserve their culture and avoid being dependent on the federal government.

E. Asian Americans had it pretty rough. They were not considered citizens, in several states were not allowed to own property. Japanese Americans put the land they owned in the names of their children that were born in the U.S. Remember the Chinese Exclusion Act and the Gentlemen’s Agreement that limited immigration from Japan in exchange for segregation of Japanese students to stop.