**Unit 12: The Roots of Progressivism**

**I. The Rise of Progressivism**

**A.** The era in American history from about 1890 to 1920 is known as the Progressive Era. **Progressivism** was a collection of different ideas and activities about how to fix the problems within American society. Progressives disagreed among themselves on the solutions, but agreed that the government should take a more active role in solving society’s problems caused by urbanization and industrialization.

**B.** Progressives believed that first the government needed to be fixed and made more responsive to people before other problems could be addressed. Progressives also believed that they could fix society’s problems by applying scientific principles to society.

**C.** The **muckrakers** were a group of journalists who investigated social conditions and political corruption. Their articles led to public debate on social and economic problems and put pressure on politicians to introduce reforms. Muckraker **Jacob Riis** focused on social problems in his book *How the Other Half Lives*, published in 1890. The book described poverty, disease, and crime in many immigrant neighborhoods in New York City.

**II. Making Government Efficient**

**A.** There were many types of progressivism. Progressives often took opposing sides on issues and on how to solve the problems.

**B.** One group of progressives believed that problems in society could be solved if government was efficient. They felt that government could become efficient by applying the principles of scientific management. They thought that managing a city required experts, not elected politicians. They wanted to replace the existing system with a **commission plan** where a board of commissioners or a city manager with expertise in city services would select and hire specialists to run city departments.

**C.** In 1901 Galveston, Texas, was the first to adopt the commission system. Many cities followed shortly after.

**III. Democracy and Progressivism**

**A.** Many progressives wanted more democracy in society. The governor of Wisconsin, **Robert La Follette,** criticized how political parties ran their conventions. He pressured the state legislature to require each party to hold a **direct primary,** a party election in which all party members vote for a candidate to run in the general election.

**B.** Three new reforms were introduced by progressives to force state legislators to respond to voter’s concerns. The **initiative** allowed a group of citizens to introduce legislation and required the legislature to vote on it. The **referendum** allowed proposed legislation to be submitted to the voters for approval. The **recall** allowed voters to demand a special election to remove an elected official from office.

**C.** To stop Senate corruption, progressives wanted the direct election of senators by all state voters. In 1912 Congress passed the direct-election amendment. In 1913 it was ratified, becoming the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution.

**IV. The Suffrage Movement**

**A.** The movement for women’s voting rights was known as the suffrage movement. **Suffrage** is the right to vote. In July 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized the first women’s rights convention. Many progressives joined the suffrage movement in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

**B.** After the Civil War, the Republicans in Congress introduced the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which protected the voting rights of African Americans. The woman suffrage movement had wanted these amendments to apply to women as well. Republicans refused.

**C.** The debate over the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments split the suffrage movement into two groups and weakened its effectiveness. By 1900 only Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, and Colorado had granted voting rights to women.

**D.** In 1890 the two groups united to form the **National American Woman Suffrage Association** (NAWSA). The head of the NAWSA’s congressional committee, **Alice Paul,** a Quaker social worker, used protests to force President Wilson to take action onwoman suffrage. After the NAWSA became alarmed at Paul’s activities, she left andstarted the National Woman’s Party. This group picketed the White House and wenton hunger strikes if arrested.

**E.** In 1918 the House of Representatives passed a woman suffrage amendment. The amendment failed by two votes. In June 1919, the Senate finally passed the Nineteenth Amendment. On August 26, 1920, the states ratified the amendment guaranteeing women the right to vote.

**V. Social Welfare Progressivism**

**A.** Social welfare progressives created charities to help the poor and disadvantaged, and pushed for laws to help fix social problems.

**B.** In 1900 over 1.7 million children under the age of 16 worked outside the home. The National Child Labor Committee worked to end child labor.

**C.** Many adult workers labored in difficult and dangerous conditions. With the creation of building codes, workers’ compensation laws, zoning laws, and health codes, the work environment was made safer for workers.

**D.** Some progressives favored zoning laws and building codes to regulate how the land and buildings could be used.

**E.** The **temperance** movement called for the moderation or elimination of alcohol. Many progressives believed alcohol was the cause of many of society’s problems. In 1874 the **Women’s Christian Temperance Union** (WCTU) was formed. At first the temperance movement worked to reduce alcohol consumption, but later it pushed for **prohibition**—laws banning the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol.

**VI. Progressives Versus Big Business**

**A.** A group of progressives focused on regulating big business, but they disagreed on the solutions. One side believed government should break up big companies to restore competition. The other group wanted the creation of government agencies to regulate big companies and prevent them from abusing their power.

**B. Socialism,** the idea that the government should own and operate industry for the community as a whole, was an idea shared by a small minority of progressives.

**C. Eugene Debs** led the American Socialist Party and was the party’s candidate for president in the election of 1912.

**D.** Most progressives and most Americans believed in the American system of free enterprise.

**Unit 12: Roosevelt in Office**

**I. Roosevelt Revives the Presidency**

**A.** During his second term, Theodore Roosevelt’s reform program was known as the **Square Deal.** As a progressive and a Social Darwinist, he felt the government should try to balance the needs of all the groups in American society. He believed that the U.S. needed progressive reforms to remain an efficient society that could compete successfully with other nations.

**B.** The fight for control of the Burlington Railroad erupted on the New York Stock Exchange. E.H. Harriman of the Union Pacific Railroad and James J. Hill and J. P. Morgan of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railroads argued over stock, which could have led to a recession. The three men compromised by creating a new holding company called **Northern Securities.**

**C.** Roosevelt felt Northern Securities violated the Sherman Antitrust Act, and he ordered a lawsuit filed. In 1904 the Supreme Court ruled that Northern Securities had violated the Sherman Antitrust Act.

**D.** The **United Mine Workers** (UMW) union called a strike of the miners who dug coal. About 150,000 workers from the mines of eastern Pennsylvania demanded a pay increase, reduction in work hours, and recognition for their union. The strike went on for months, threatening a coal shortage. Roosevelt urged the union and owners to accept **arbitration,** a settlement imposed by an outside party. The union agreed, but the owners did not. Mine owners finally agreed after Roosevelt threatened to have the army run the mines.

**E.** In 1903 Congress created the Department of Commerce and Labor. Within the department was the **Bureau of Corporations** that had the authority to investigate corporations and issue reports on their activities.

**F.** In 1906 the **Hepburn Act** was intended to strengthen the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) by giving it the power to set railroad rates. Over time, railroads realized they could work with the ICC to set rates and regulations that limited competition and prevent new competitors from entering the industry.

**II. Social Welfare Action**

**A.** By 1905 consumer protection became a national issue. Patent medicines and food consumption became serious threats to Americans, forcing new legislation.

**B.** In 1906 **Upton Sinclair’s** *The Jungle* described his observations of Chicago slaughterhouses. As a result, federal legislation was passed. The **Meat Inspection Act** required federal inspection of meat sold and set standards of cleanliness in meatpacking plants. The **Pure Food and Drug Act** prohibited the manufacture, sale, or shipment of impure or falsely labeled food and drugs.

**III. Conservation**

**A.** President Theodore Roosevelt urged Americans to conserve natural resources. In 1902 Roosevelt supported the passage of the **Newlands Reclamation Act,** which authorized the use of federal funds from public land sales to pay for irrigation and land development projects.

**B.** Roosevelt appointed Gifford Pinchot to head the United States Forest Service to carefully manage the timber resources in the West. Pinchot and his department created regulations controlling lumbering on federal lands.

**C.** Roosevelt’s actions during his presidency caused Americans to increasingly look to the federal government to solve the nation’s economic and social problems. The executive branch of government greatly increased in power.

**Unit 12: The Taft Administration**

**I. Taft Becomes President**

**A.** Endorsed by Theodore Roosevelt, the Republican candidate, William Howard Taft, easily defeated the Democratic candidate, William Jennings Bryan, in the election of 1908. Taft, a skillful administrator and judge, had a slow approach to problem solving that led to conflicts with the progressives.

**B.** Taft, like many progressives, felt high tariffs limited competition, hurt consumers, and protected trusts. Taft called Congress into session to lower tariff rates.

**C.** Speaker of the House **Joseph G**. **Cannon** had the power to push bills through without discussion. Many progressives wanted to unseat him because he blocked their legislation. Taft stopped the Republican campaign against Cannon, and in return Cannon pushed the tariff bill through the House. These actions angered many progressives.

**D.** With the approval of the **Payne**-**Aldrich Tariff,** which raised some tariffs instead of lowering them, Taft had further alienated progressives. Gifford Pinchot, along with other progressives, felt betrayed and angry with Taft.

**E.** Taft’s position with Republicans took a final turn for the worst with the hiring of **Richard Ballinger** as secretary of the interior. Gifford Pinchot charged that Ballinger had tried to turn over valuable public lands in Alaska to a private **syndicate,** or business group, for his own profit. The charges were groundless, but Pinchot leaked the story to the press. Taft fired Pinchot for **insubordination,** or disobedience.

**F.** The progressives’ feeling that Taft had “sold the Square Deal down the river” resulted in a 1910 Democratic victory, with Democrats taking the majority in the House and Democrats and Progressive Republicans gaining control of the Senate from the conservatives.

**II. Taft’s Progressive Reforms**

**A.** Taft brought twice as many antitrust cases as Roosevelt and established the **Children’s Bureau** to fight child labor. He was a conservationist who monitored the activities ofthe mining companies, expanded national forests, and protected waterpower sitesfrom private development.

**B.** Theodore Roosevelt refused to criticize Taft’s actions as president until Taft brought an antitrust lawsuit against U.S. Steel—a trust Roosevelt had established. Progressives convinced Roosevelt to reenter politics and attempt to replace Taft as the Republican nominee for president in the election of 1912.

**Unit 12: The Wilson Years**

**I. The Election of 1912**

**A.** Republican conservatives supported William Taft in the election of 1912. Most Republican progressives supported Theodore Roosevelt. Taft gained the Republican nomination.

**B.** Roosevelt ran as an independent for the **Progressive Party.** In the end, the contest came down to the two progressives: Roosevelt and Democratic candidate Woodrow Wilson. As governor of New Jersey, Wilson had made his state a model of Progressive reform.

**C.** Roosevelt’s **New Nationalism** was a complete line of reforms that favored legislation to protect women and children in the workforce and workers’ compensation for those injured on the job. He also wanted a federal trade commission to regulate industry.

**D.** Wilson’s plan, the **New Freedom,** supported free enterprise and criticized Roosevelt for a program that Wilson felt supported monopolies.

**E.** Roosevelt and Taft split the Republican vote, giving Wilson the Electoral College win. It was the first time since 1892 that a Democrat had been president of the United States.

**II. Regulating the Economy**

**A.** During Wilson’s eight years as president, he issued reforms that affected tariffs, the banking system, the trusts, and workers’ rights.

**B.** In 1913 the **Underwood Tariff** reduced the average tariff on imported goods to about half of what it had been in the 1890s. An important part of the Underwood Tariff was the provision for levying an **income tax,** or a direct tax on the earnings of individuals and corporations.

**C.** There had not been a central bank since the 1830s, when economic depressions had caused small banks to close, wiping out customers’ savings. Wilson supported the Federal Reserve system where the banks would have to keep some of their deposits in a reserve to protect customers’ money.

**D.** In 1914 Wilson asked Congress to create the **Federal Trade Commission** (FTC) to monitor American business. The FTC investigated companies and issued “cease and desist” orders against companies involved in **unfair trade practices.** Progressives in Congress responded by passing the **Clayton Antitrust Act** that put a ban on tying agreements and price discrimination.

**III. Federal Aid and Social Welfare**

**A.** Wilson stopped supporting reforms, believing that his New Freedom program was complete. After a shaky congressional election in 1914, Wilson began to support reforms again.

**B.** In 1916 Wilson signed the Keating-Owen Child Labor Act, which prohibited children under the age of 14 from working in factories. He also signed the Adamson Act, which established an eight-hour workday for railroad workers. He approved the Federal Farm Loan Act, which provided farmers with long-term loans at low interest rates.

**IV. The Legacy of Progressivism**

**A.** By the end of the Progressive era, Americans looked to the government to play an active role in regulating the economy and solving social problems.

**B.** In 1905 African American leaders met to demand full political rights and responsibilities and an end to racial discrimination for African Americans. In 1909 the **National** **Association for the Advancement of Colored People** (NAACP) was founded.