

The Progressive Era



★ You Decide: Washington or Du Bois?

During the early Progressive Era, two African American leaders dominated the debate over the best course for racial advancement in America, Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois.

Who had the better vision for improving the conditions of African Americans in the early 1900s.



Booker T. Washington or W. E. B. Du Bois?

The progressive movement attracted middle-class city dwellers, who included writers, teachers & scholars. **They sought to cure the social problems caused by industrialization.** There were many progressive reform movements called **SOCIAL REFORM** & they all had at least one of these four goals:

Protect social Welfare

Promote Moral Improvement

Create Economic Reform

Foster Efficiency



The Progressive Movement had 3 goals : 1. Aimed to return control of the government to the people. 2. Restore economic opportunities. 3. Correct injustices in American Life



At the dawn of the new century, middle-class reformers addressed many of the problems that had contributed to the social upheavals of the 1890's. Journalists & writers known as **Muckrakers** exposed the unsafe conditions that factory workers, including women & children, often faced. They also began publishing investigations of business abuses & the miseries of slum life. Intellectuals questioned the dominant role of large corporations in American society. Political reformers struggled to make government more responsive to the people.

The term Muckraker was coined by President Theodore Roosevelt, which comes from the English author John Bunyan's famous 17th century religious allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which features a character too busy raking up the muck to see a heavenly crown held over him. The originally negative term soon was applied to many writers whose reform efforts Roosevelt himself supported. The muckraking movement spilled over from journalism into fiction, particularly among novelists, who worked as journalists.

In 1904, Fred Warren, editor of the socialist journal, *Appeal to Reason*, commissioned Upton Sinclair to write a novel about immigrant workers in the Chicago meat packing houses, which were renowned for their abuse of their workers, as well as the animals. After researching the subject for 7 weeks, Sinclair wrote the novel, *The Jungle*. The book won Sinclair fame and fortune. One of the book's more prominent supporters was president Theodore Roosevelt, who read *The Jungle* and ordered an investigation of the meat-packing industry.



Upton Sinclair

“There would be meat that had tumbled out on the floor, in the dirt & sawdust, where the workers had tramped & spit uncounted billions of consumption (tuberculosis) germs. There would be meat stored in great piles in rooms;...& thousands of rats would race about on it... A man could run his hand over these piles of meat & sweep off handfuls of the dried dung of rats. These rats were nuisances & the packers would put poisoned bread out for them; they would die & then rats, bread, & meat would go into the hoppers together...There were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit.”

What shocked readers in Sinclair's book was the sickening conditions in the meatpacking industry. The Author admitted that the public's reaction to his book had surprised him. *"I aimed at the nation's heart, but by accident, I hit it in the stomach."* Sinclair's graphic descriptions of the filthy conditions turned the stomachs of the nation and the world.

The book, sold 25,000 copies in one week alone. Like many other readers, President Theodore Roosevelt lost his taste for meat, reportedly crying, "I'm poisoned," after reading the book. The nauseated president invited the author to visit him at the White House. Roosevelt appointed a commission of experts to investigate the meatpacking industry. The commission issued a report that backed up Sinclair's description "potted ham" as a hash whose disgusting ingredients included ground rope and pigskin.

In 1906, Roosevelt pushed for the passage of the MEAT INSPECTION ACT, which dictated strict cleanliness requirements for meatpackers and created the program of federal meat inspection that was in use until it was replaced with more sophisticated techniques in the 1990's.

Also in 1906, Congress passed the Pure Food and Drug Act, which halted the sale of contaminated foods and medicines and called for truth in labeling.

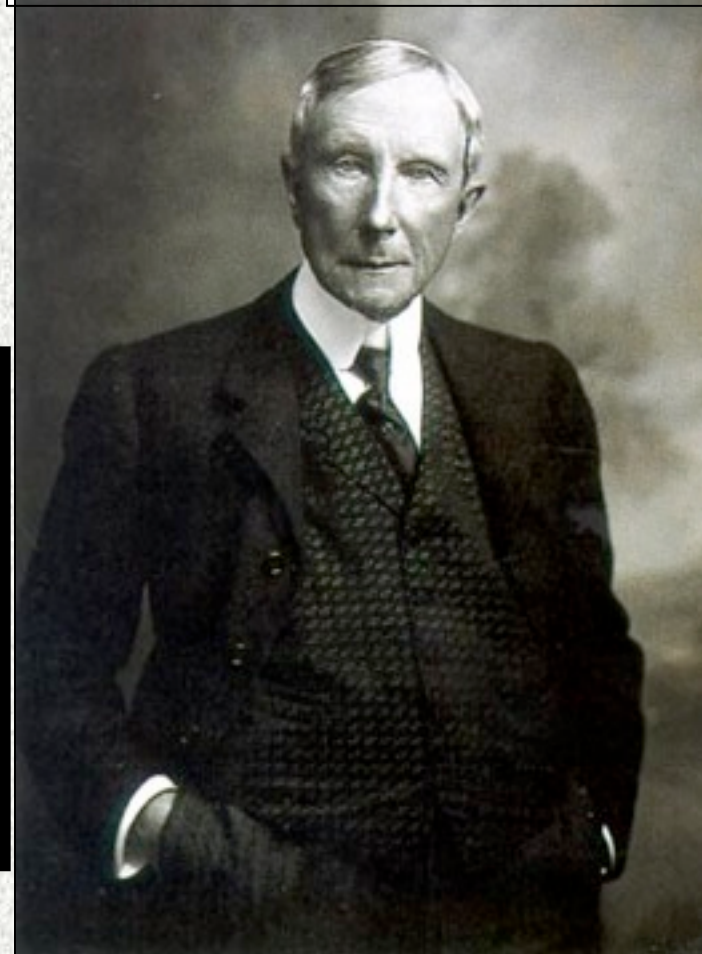
Before passage of the Pure Food & Drug Act, manufactures had advertised that their products accomplished everything from curing cancer to growing hair. In addition, popular children's medicines often contained opium, cocaine or alcohol.



IDA M. TARBELL.

Ida M. Tarbell's *The History of the Standard Oil Company* exposed the ruthlessness with which John D Rockefeller had turned his oil business into an all-powerful monopoly.

John D. Rockefeller



In her book, Tarbell describes how Standard Oil forced their competitor's to sell their business to Rockefeller or be simply drove out of business. Rockefeller would have prices lowered to drive competitors out of the market & then took advantage of the lack of competition to jack prices up even higher.

The Social Gospel Movement

The Social Gospel Movement was based on the belief that Christians should support social reform to alleviate poverty, slums, & labor exploitation.

The movement climaxed in 1908 in the formation of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. The council, representing 33 religious groups, adopted a program that endorsed welfare & regulatory legislation to achieve social justice. By linking reform with religion, the movement gave progressivism a powerful moral drive that affected much of American Life.

The Social Gospel movement provided an ethical justification for government intervention to improve the social order.

Labor's Demand for rights:

Industrial workers with different objectives also hastened the ferment of reform.

Workers resisted the new rules of efficiency experts & called for improved wages & working conditions & reduced work hours. They & their middle-class sympathizers sought to achieve some of these goals through state intervention, demanding laws to compensated workers injured on the job, curb child labor & regulate the employment of women.

Workers organized unions to improve their working conditions. Unions such as the AFL (American Federation of Labor, which had 4 million members by 1920, but it recruited mainly white, male, skilled workers.

Other unions organized the factories & sweatshops where most immigrants & women worked. For example, the “uprising of the 20,000”, a 1909 strike in NYC, which included months of rallies, picketing & police repression.

And there was the “Wobblies” - a union founded in 1905 as the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), who tried to organize miners, lumberjacks, Mexican & Japanese farm workers in the West, Black dockworkers in the South and immigrant factory hands in New England. They used sit-down strikes, sit-ins & mass rallies. “Respectable people” considered the Wobblies violent revolutionaries, but most of the violence was committed against them.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton &
Susan B. Anthony



Women Reformers & their organizations played a key role in progressivism. By the early 20th century, more women than before were working outside the home in factories, mills & sweatshops. They were also working as clerks in stores & offices.

Their importance in the work force & participation in unions & strikes challenged assumptions that woman's natural role was to be a submissive housewife.

In 1896, Black women founded the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) by merging two earlier organizations. The NACW managed nurseries, reading rooms and kindergartens.

Women in Public Life

By the late 19th century, only upper-class & middle-class women could afford to concentrate on home life. Poorer women usually had no choice but to work in order to contribute to the family income.



Two ways that women were involved in public life:

- **Women in the Work Force**
- **Women's Leadership in Reform**

Women also joined or created other organizations that pushed beyond the limits of traditional domesticity.

Organizations such as The National Congress of Mothers, organized in 1897, worried about crime & disease & championed kindergartens, foster-home programs, juvenile courts and compulsory school attendance.

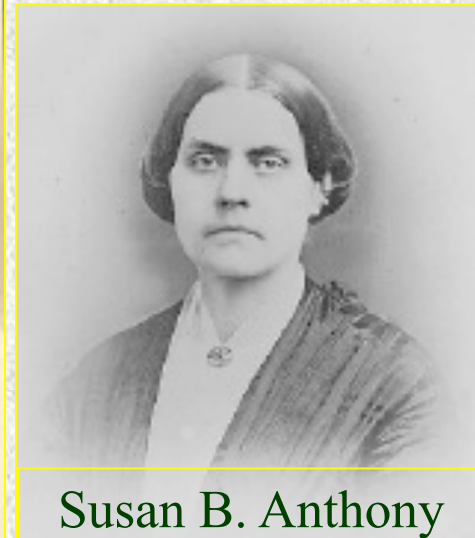
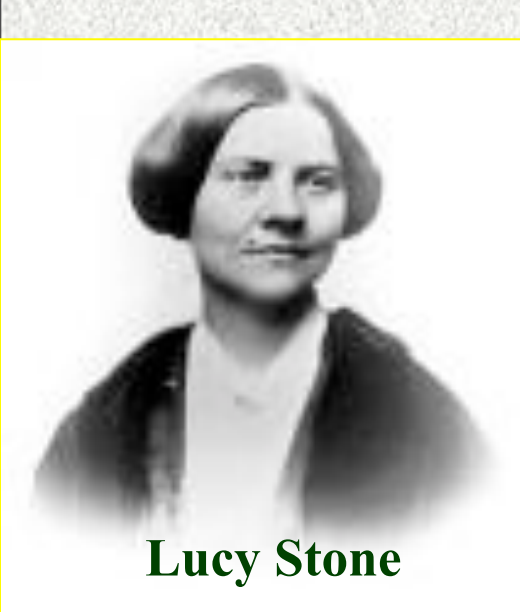
The Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) – organized to unionize women workers & eliminate sweatshop conditions.

The garment workers strike of 1909, also called the “mink brigade”, which assisted strikers with relief funds, bail money, food supplies & public relations campaign.

Woman Suffrage – In 1910, Washington became the first state to approve woman suffrage since the mid-1890's, followed by California in 1911 & Arizona, Kansas, & Oregon in 1912. Suffragists also mounted national action, such as the dramatic inaugural parade in March 1913.

Prominent leaders of the suffrage crusade included Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, and Julia Ward Howe.

In the 1872 elections, Susan B. Anthony along with her 3 sister and several other women illegally voted in the presidential election. At her trial, she was fined \$100. The defiant Anthony declared, “Not a penny shall go to this unjust claim.” The judge didn’t press the issue and the case was closed.



Three-Part Strategy for Suffrage:

The leaders of the suffrage movement tried three different approaches to achieve their objective.

First: They tried to convince state legislators to grant women the right to vote. They achieved a victory when the territory of Wyoming granted the vote to women. By the 1890's Utah, Colorado & Idaho did the same, but after 1896, efforts in other states failed.

Second: Women pursued court cases to test the 14th amendment. Weren't women citizens also? In 1871 & 1872, Anthony & other women attempted to get the Supreme Court to answer that question by making at least 150 attempts to vote in 10 states. When the Supreme Court ruled in 1875 on the relationship between the 14th amendment & women's suffrage, the justices agreed that women were indeed citizens – but citizenship did not automatically confer the right to vote.

Third: women pushed for a national constitutional amendment that would grant women the vote. Anthony persuaded Senator Aaron Sargent of California to introduce an amendment that read, “the right of citizens of the U.S. to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the U.S. or by any state on account of sex.” The amendment was killed by the senate, but women activists lobbied for the next 18 years to have it reintroduced.



By 1919, 39 states had established full or partial woman suffrage & Congress finally approved an amendment. Ratified by the states in 1920, the 19th Amendment marked a critical advance in political democracy.

Sixty-sixth Congress of the United States of America;

At the First Session,

Began and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the nineteenth day of May,
one thousand nine hundred and nineteen.

JOINT RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution extending the right of suffrage
to women.

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States
of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein),
That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution,
which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when
ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States.*

"ARTICLE ———."

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or
abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

"Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate
legislation."

F. H. Gillett

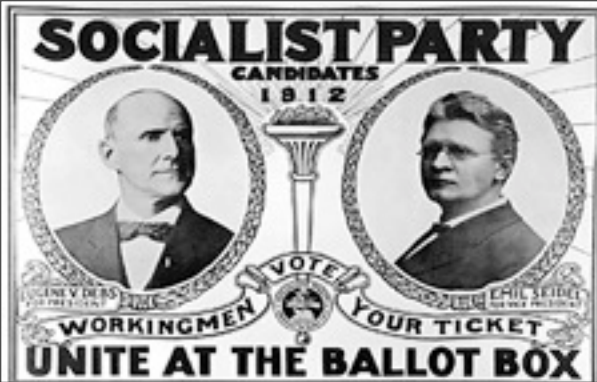
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Thos. R. Marshall

Vice President of the United States and

President of the Senate.

For 72 years, from 1848 -1920, generations of women - from every state and every party, of every race and every religion - fought for the right to vote. The 19th Amendment was introduced in Congress 42 years before the House and Senate could muster the 2/3 majority to pass it.



Cleaning Up Government

In many large cities, political bosses rewarded their supporters with jobs & kickbacks & openly bought votes with favors & bribes.

Efforts to reform city politics stemmed in part from:

- The desire to make government more efficient & responsive to its constituents
- Distrust of immigrants' participation in politics

Reform Local Government

3 GOALS:

Reform State Government

Reform Elections

Socialism

Democratic socialists believes that the individuality of each human being can only be developed in a society embodying the values of liberty, equality, and solidarity. These beliefs do not entail a crude conception of equality that conceives of human beings as equal in all respects. Rather, if human beings are to develop their distinct capacities they must be accorded equal respect and opportunities denied them by the inequalities of a capitalist society, in which the life opportunities of a child born in the inner city are starkly less than that of a child born in an affluent suburb. A democratic community committed to the equal moral worth of each citizen will socially provide the cultural and economic necessities for the development of human individuality (decent education, healthcare, childcare, and so on).

Socialism is the collective ownership by all the people of the factories, mills, mines, railroads, land and all other instruments of production.

Socialism means production to satisfy human needs, not as under capitalism, for sale and profit.

Socialism means direct control and management of the industries and social services by the workers through a democratic government based on their nationwide economic organization.

Under socialism, all authority will originate from the workers, integrally united in Socialist Industrial Unions. In each workplace, the rank and file will elect whatever committees or representatives are needed to facilitate production. Within each shop or office division of a plant, the rank and file will participate directly in formulating and implementing all plans necessary for efficient operations.

For individuals, socialism means an end to economic insecurity and exploitation. It means workers cease to be commodities bought and sold on the labor market, and forced to work as appendages to tools owned by someone else. It means a chance to develop all individual capacities and potentials within a free community of free individuals. It means a classless society that guarantees full democratic rights for all workers.

Socialist ideas also promoted the spirit of progressivism. Socialists never attracted a large following, even among workers, but their criticism of the industrial economy gained increasing attention in the early 20th century.

American socialists condemned social & economic inequities, criticized limited government & demanded public ownership of railroads, utilities, and communications. They also campaigned for tax reforms, better housing, factory inspections and recreational facilities for all.



Child Labor- “The maiming & killing of children in industrial accidents made it inevitable that efforts to secure a child labor law should be our first venture into the field of state legislation.”-The National Child Labor Committee organized in 1904



child labor laws

Laws passed over many decades, beginning in the 1830s, by state and federal governments, forbidding the employment of children and young teenagers, except at certain carefully specified jobs. Child labor was regularly condemned in the nineteenth century by reformers and authors (*see David Copperfield and Oliver Twist*), but many businesses insisted that the Constitution protected their liberty to hire workers of any age. In several cases in the early twentieth century, the Supreme Court agreed, declaring federal child labor laws unconstitutional. Eventually, in the late 1930s, the federal Fair Labor Standards Act was upheld by the Court. This law greatly restricts the employment of children under eighteen in manufacturing jobs.

The *National Child Labor Committee*, an organization dedicated to the abolition of all child labor, was formed in 1904. It managed to pass one law, which was struck down by the Supreme Court two years later for violating a child's right to contract his work. In 1924, Congress attempted to pass a **constitutional amendment** that would authorize a national child labor law. This measure was blocked, and the bill was eventually dropped. It took the **Great Depression** to end child labor nationwide; adults had become so desperate for jobs that they would work for the same wage as children. In 1938, President **Franklin D. Roosevelt** signed the **Fair Labor Standards Act** which, amongst other things, placed limits on many forms of child labor.

Teddy Roosevelt's Square Deal



“Speak softly & carry a big stick.”

Roosevelt saw the presidency as a “bully pulpit,” from which he could influence the news media & shape legislation. If big business victimized workers, then President Roosevelt would see to it that the common people received what he called a **Square Deal**. This term was used to describe the various progressive reforms sponsored by the Roosevelt administration.

“It is the duty of the President to act upon the theory that he is the steward of the people, &... to assume that he has the legal right to do whatever the needs of the people demand, unless the Constitution or the laws explicitly forbid him to do it.”

Roosevelt was born in New York into one of the old wealthy Dutch families which had settled in America in the seventeenth century. As a child, he was so frail that he had to sleep propped up in order to breathe, due to his asthma. At 18 he entered Harvard College and spent four years there, dividing his time between books & sport (boxing & wrestling) & excelling at both. After leaving Harvard he studied in Germany for almost a year & then immediately entered politics.



“In life as in a football game, the principle to follow is hit the line hard.”

Roosevelt won public acclaim for his role in the battle at San Juan Hill in Cuba. He returned a hero & soon won election to the governorship of New York & then the vice-presidency. He became president after President McKinley was assassinated in 1901. Making him the youngest person ever to become president at the age of 42.

As president, he soon dominated the news with his many exploits. He boxed with professionals, one whom blinded him in the left eye. He galloped 100 miles on horseback just to prove that the feat could be done. When he spared a bear cub on a hunting expedition, a toymaker marketed a popular new product, The Teddy Bear.



In politics, Roosevelt acted boldly. his leadership & publicity campaigns helped create the modern presidency, making him a model by which all future presidents would be measured. Roosevelt thought the government should assume control whenever states proved incapable of dealing with problems.

President Roosevelt was known as a “Trust Buster”



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A Trust is a form of business merger in which the major stockholder in several corporations turn over their stock to a group of trustees. The trustees then run the separate corporations as one large company, or trust. In return for their stock, the stockholders of the separate corporations receive a share of the trust's profits. By 1900, trusts controlled about 4/5 of the industries in the U.S.

U.S. business leaders of the late 1800's used trusts to stifle competition & take control of particular industries.

In 1890, TRUSTS were outlawed by the Sherman Anti-Trust Act.

In 1902, Roosevelt made newspaper headlines as a “Trust Buster” when he ordered the Justice Department to sue the Northern Securities Company, which had established a monopoly over the Northwest railroads. In 1904, The Supreme Court ordered the dissolution of the Northern Securities Company. Roosevelt also sued the beef trust, the oil trust & the tobacco trust. In all, the Roosevelt administration filed some 44 antitrust suits, which they won a number of and broke up some of the trusts.

Also during the progressive era, many blacks began making progress. Roosevelt, like most other progressives, was no supporter of civil rights for blacks. In 1906, Roosevelt angered many blacks when he dismissed without question an entire regiment of black soldiers accused of rioting in Brownsville, Texas.

As a symbolic gesture, Roosevelt invited the black leader Booker T. Washington to dinner at the White House. At the time no American black enjoyed more respect from powerful whites than Washington, who was head of the Tuskegee Institute – an all black training school.

Washington however faced criticism from W.E.B. Du Bois another prominent American Black who demanded immediate social & economic equality for Black Americans. Du Bois & other advocates of equality for American Blacks were deeply upset by the apparent progressive indifference to racial injustice. In 1909, a number of American Blacks joined with prominent white reformers in New York to found the NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which had about 6,000 members by 1914. The NAACP aimed for full equality among the different ethnic groups. That goal, however, found little support in the progressive movement, which focused on the needs of middle-class whites.

★ You Decide: Washington or Du Bois?

During the early Progressive Era, two African American leaders dominated the debate over the best course for racial advancement in America, Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois.

Who had the better vision for improving the conditions of African Americans in the early 1900s,



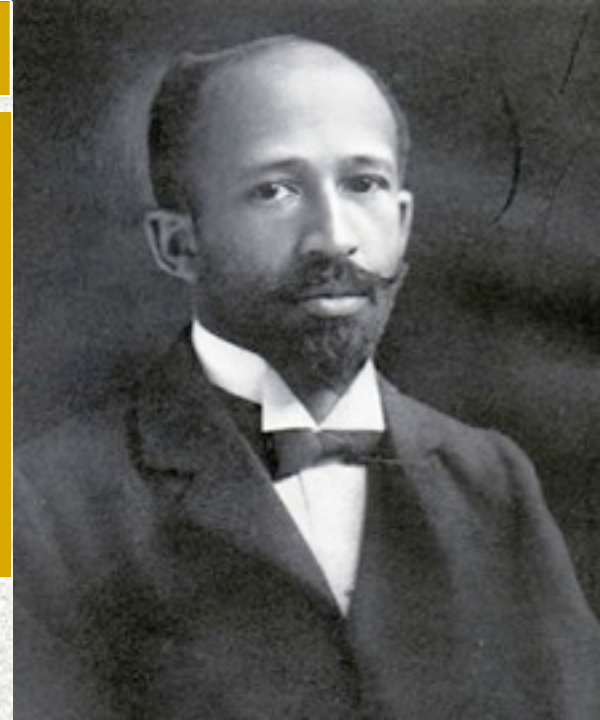
Booker T. Washington or W. E. B. Du Bois?

W.E.B. Du Bois

In 1895, he became the first black to receive doctorate from Harvard. DuBois became arguably the most notable political activist on behalf of African Americans in the first half of the ~~twentieth century~~.

Dubois believed that blacks should seek a liberal arts education so that the black community would have well-educated leaders. Furthermore, he proposed that a group of educated blacks, the most “Talented Tenth” of the black community attempt to achieve immediate ~~inclusion into mainstream American~~

“We are Americans not only by birth & citizenship but by our political ideals...& the greatest of those ideals is that All men





Booker T. Washington

Another prominent black leader. He was born into slavery at the community of Hale's Ford in Franklin County, Virginia. After he and his mother were freed, as a young man he made his way east from West Virginia (where he had obtained work) to obtain schooling at Hampton in eastern Virginia at a school established to train teachers.

In his later years, Dr. Washington became a leading educator and was a prominent and popular spokesperson for African American citizens of the United States in the late 19th and early 20th century. Although labeled by some activists as an "accommodator", his work cooperating with white people and enlisting the support of wealthy philanthropists helped raise funds to establish and operate dozens of small community schools and institutions of higher education for the betterment of black persons throughout the south.

Within the context of the times he did much to improve the friendship and working relationship between the races.

"I will let no man drag me down so low as to make me hate him."

Progressivism Under Taft



As soon as Roosevelt won election in 1904, he pledged not to run for reelection in 1908. Popular enough to designate a successor, Roosevelt hand-picked his secretary of war **William Taft**



6ft, 350lbs



As president, Taft (The Republican President) received little credit for his accomplishments. Like Roosevelt, Taft became a trust buster. Busting 90 trusts in a 4-year term. However, he was not popular.

Taft actually confessed in a letter to Roosevelt that he never felt like the president.

Unlike Roosevelt, Taft did not use the presidential bully pulpit to arouse public

During his campaign for presidency, one of his platforms was to lower tariffs; in particular, on manufactured goods. But once in office, he signed the Payne-Aldrich Tariff, which was a set of tax regulations that FAILED to significantly reduce the tariff's on manufactured goods.

Next, Taft angered conservationists by appointing Richard Ballinger as his secretary of the interior. Ballinger was a wealthy lawyer from Seattle who disapproved of conservationist of western lands.

Ballinger removed 1 million acres of forest & mining lands from the reserved list & approved the sale to Seattle businesses of several million acres of coal-rich land in Alaska. These businesses then sold their holding to a group of New York bankers.

Historically, conservationists have stood for the balanced use of natural resources,

Ballinger pressed for the private development of wilderness areas, where preservationists such as John Muir advocated preserving all remaining wilderness.



Richard Ballinger

After Taft's election in 1904, Roosevelt left the country. When he returned in 1910 he was received with a rousing welcome. He responded by giving a speech & declaring that the country needed a "New Nationalism," under which the federal government would exert its power for "The welfare of the people."

2 years later, in 1912, Roosevelt decides to run for a 3rd term as president, but Taft had the advantage of being the incumbent – the holder of office.

At the Republican convention in June, 1912, Taft's supporters refused to seat Roosevelt delegates (a person acting for another as a representative) & re-nominated Taft on the first ballot.

Roosevelt's supporters stormed out & held their own convention 2 months later in August, where they formed a new third party, **THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY**, & they nominated Roosevelt for president. Where he proclaimed that it was a battle between good & evil. "We battle for the Lord."

The Progressive Party became known as the Bull Moose Party, after Roosevelt boasted that he was "as strong as a bull moose."

The Bull Moose Party advocated:

- Woman suffrage
- National workman's compensation
- An 8 hour workday
- A minimum wage for women
- A federal law against child labor
- Federal trade commission to regulate business

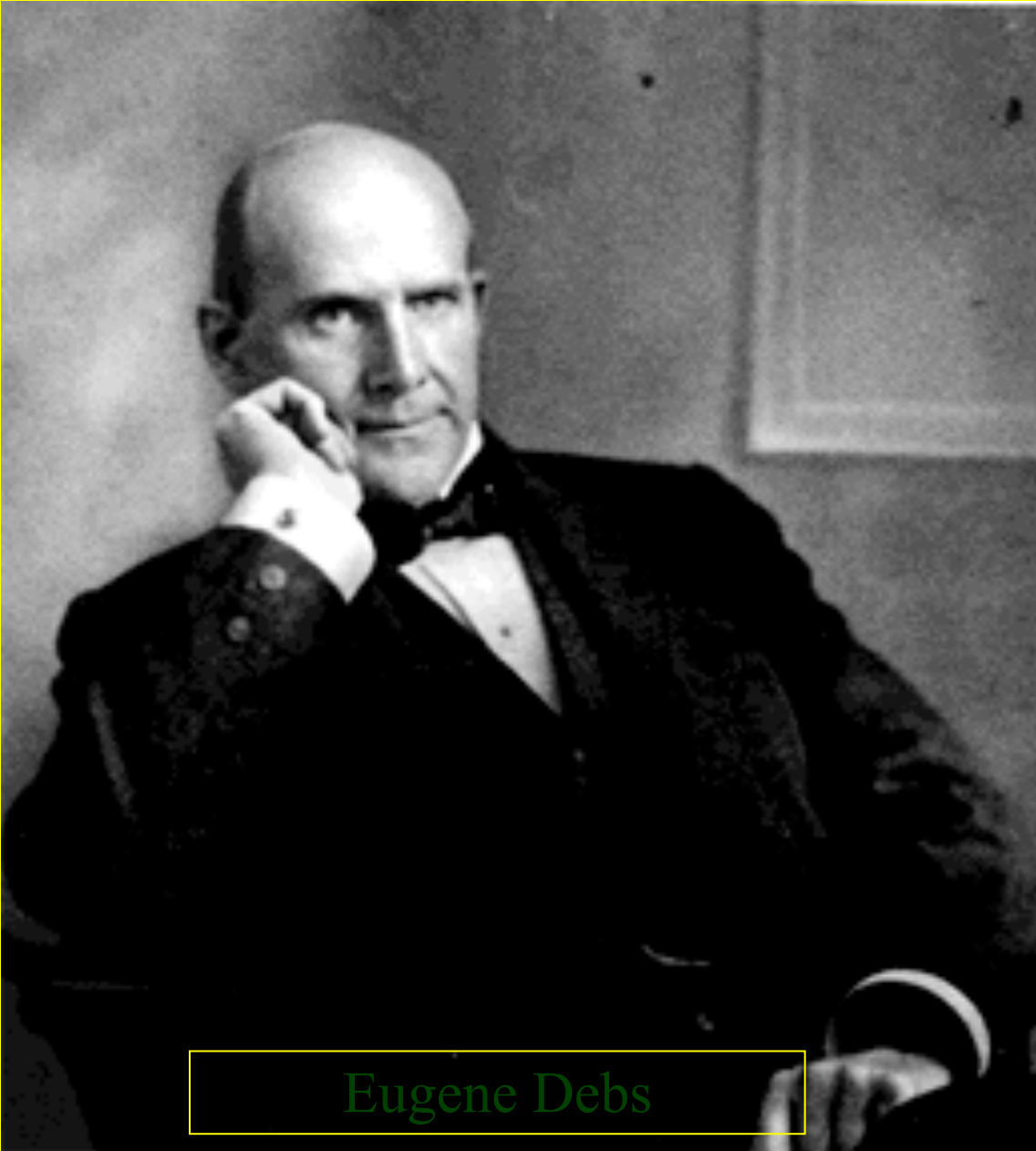


The split in the Republican ranks between the Bull Moose Party & Taft's conservative Republicans gave the Democrats a chance at the White House. Their Candidate was Woodrow Wilson



As the Democratic presidential nominee, Wilson endorsed a progressive platform, called the New Freedom that demanded even stronger antitrust legislation, banking reform & reduced tariffs.

While Taft & Roosevelt turned nasty against each other, Wilson stayed above the feud. Gloating, "Don't interfere when your enemy is destroying himself."



Eugene Debs

Debs called for an end to capitalism. He wanted to use the government not only to regulate business & bust trusts, but also to distribute national wealth more equally among the people.

The Election offered voters several choices:

Wilson-Democrat

Wilson supported a stronger Gvmt. role in economic affairs. He supported small business & free-market competition, & characterized all business monopolies as evil.

Taft-Republican

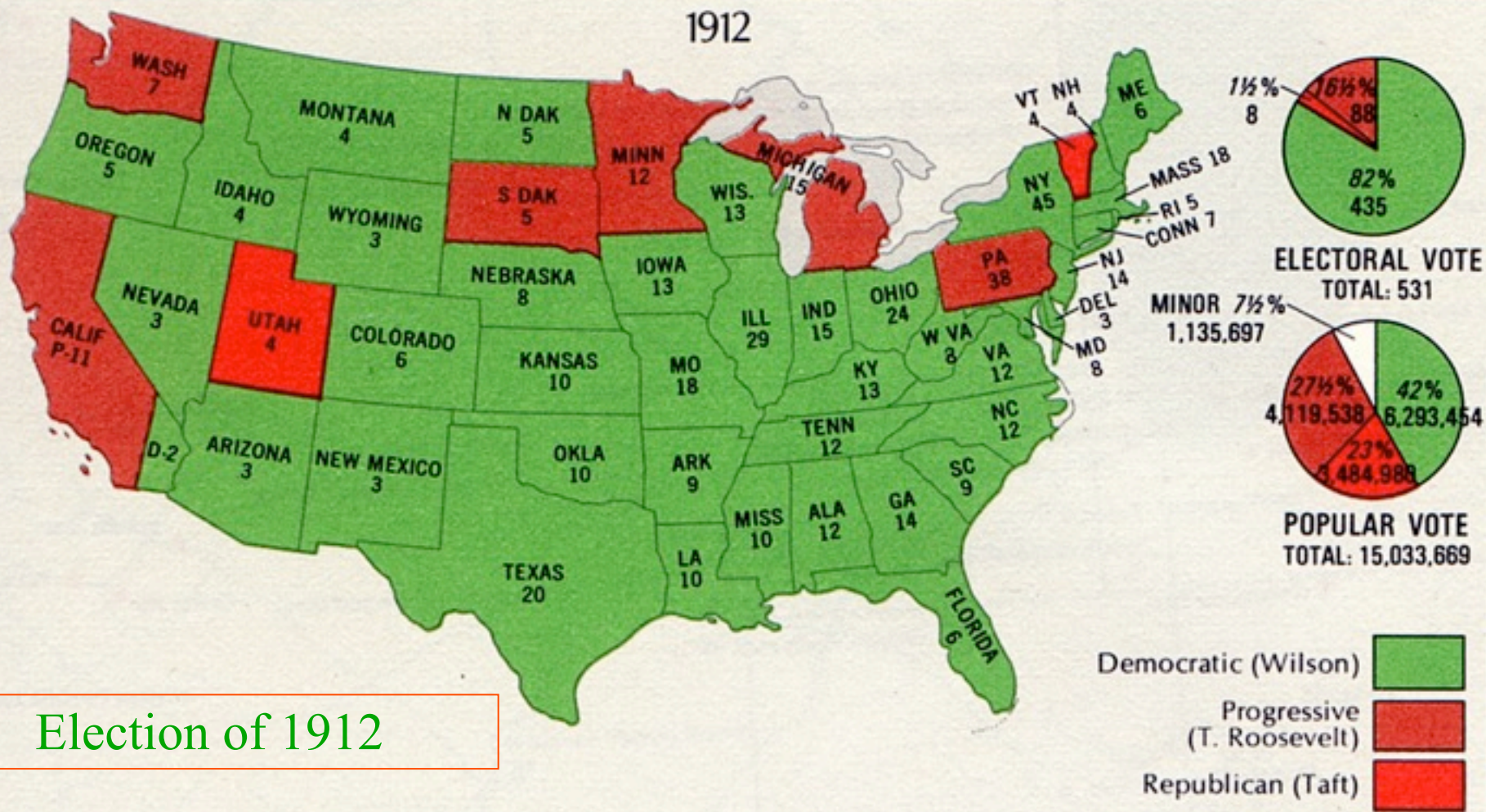
Taft's administration was conservative.

Roosevelt-Progressive

Supported a stronger Gvmt. Role in economic affairs. He supported government action to supervise big business but did not oppose all business monopolies.

Debs-Socialist

Called for an end to capitalism. He wanted to use the government not only to regulate business & bust trusts, but also to distribute national wealth more equally among the people.



Democratic- Wilson received 435 Electoral Votes, 6,296,547 pop. votes

Progressive- Roosevelt – 88 Electoral Votes, 4,118,571 pop. votes

Republican- Taft – 8 Electoral Votes, 3,486,720 pop. votes

Socialist- Debs – 0 Electoral Votes, 900,672 pop. votes.