
Progressive Era Ideals

Unit 3

Standards:

US 08 Explain the concepts of social Darwinism and the Social Gospel.

US 11 Explain the rise of the labor movement, union tactics (e.g., strikes), the role of leaders (e.g., Eugene Debs and Samuel Gompers), the unjust use of prison labor (e.g., Coal Creek labor saga), and the responses of management and government.

US 13 Describe working conditions in industries during this era, including the use of labor by women and children.

Progressivism

- Political, social, and economic movement in reaction to lack of regulation in government, society, and economy
- Response to laissez-faire economics
- Most followers believed government needed to play larger role in society's problems

Social Darwinism

- **Social Darwinism:** asserting that humans have developed through competition and natural selection with only the strongest surviving
- This ideology became popular thanks to the efforts of philosopher Herbert Spencer and others, using it to justify capitalism and other concepts.

The Beginning of the Social Gospel

- Others, such as Henry Ward Beecher, opposed Social Darwinism
- Andrew Carnegie advocated the implementation of philanthropy in American life to help the less fortunate.
- Naturalist writers, such as Upton Sinclair, challenged the idea that people were Poor through their own faults.
- The Social Gospel movement began in response to Social Darwinism, seeking to help the poor through services and aid.

The Social Gospel Movement

- Salvation Army, YMCA, the settlement house movement, and other social programs were a major part of the Social Gospel movement, with figures such as Jane Addams, Lillian Wald, Walter Rauschenbusch, and Washington Gladden becoming major parts of the movement.
- One notable reformer that was outside of both main movements was D.L. Moody, who argued salvation of the poor came not from providing services, but reforming their character & redeeming their souls

The Rise of the Labor Movement

- The labor movement in the United States grew out of the need to protect the common interest of workers
- Life for workers in the U.S. prior to the 20th century was difficult, with poor conditions and frequent illnesses & injuries.
- Industrialism led to a higher standard of living, with worker wages rising 50% between 1860 & 1890

The Formation of Unions

- Many workers felt they needed safer conditions, better benefits, and more pay, especially after **deflation** when the value of money went up while prices and wages went down
- In order to achieve this, workers felt they needed unions to help bargain for their conditions.

Early Unions

- In 19th century U.S., there were 2 types of workers: **craft workers** & **common laborers**.
- Craft workers, such as iron workers, Shoemakers, & machinists, had more specialized skills & training, and received better pay with more control over their time.
- Common laborers had few skills & received lower wages.
- By 1873, there were 30 national trade unions in the U.S.

Women in Labor

- During the rise of the unions, most unions barred women
- Women made some strides with the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) forming in 1900 & the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) forming in 1903.

Opposition to Unions

- While employers found it necessary to negotiate with unions, they fundamentally opposed unions, claiming unions interfered with property rights
- Many owners claimed unions were un-American, as many labor leaders supported the works of Karl Marx.
 - Marx was a proponent of communism, which called for an end to social classes and an equal distribution of wealth.
- In addition, some supported **anarchism**, which is opposition to all government.

Stopping Unions

- Employers used several tactics to stop workers from unionizing.
 - They required workers to sign contracts promising not to join or form unions
 - hired detectives to identify union leaders
 - placed union members on a “Blacklist”
 - used **lockouts** (locking out union workers from their jobs) to break existing unions.

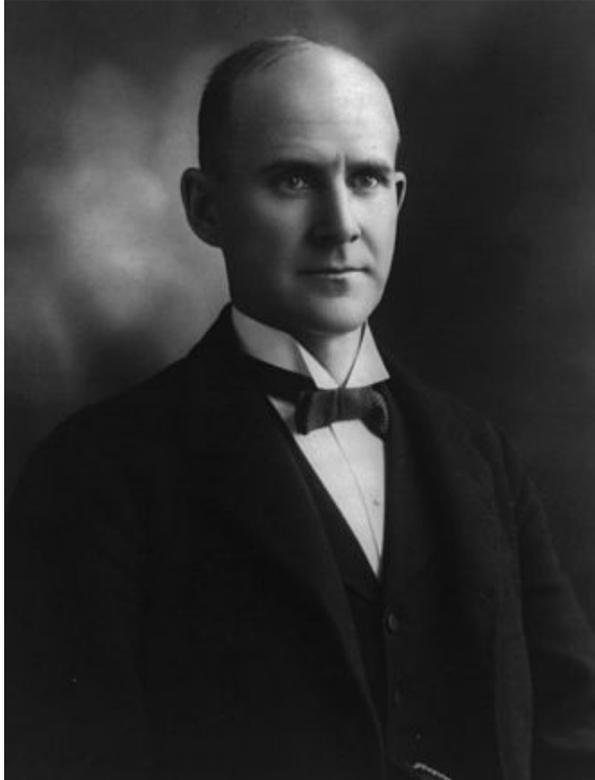
Union Leaders

Samuel Gompers

- Worked in a cigar factory, joined the Cigar Maker's Union and rose to become its president
- 1886- gathered together a wide range of unions to form the **American Federation of Labor**
- Advocated "Pure and Simple Unionism" meaning that unions would avoid forming a political party in order to preserve the unity of the labor movement
- By 1903, the American Federation of Labor represented more than one and a half million union members



Eugene Debs



- Leader of the **Socialist Party of America**
 - The Socialist Party of America split off of the American Federation of Labor
- Five times the candidate of the Socialist Party of America for President of the United States
- Opposed corporations
- Wanted to have the average working man build socialism without large state involvement.