**APUSH Unit 9: Learning Goals - The Progressive Era (1896-1920)**

1. Describe the roots of the Progressive era?
2. What were the areas targeted for reform?
3. Who were the major leaders of reform?
4. What reform legislation and amendments were passed?
5. What Progessive reforms happened under each president in this time period?
6. Describe TR’s attempts at reforming the 3 C’s.
7. Describe Taft’s progressive reforms – trust busting
8. Describe Wilson’s attempts to tackle the Triple Wall of Privilege

**Topics**

Muckrakers

Political Progressivism

TR’s 3 C’s

Corporations

Consumer Protection

Conservation

Labor

Urban reform

Suffrage

Temperance

African Americans

Wilson’s Triple Wall of Privilege

Tariff

Banking

Trusts

Monetary reform

**Themes**

“Jeffersonian goals in Hamiltonian form?”

First major government efforts on the behalf of the common man?

Conservatives as Progressives (reform to preserve?)

Was the era of Progressive reform a middle class movement?

**The introduction to Progressive era essays in Conflict and Consensus:**

The problems arising in an industrialized America could be solved only by expanding democracy and social justice.

- To solve the problems of democracy we needed more democracy.

- Unlike the socialist movements gaining ground throughout the world at this point, Progressives did not want to introduce a new system of government, they believed problems could be solved by reforming rather than abandoning the American system.

**Historian’s interpretations include:**

1. The progressive era is a time of conflict between reformers on one side and businessmen and political bosses on the other.
2. The movement was a “status revolution.” – Middle class, well-educated citizens frustrated by their loss of status and power trying to hold on to a society they deemed good but disappearing.
3. Progressive reformers rejected old solutions and proposed changes that would solve problems created by new economic and social order without giving up it’s benefits.

**The three historian’s whose essays appear in C & C…**

1. Mowry – No real link between populists and progressive reformers.
2. Progressive leaders were an “economically secure, well-educated, **middle class** group who had been conservatives during the hard times of the 1890’s but progressive reformers during the relatively prosperous times of the 1st decade of 20th century because they found it difficult to adjust to the vast change of the industrial age.
3. They were motivated by a combination of fear and confidence – fear of the “new collectivism” of big business and organized labor (getting squashed from above and below) and confident they had the skills and insight necessary to lead the nation.
4. Intensely individualistic, they considered themselves to be above the class conflict and selfishness that divided the general population and could then solve the problems the nation faced.
5. Progressives were divided in their goals, some looking backward to conditions that were disappearing, others looking forward to a highly centralized government which, under their leadership, could institute needed changes.
6. Boyer – Progressivism was a moral crusade against sin and evil.
7. The progressives battled for social justice, and against corporate wrongdoing, corruption in government and immorality of all kinds.
8. They relied on a new group of experts – social scientists.
9. They did not deem the system to be fundamentally evil; rather they insisted that the system required adjustment to correct those evils.

* ***Both Mowry and Boyer find a coercive strain in progressivism – people have to be forced to give up improper ways. What implications does this have for democracy? Is it not undemocratic to coerce people to behave in a manner deemed to be correct, not by the people themselves, but by experts who claim to know what is best?***

1. Rothman – The progressives were liberal reformers who sought to ameliorate the wrongs but in the process often trampled on the rights of those they were helping.
2. Using the power of the state they sought to impose a middle-class consensus – like parents who think they know best for their children.

Were the liberal reformers illiberal in their goals?

* Did they, in seeking their goals, infringe upon the rights of those they were supposed to be helping?
* Or does such a view do injustice to a group of people trying to help others in distress?

Did progressive reform introduce undemocratic features into American life by taking decisions from the people and putting them into the hands of experts?

Does Democracy require that people who are wrong-headed and might act in a manner that would injure themselves and perhaps, even indirectly, others, be allowed to continue such behavior?

Who should decide?