**Guided Notes: Progressivism and Imperialism**

**The Rise of Progressivism**

In the Gilded Age, **Robber Barons** gained great **wealth**, while the majority of society lived in **slums** and **tenement homes**. The Industrial Revolution and excessive urban growth left cities **overcrowded** and businesses **unregulated**. Many people wanted to institute changes to **reduce government corruption**, **expand social welfare**, expand democracy, and create economic reform.

Some say that the Progressive Movement was an extension of the **Populist Movement** of the late 1800’s. Indeed, **Mugwumps** campaigned on the principle of **honest government.**

Furthermore, the concept of **socialism** was spreading throughout the U.S. and had a hand in shaping the Progressive Movement. The socialist ideals focused on benefiting the working and middle class, and **removing** the competitive nature of **capitalism.** **Eugene V. Debs** even ran for President under a socialist ticket.

Social reformers and **muckrakers** worked tirelessly to institute change. These reformers wrote human interest stories exposing urban blight, and muckrakers tried to dig up all the “muck” or corruption in society. The media begins its role as a **social watchdog, reporting on everything that is wrong with society**. **Child labor laws, working conditions, and monopolies** were key issues. Others started community centers, **hoping to help the poor, the unemployed, immigrants**, and factory workers. **Settlement House** reformers like **Jane Addams** were particularly successful in help to curb the ill effects of urbanization.

**Changes to Democracy**

Progressivism brought about **changes to our democratic process** that are relevant today. Reformers wanted qualified workers to get government jobs based upon their merits. Instead, politics had a long running policy of **patronage**, or the **spoils system**. Under the spoils system, jobs were given in exchange for political support.

Progressives also felt that government leaders would be more responsive to voters if they had more **direct involvement in the electoral process.** They instituted the following procedures to expand democracy.

**Direct Primary:** A primary in which **voters**, not party conventions, **choose candidates** to run for public office.

**Initiative:** Voters may **directly propose laws** by petitioning to have them put on the ballot

**Referendum**: Voters can **approve proposed laws**

**Recall:** Elected officials, laws, or statues can be **voted out of office**, or out of existence.

**Economic Reform**

Progressive reformers wanted to **limit the power of big business**. By the late 1800’s, many major industries had formed **trusts**. A trust is a group of businesses that work together, hold stock in each other’s companies, drive out competition, and increase profits for themselves. **The Sherman Antitrust Act**, passed in **1890,** was designed to keep monopolies in check and prevent trusts from forming. Initially however, it didn’t work. The law **wasn’t successfully enforced** and businesses were easily able to find legal loopholes or bribe politicians.

**Other Government Regulation:**

Hoping to increase in **efficiency**, the government reorganized its agencies to avoid overlapping. Clear responsibilities were delineated to each agency so each knew who was in charge in specific situations, and who was to blame.

Efficiency was also modeled at the **local**/municipal level:

**Commission Government**: Authority placed on a board of directors of city departments.

**City Manager System**: A professional administrator runs the city by the policies established by the city council and mayor.

Lacking specific regulation, many major cities began to create systems for distributing city wide services**. Public transportation and public utilities** like gas and water were considered part of the socialist school of thought.

**Labor Reform**:

The most important social reform of this time period was **labor legislation**, which was often supported by **unions.**

**National Child Labor Committee** – Established in 1904

First on the agenda was to push for the **ban on the employment of young children**, which was a major problem of the time. It took ten years for laws to fully take effect. While exact age differed from state to state, “under age” children were eventually **banned** from the workforce, and the hours older children were able to work were **limited.** It is noteworthy to add that these rules did not apply to **agriculture**, and young children often helped out on a farm.

**Keating-Owen Act (**1916) – also called the **Child Labor Act**, excluded any consumer good that were made by children under the age of 14 from interstate commerce.

**Adamson Act** (1916) - **established an eight hour workday** for railroad workers. This later spread to other areas of labor

There was also a major push to improve working conditions in **factories**. A tragic example that reform was needed was the **Triangle Shirtwaist fire**. In 1911, about 146 workers, mostly women, were killed. There were not enough exits, and most people were burned beyond recognition. Fire crews were on the scene right away, but their tallest latter was three floors too short. Regulation on several fronts was clearly in order.

**Accident compensation** was also a goal of progressives. Initially, there was no compensation or insurance, despite the many hazardous conditions that people worked in on a daily basis. Progressives hoped to institute programs that allowed workers to be compensated if they are **injured on the job**.

**Prohibition**

The push for the **banning of alcohol** has a long history in the United States. Several groups were formed to try and make an alcohol ban an effective **law.**

**The Women’s Christian’s Temperance Union** and **The Anti-Saloon League** were two of the most prominent prohibitionist groups. They began to get politically active and amass a large following. Some, like **Carry A. Nation,** used extreme measures to get their viewpoint across. She would visit saloons with a **hatchet**, destroying any alcohol she could get her hands on.

After decades of campaigning, the **18th Amendment** was ratified in 1919, **banning the sale, production, and distribution of alcohol**.

While the goals of the prohibitionists were to create a society with higher moral standards, the opposite occurred. Huge increases in crime, gang violence, and alcohol smuggling were reported. After 13 years, this **noble experiment** was deemed a failure.

**Roosevelt’s Progressivism**

Roosevelt became President in 1901 after **William McKinley** was assassinated. **He felt the government’s purpose was to ensure fairness**. Therefore, in his fight against corruption, he presented a **“Square Deal”** for workers, consumers, and big business.

Roosevelt started **enforcing the Sherman Antitrust Act**. During his tenure as president his administration filed suit against **44 corporations** for antitrust violations. He also increased federal regulation over interstate commerce.

Elkins Act (1903) – Made it illegal for the railroads to give or receive “secret” rebates to favored customers, everyone had to be charged the same price for a ticket.

Roosevelt was re-elected in **1904**. Voters approved of his progressive and conservative values. In his second term, he continued to focus on **regulation and control over businesses**.

**The Hepburn Act of 1906** gave the interstate commerce commission more authority, allowing it to control freight rates of the railroad and set the maximum rate they could charge.

After reading Upton Sinclair’s **The Jungle**, Roosevelt became concerned about the **meat packing industry.** Investigations were launched into the sanitary conditions of food processing, and many disturbing findings came to light. Roosevelt then passed the **Meat Inspection Act in 1906**, creating a government program to oversee meat processing and production. He also signed the **Pure Food and Drug Act**, saying that all foods and medications must list ingredients contained within them.

Roosevelt was a well known **conversationalist**, and firmly believed in controlling how we use our **natural resources**. He preserved more than **194 million** acres of public land, including the Grand Canyon. Much of this land later became part of one of America’s National Parks. He also created the **U.S. Forest Service**.

**William Howard Taft**

Elected in **1908**, Taft was hand-picked by Roosevelt to be his successor and carry on his plans. Taft continued Roosevelt’s attack on trust, busting **more than twice as many trusts** as his predecessor. Although Taft had a distinguished legal career, he was not a great politician.

Taft’s major reforms include the passing of two **constitutional amendments.**

**16th Amendment**: Gave Congress the Power to create a **Federal Income Tax**. This became a great source of revenue for the nation.

**17th Amendment:** Gave the voters the right to **directly elect their senators**. This cut down on corrupt, political bargains and gave people more of a direct voice in their government.

During Taft’s Presidency, a **split** developed within the Republican Party. His former friend Theodore Roosevelt became his arch nemesis and ran against him in the election of 1912 under the new progressive **Bull Moose Party**. With the Republican vote split between Roosevelt and Taft, **Woodrow Wilson**, the democratic candidate, easily won the election.

After his loss in the **1912** election, Taft was elected to the **Supreme Court**, living out his career working in his true passion: the law. Taft was the only former President to be elected to the Supreme Court.

**Woodrow Wilson**

Wilson would be the high point for progressivism. His New Nationalism focused on **social reform, social justice, taxes, workers, compensation, and labor regulation for women and children.** Unlike Taft, Wilson relied more on popular support than popularity.

**Federal Reserve Act** (1914) - created a new banking system with **12 regional reserve banks** that were supervised by a central board of directors, **the FED**. These regional banks made sure money was distributed where it is most needed, allowing for a more flexible currency system.

**Federal Trade Commission** (1914) - created as a watchdog of trade and commerce. They would define unfair trade practices and issue orders to stop set practices. **This was the cornerstone of Wilson’s anti-trust program.**

**Clayton Antitrust Act** 1914 - outlawed **price discrimination** and other business practices that lessened competition. Furthermore, The Clayton Antitrust Act allowed labor unions to expand and **legalized strikes**. This law greatly expanded the government’s ability to regulate trusts.

Wilson did little to address the **racial problems** of the day. Jim Crow Laws were rampant, as were the disenfranchisement of the blacks and growth of the KKK. He basically considered this as well as child labor, a state issue. He believed in **segregation,** and even segregated the Federal government.

**Women’s Suffrage:**

Before the Civil War, women were very active in the **abolitionist** movement to end slavery. They considered the struggle of African Americans to gain freedom and rights much like their own. In 1848, **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** organized the first Women’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, NY. Their goals were for women to have **equal rights in education, voting, and ownership of property**. Women were disappointed when the **15th Amendment** was passed, as it only gave **African Americans** the right to vote.

As the turn of the century approached, writers like **Charlotte Perkins Gilman** wrote stories that portrayed women working outside the home instead of always cooking and cleaning. Many women were seeking **higher education, and finding jobs** as teachers, nurses, store clerks, secretaries, and even in factories.

**Susan B. Anthony** was a leader in the struggle for women attaining the right to vote. She argued that the **14th Amendment’s equal protection under the law clause** applied to women just as it did African Americans. After a great deal of work from the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), the **19th Amendment** was finally ratified in 1920, **granting women the right to vote.**

**Imperialism**

Americans had always sought to expand the size of their nation. In the early 1800’s, a philosophy of **Manifest Destiny** overtook the country. This was the belief that it was the **divine right of America to expand from the Atlantic to the Pacific**. Once this goal was achieved, America sought to expand further.

By the late 1800’s, many American leaders hoped to join the ranks alongside the imperialist powers of Europe and **establish colonies overseas**. So the new talk of the town was **imperialism: the policy by which stronger nations extend their economic, political, or military control over weaker nations.** European nations had been establishing colonies for years. Many were in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Many Americans thought expanding our power **would help our economy**. There was also a belief that **American culture was far superior** to that of other cultures, and that our way of life needed to be spread around the world.

Characteristics of American Imperialism:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Economic | Military | Cultural |
| **1. Maintain Industrial Prosperity** | **1. Show foreign powers the strength of U.S. power** | **1. Belief in cultural superiority over all industrialized nations** |
| **2. Acquire raw materials from new markets** | **2. Build Strong U.S. navy to protect shipping routes** | **2. Belief in cultural inferiority of non-industrial societies** |
| **3. Few new markets for sale of American goods** | **3. Establish U.S. military bases overseas** | **3. Belief in need to spread democracy and Christianity.** |

**American Annexations:**

Alaska: In 1867, **William Seward** arranged for the purchase of Alaska from **Russia** for $7.2 million. It was officially annexed into the United States in 1884. Alaska is known for its **timber, minerals, natural beauty, and oil.**

Hawaii: In the early 1800’s **missionaries** came to Hawaii to try to convert the natives to Christianity. Their descendants became wealthy **sugar plantation owners** that dominated Hawaii’s economy. When **Queen Liliuokalani** tried to diminish the influence of planters, they revolted**. U.S. Marines helped t**hem overthrow the queen and set up their own government. The planters asked to be annexed into the United States, but it did not happen until 1898.

The U.S. also saw the **military value** of the Hawaiian Islands. They pressured the Hawaiian government to allow them to build a military base at **Pearl Harbor**, Hawaii’s best port. They eventually succeeded, and Hawaii became an important **coal re-fueling station for U.S. military ships bound for Asia**.

**Spanish American War:**

While Spain had a great colonial empire once upon a time, by the end of the 1800’s it’s few remaining colonies were seeking **independence.**

Cuba: Cubans were revolting against Spain because of **poor economic conditions**. Spain dealt with dissenters harshly, putting them in guarded prison camps where they often starved to death. Two New York Newspapers, competing for readers, used **a sensational style of writing known as Yellow Journalism** to exaggerate how cruel the Spanish were with their punishments.

**McKinley** did not want war, but American **public opinion** stirred up by Yellow Journalism, forced him to take action. He ordered Spain to stop treating Cubans so harshly.

Then, riots broke out in Cuba. Due to Cuba’s close proximity to the southern part of the United States, McKinley sent **the U.S.S. Maine** to Havana as a hedge of protection. A few weeks later, the Maine **inexplicably exploded and sank, killing all men on board**. No one knows what caused the explosion, but Americans came to **blame Spain**.

McKinley then called for **Cuba’s independence and for a withdrawal of Spanish forces**. Spain broke off diplomatic ties with the United States.

The Spanish American War of 1898 was fought for Cuban freedom, but it also granted independence to the Philippines. In April of 1898, American commodore **George Dewey** defeated a Spanish fleet at **Manila**. A few months later, Filipino rebels and Dewey overtook Manila. Dewey became a national hero, both in the Philippines and in America. Dewey’s work showcased **the strength of our navy** and influenced McKinley to bring the Philippines under U.S. control. Dewey even ran for President in 1900, but several political missteps made winning an impossibility for him.

After the Victory at Manila Bay, America turned its attention to Cuba once again. Several volunteer soldiers, including **Theodore Roosevelt and the Rough Riders**, went to Santiago to gain control of their port. To do this, American troops had to capture **San Juan Hill**. Once they captured the hill, American ships destroyed the Spanish fleet as they tried to escape.

A week after securing Cuba, the U.S. took over Puerto Rico. Spain, clearly defeated, signed the **Treaty of Paris** ending the war. In the treaty, they gave Cuba their independence, and gave control of several of their territories: Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines, to the United States. **While Cuba was independent, the U.S. still had military control of the country.** The **Platt Amendment** was added to the Cuban constitution, stating **that the United States had the right to intervene in Cuban affairs anytime there was a threat to life property and individual liberty.** It also allowed the U.S. to build a **naval base on Guantanamo Bay.**

With the War over, and Cuba squared away, the United States had to decide what to do with its other colonies. The **Filipino people** were hoping for **independence** and **revolted** when the U.S. decided the Philippines would become an American colony. The revolt was not successfully squashed until 1902. With the Philippines firmly in its grasp, the United States looked forward to using that territory as **a springboard to spread democracy.** They saw a great deal of promise in Asian markets and resources.

Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory. The U.S. set up a government and appointed officials, leaving Puerto Ricans **little say in their governance**. In 1917 the U.S. agrees to allow Puerto Rico to be **self governed**, and grants citizenship to all Puerto Ricans.

While many were for the imperialist cause, some were disgusted by how America dealt with Spain’s former colonies. Prominent people such as Andrew Carnegie, Jane Addams, Mark Twain, and former President Grover Cleveland formed the **Anti-Imperialist League** which believed that **America had no right to deny others the opportunity to govern themselves.**

*Let’s review:*

**Causes of the Spanish American War:**

1. The battleship **U.S.S. Maine** in Cuba’s Havana Harbor mysteriously **exploded and sank** on February 15, 1898.
2. Many Americans thought the United States should help the Cuban rebels gain independence from Spain.
3. Other Americans wanted Spain out of Cuba so that the United States could control the island and protect U.S. business interests there.
4. **American newspapers stirred people up** by printing sensational stories.

Results of the Spanish-American War

1. **Cuba got limited independence from Spain**
2. The United States gained an empire of Spain’s old possessions: **Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines**.
3. The United States paid Spain $20 million for the Philippines.
4. **Theodore Roosevelt became a national hero** for his work in the battle of San Juan Hill. President McKinley chose him to be his Vice Presidential running mate in the 1900 Presidential Election
5. The U.S. victory **demonstrated the growing importance of the United States as a leader in international affairs.**

**Asia and Latin America:**

Beyond gaining territories, America also wanted to make gains in their **sphere of influence**: **places where they claimed special rights and economic privileges**.

First, in the 1850’s Commodore Perry went to **Japan** and opened up a trade agreement with them. This is the **first time in 200 years** that Japan was open to foreign trade. This trade alliance allowed for the **spread of Western culture** and an increase in our sphere of influence.

In China, there were several nations staking claims to land and resources. Of course the United States wanted to get involved, but also showed concerns about the European fighting over China. In 1899, Secretary of State John Hay suggested all nations involved follow **an Open Door Policy. This stated that no single country should have a monopoly on trade with China.** This was acceptable to most countries involved.

Many Chinese people, however, were not overly pleased with the international presence. A group called the Boxers formed an uprising in 1900 known as the **Boxer Rebellion.** Eight nations, including the United States, put together an **international force** to put down the revolt.

Since the Pacific was becoming more and more vital to America’s success, we needed to develop a **trade route that would make shipping easier**. Specifically, we wanted a **canal** **built to connect the Atlantic and Pacific** Oceans so that U.S. ships would not have to travel around the coast Of South America to get from one ocean to the other.

The most logical spot for the canal was in the **Isthmus of Panama**; however, this land was controlled by **Columbia**, who was unwilling to give up control of the land. Undeterred, Roosevelt helped the native Panamanians launch a successful **revolt against Columbia** in 1903. Once Panama gained independence, they granted the United States the right to a ten mile strip of land known as **the Canal Zone**. Many thought the United States cheated Columbia out of its land. In 1921, we finally paid Columbia $25 million for the loss of Panama.

Building the Panama Canal was a huge undertaking that took years to complete and cost $380 million. The Canal Zone was full of **mosquitoes that carried malaria and yellow fever**. Nearly 5,500 men died from disease while building the canal. The canal finally **opened in 1914.**

The U.S. also had interests in several other Latin American countries. They made trade deals to buy Latin American products, such as bananas, for cheap prices, and up sell them at home.

To protect their business and economic investments from European imperialists, Roosevelt reminded Europe of the **Monroe Doctrine, a document saying that Europe was not to have colonial interests in the Western Hemisphere.** Furthermore, he added the **Roosevelt Corollary, giving the United States police power over Latin America**. It not only threatened military action if Europe intervened, it also **promised to ensure political and economic stability** within the region. This police power had to be used several times. Multiple Presidents sent troops to a variety of nations to quell uprisings. The American public didn’t question government decisions when it came to Latin America, however, the **Latin Americans developed a view of mistrust** and distaste for the United States for continually meddling in its affairs.