

- AMH 2010 & AMH 2020: AMERICAN HISTORY
- DR. ANDREW GOTTLIEB

7 – THE PROGRESSIVE ERA



Miami Dade
College

West Campus



Lecture 7: The Progressive Era



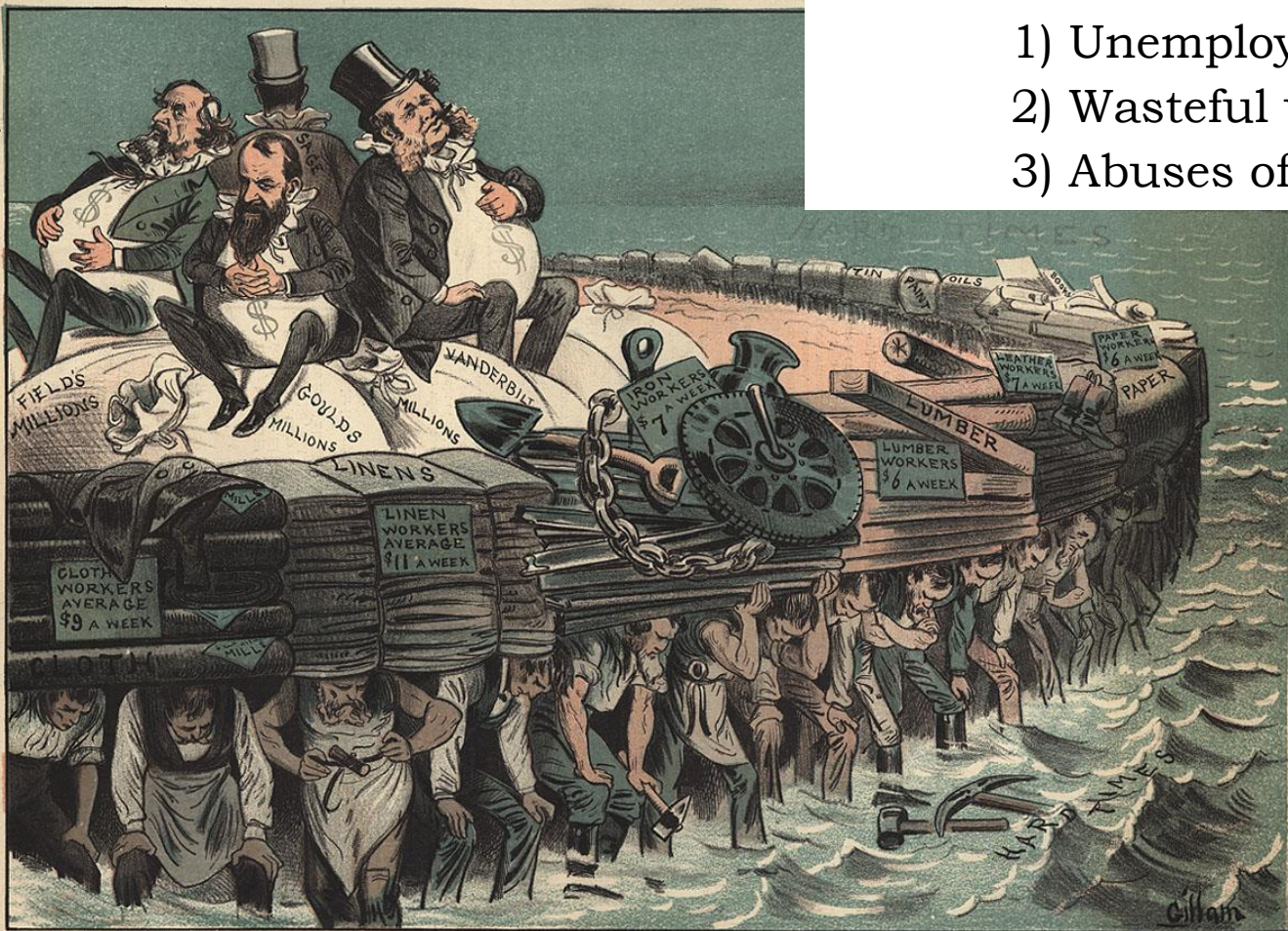
Xtimeline.com

Theodore Roosevelt: Champion of Progressive Reform

I. Sources of Progressive Reform

A. Industrialization, with its increase in productivity and the number of consumer goods, created:

- 1) Unemployment and labor unrest
- 2) Wasteful use of natural resources
- 3) Abuses of corporate power



THE PROTECTORS OF OUR INDUSTRIES.

B. Growing cities magnified problems of poverty, disease, crime, and corruption



C. The Influx of immigrants and rise of new managerial class upset traditional class alignment and Victorian tradition.



Coney Island was one of the few places middle class New Yorkers could go to feel sexually free and loose—by the standards of the time, that is. Compared to what people generally wore in the summer, those bathing-suit-and-bloomers combos were pretty revealing.

Single men and women met up and flirted on the boardwalk and beach, breaking free from rigid Victorian-era dating codes.

The rides at the great amusement parks afforded a couple privacy and intimacy. They were kind of the hook-up spots of turn-of-the-century New York City.

“Various amusements contrived to lift women’s skirts, revealing their legs and underclothing. Numerous others provided opportunities for intimate physical contact.”
from *Amusing the Millions: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century*, John F. Kasson.

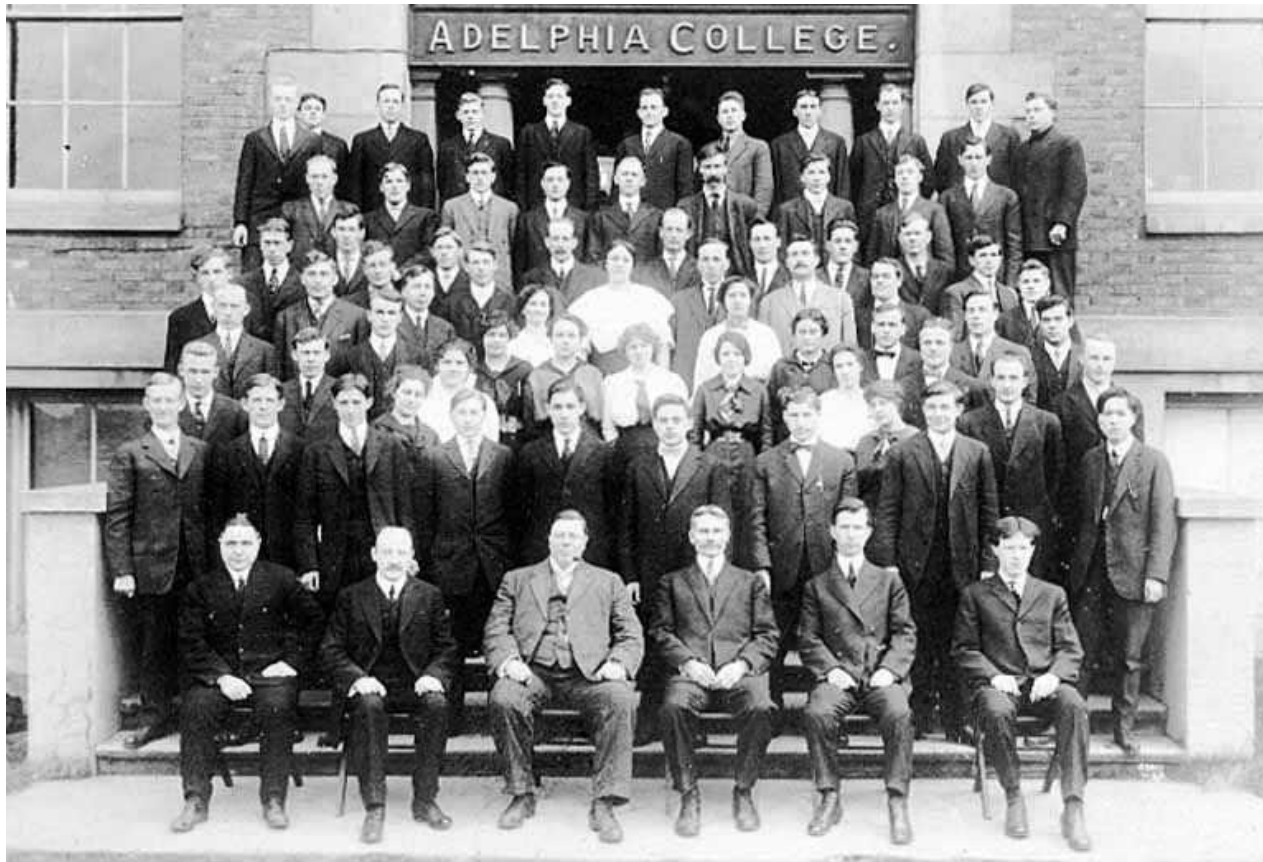
D. Massive depression (1893-1897) convinced many that equal opportunity was out of reach for many Americans. [Below: Aschcan school precursor Frank Bramley: *Hopeless Dawn* (1888)]



II. Who Were the Progressives?

A. New middle class composed of young professionals

1. Sought to apply principles of professions (medicine, law, business, teaching) to problems of society. In this aspect, we differ greatly from Europe. Their study of sociology is *descriptive*, while progressive principles in the U.S. lead to the American sociological trend as one that is *proscriptive*.
2. Strong faith in progress and the ability of educated people to overcome problems



3. Rise in volunteer organizations organized to address issues important to Progressives.



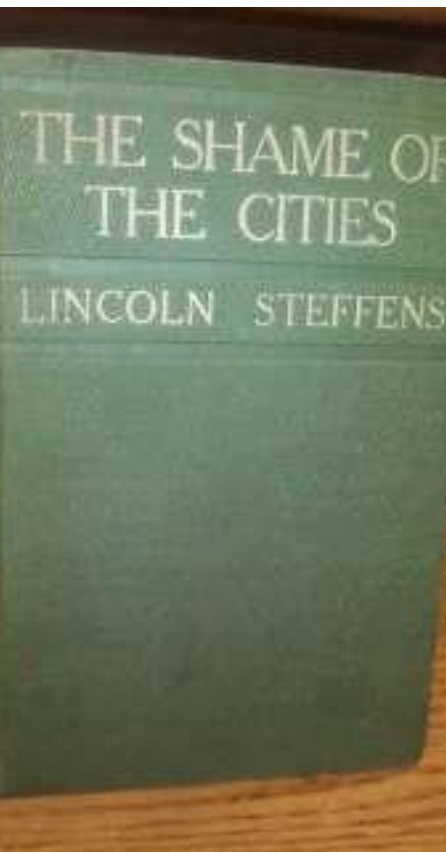
Bet.Com

- a. American Bar Association,
- b. U.S. Chamber of Commerce,
- c. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and
- d. National Municipal League.

The Progressives were mainly urban in residence and orientation

B. Muckraking journalists attacked corruption and scandal with a sense of moral outrage

1. Lincoln Steffens exposed city machines in *The Shame of the Cities* (1904)
2. Ida Tarbell exposed Standard Oil Trust abuses
3. Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906) attacked the meat-packing industry

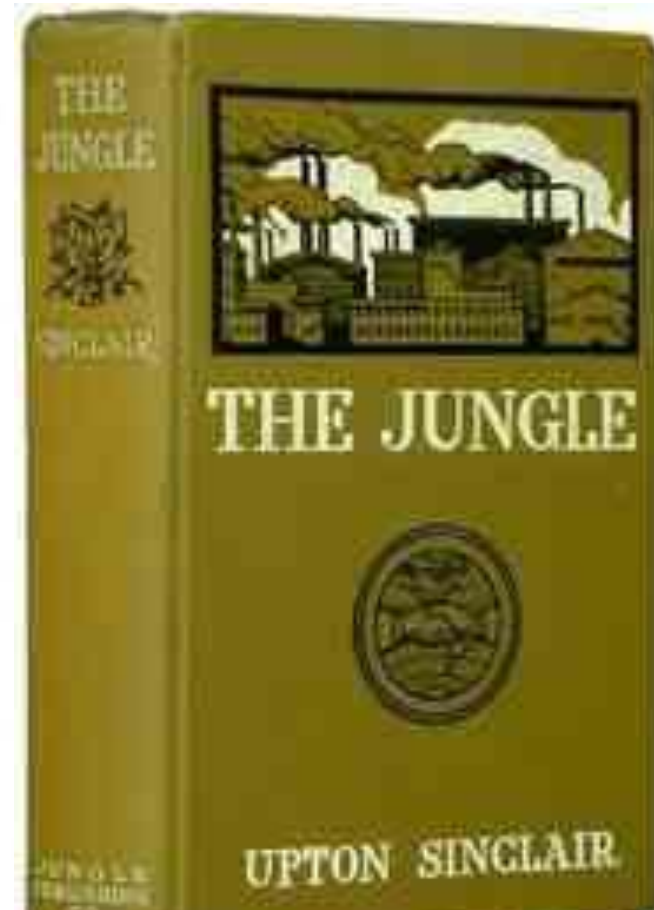


ONE of the busiest corners of the globe at the opening of the year 1872 was a strip of Northwestern Pennsylvania, not over fifty miles long, known the world over as the Oil Regions. Twelve years before, this strip of land had been but little better than a wilderness its only inhabitants the lumbermen, who every season cut great swaths of primeval pine and hemlock from its hills, and in the spring floated them down the Allegheny River to Pittsburgh. The great tides of Western emigration had shunned the spot for years as too rugged and un-

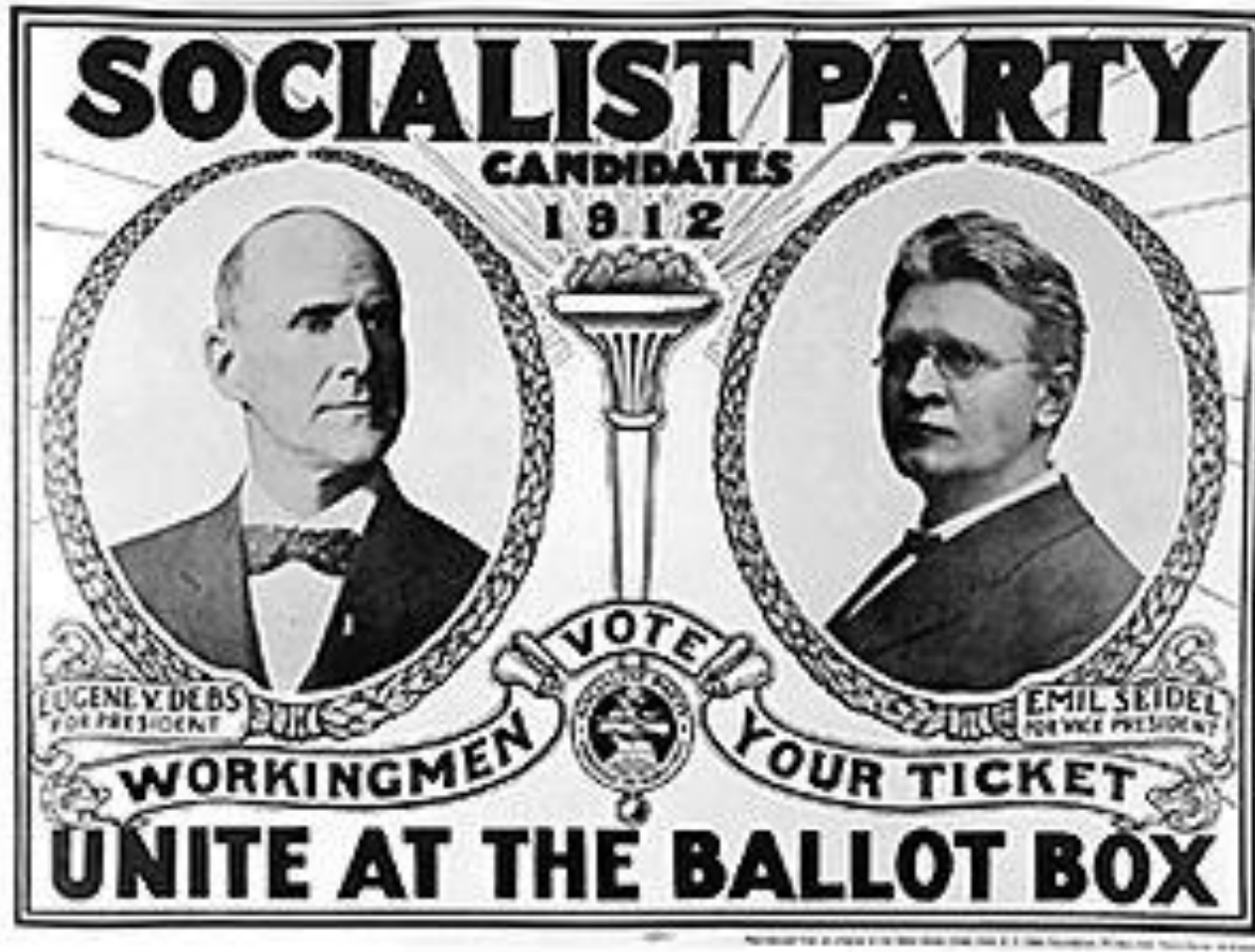


duct, petroleum, which had made this change from wilderness to market-place. This product in twelve years had not only peopled a waste place of the earth, it had revolutionized the world's methods of illumination and added millions upon millions of dollars to the wealth of the United States.

Petroleum as a curiosity was no new thing. For more than two hundred years it had been described in the journals of Western explorers. For decades it had been dipped up from the surface of springs, soaked up by blankets from running streams, found in quan-



C. Socialists--frustrated workers who promised to destroy capitalism. They were led by Eugene Debs. (who polled 900,000 votes for president in 1912).



http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/74/Debs_campaign.jpg

Socialists were rejected by most Progressives as too extreme in their goals and methods.

II. Teddy Roosevelt & the Square Deal

A. Using the power of the presidency (a "bully pulpit") as no president since Lincoln, T.R. loved to lead and to fight those he felt were not acting in America's best interests.

1. Coal Strike--When coal mine owners refused to deal with the union in a 1902 strike, T.R. summoned them and the head of the mine workers to the White House and threatened to use army troops to keep the mines open.

Owners backed down and T.R. was credited with ending the strike

2. Northern Securities Case--T.R. used the Sherman Antitrust Act to attack a railroad monopoly. Supreme Court ordered the company to dissolve. FURTHERMORE . . .



<http://etc.usf.edu/clipart>

3. Added Departments of Labor and Commerce to the Cabinet
4. Pushed through the Hepburn Act (1906), strengthening the Interstate Commerce Commission
5. Urged Congressional approval of the Pure Food and Drug Act (1906), which forbade impure foods and required labeling of ingredients of foods and drugs.

B. Conservation reform added massive areas to the national forests (total of 190 million acres)

- 1. Transferred forests to the U.S. Forest Service headed by Gifford Pinchot, who insisted that trees be planted as well as harvested.**

Firstrefuge.org



Enjoy Your
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
**Pelican Island
National Wildlife Refuge**
Welcome to the Pelican Island Viewing Area
PERMITTED

2. Withdrew millions of acres of public land from sale to protect resources
3. Used public land sale revenues to build dams and canal systems .

III. City and State Government Reform

A. City government system changed to prevent boss or "machine" rule.



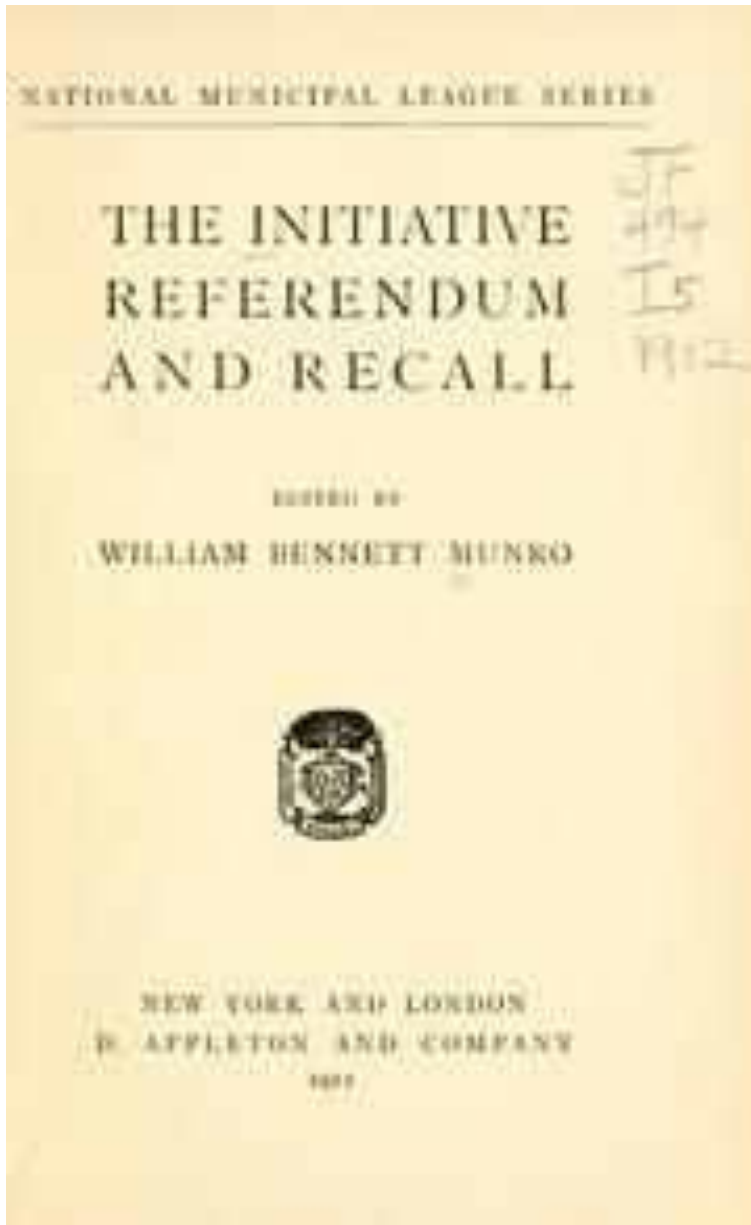
1. City commissions replaced mayors and city councils in some areas
2. City managers (nonpolitical professional managers) were hired to run small cities



Biography.com

B. State level reform efforts championed by Robert La Follette of Wisconsin

- 1. Direct primary to give voters control over candidates.**
- 2. Competitive civil service and restrictions on lobbying**
- 3. Many states passed workmen's compensation laws**



4. Election reforms to bring direct democracy to voters

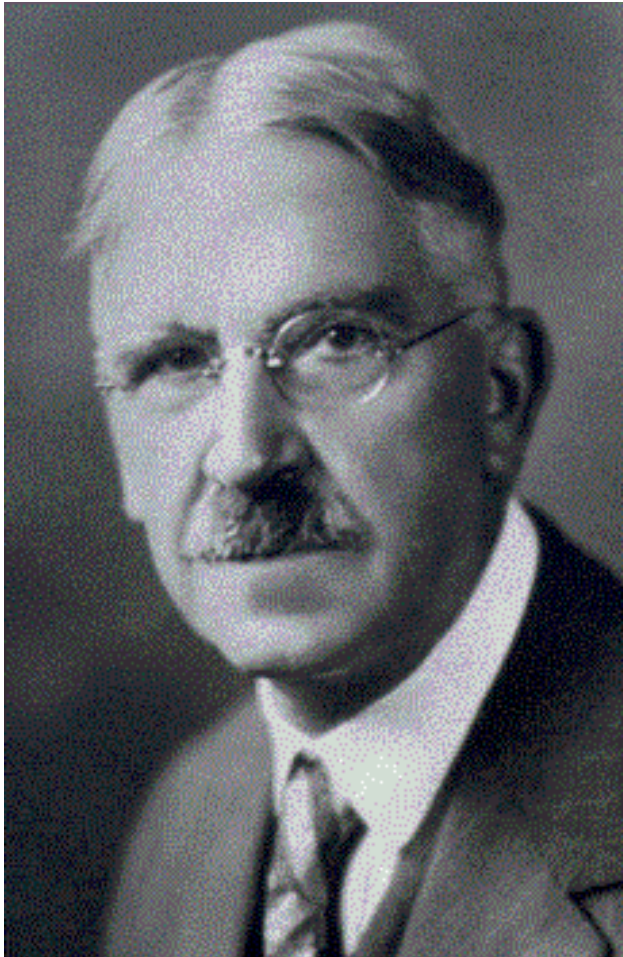
- a) Initiative--allowed 5% of voters to "initiate" laws in state legislatures**
- b) Referendum--in some states voters could then pass initiatives into laws**
- c) Recall--by petition voters could force an official to stand for re-election at any time**

IV. Major Progressivism Programs

A. Education

- 1. Progressive education--John Dewey led movement that focused on personal growth in education, seminars (conversation), not just mastery of knowledge through memorization.**

www.nkfu.com



"Anyone who has begun to think, places some portion of the world in jeopardy."

John Dewey

2. Charles Eliot of Harvard pioneered elective courses and new teaching techniques (such as seminars) to make university learning more meaningful.

Library.hbs.edu



3. Women began attending colleges in large numbers (by 1920, 47% of total enrollment was female).



4. Belief that more education would help bring an enlightened population, Progressives pushed enrollments to record levels (86% of children in schools by 1920) without seriously assessing how schools were doing.



Afflictor.com

B. Law--judges opinions needed to be based on factual information, not just oral arguments and precedents (the “facts of the case”)

never mind your opinion,
what are the facts?

1. Muller V. Oregon (1908)-limited women's working hours

Muller v. Oregon, 208 [U.S. 412](#) (1908), was a landmark decision in United States Supreme Court history, as it justifies both sex discrimination (not *necessarily a bad thing?*) and usage of labor laws during the time period. The case upheld Oregon state restrictions on the working hours of women as justified by the special state interest in protecting women's health. The ruling had important implications for protective labor legislation.

Curt Muller, the owner of a laundry business, was convicted of violating Oregon labor laws by making a female employee work more than ten hours in a single day. Muller was fined \$10. Muller appealed to the Oregon Supreme Court and then to the U.S. Supreme Court, both of which upheld the constitutionality of the labor law and affirmed his conviction.

2. Not all Progressive legal principles prevailed. In *Lochner v. New York* (1905), the Supreme Court overturned a New York law limiting bakers' working hours.

Muller (previous slide) had been decided a mere three years after *Lochner v. New York*, 198 U.S. 45 (1905), in which a New York law restricting the weekly working hours of bakers was invalidated.

The Court decided that a covenant between labor and management was sacred. None could intervene. Labor law over the following years would change this, especially the “8-hour workday” (which spread quickly throughout the country).

Justice Brewer insisted that *Muller* did *not* overturn *Lochner*, but instead merely distinguished the law as it applies to women and to men.

C. Settlement Houses--founded by Jane Addams—offered a variety of services:



1. Promoted public health reform in cities, chlorinating water and sanitary regulations
2. Developed education and craft programs
3. Created neighborhood health clinics <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1aZbqjBF7A>

Mention The JUNGLE, Upton Sinclair

D. Racial anti-discrimination efforts

1. **Booker T. Washington (Atlanta Compromise) argued for self-help and accommodation on the part of blacks to white society (we should accommodate *our* ways to *yours*, ie Dawes Act & Am. Ind.)**

The **Atlanta compromise** was an agreement struck in 1895 between African-American leaders and Southern white leaders. The agreement was that Southern blacks would work meekly and submit to white political rule, while Southern whites guaranteed that blacks would receive basic education and due process in law; blacks would not agitate for equality, integration, or justice, and Northern whites would fund black educational charities.



2. W.E.B. DuBois (Niagara Movement--1905) urged blacks to assert themselves and agitate for political and economic rights. Helped Form NAACP to use legal means to end racial discrimination.



E. Women's rights

- 1. While the number of employed women stayed constant from 1900-1920 (20%), the type of work switched from domestic labor (servants, cooks, laundresses) to clerical work (clerks, typists, bookkeepers), factory work, and professionals.**

<http://oztypewriter.blogspot.com/2012/02/more-than-mere-typists.html>



2. Most women still held the lowest paying and least opportune jobs.

Incometherapy.com



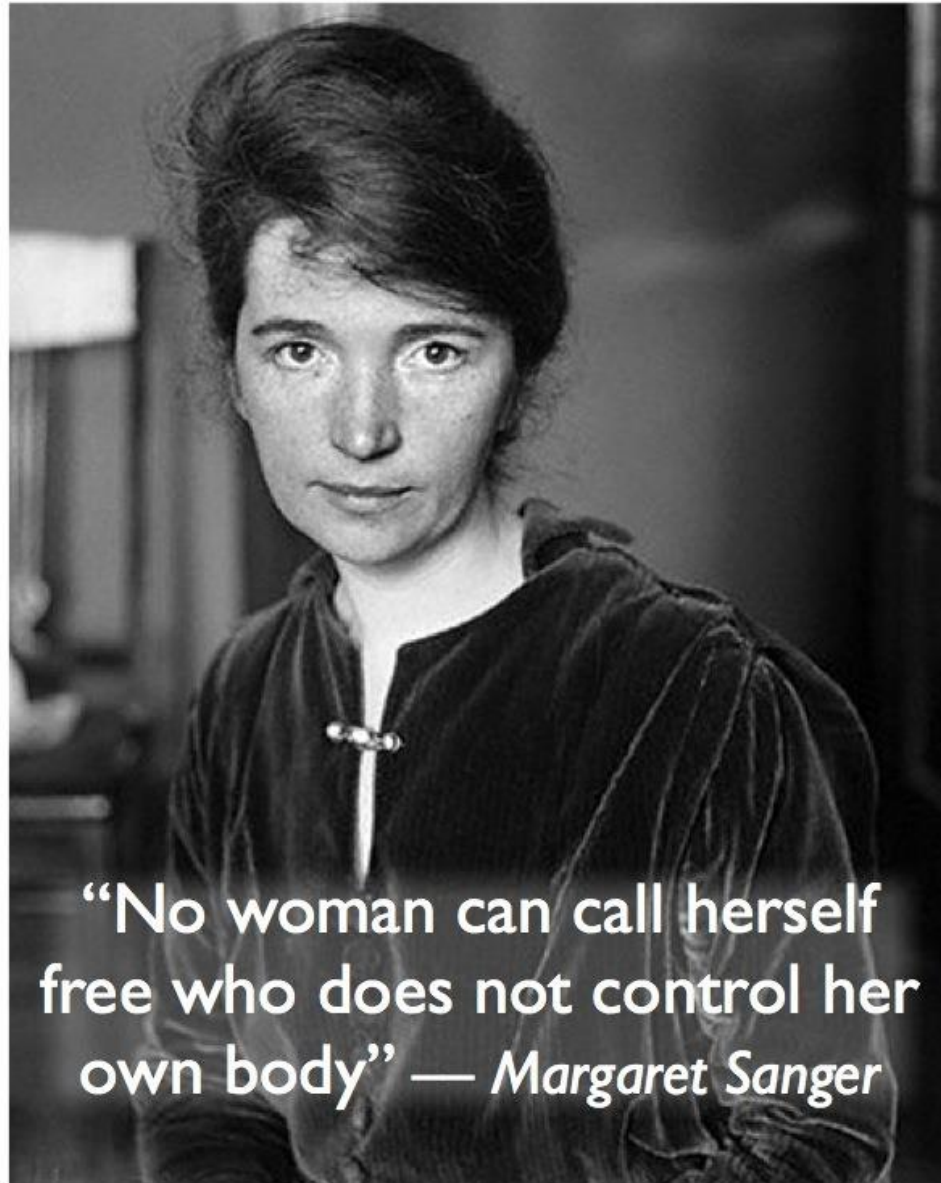
3. Significant Progressive feminists called for greater reform

- a) Charlotte Perkins Gilman attacked the male monopoly on opportunity and declared that domesticity was an obsolete value for American**

Charlotte Perkins Gilman



b) Margaret Sanger led the movement to provide birth control to prevent unwanted pregnancies among poor women.



“No woman can call herself free who does not control her own body” — *Margaret Sanger*

<http://theawarenesscenter.blogspot.com/2012/09/womens-history-margaret-sanger.html>

c) Suffragists urged that women be given the franchise, which came on the national level with the 19th Amendment (1919).

On-this-Day--19th-Amendment-Gives-Women-Right-to-Vote.com



F. Child labor laws--most states passed minimum working age laws and prohibited children from working more than 10 hours per day, but enforcement was difficult to achieve.



G. Temperance--Anti-Saloon League and Women's Christian Temperance Union fought alcoholism on the state level through blue laws and on the national level with the 18th Amendment which prohibited the manufacture, sale, and transportation of liquor.

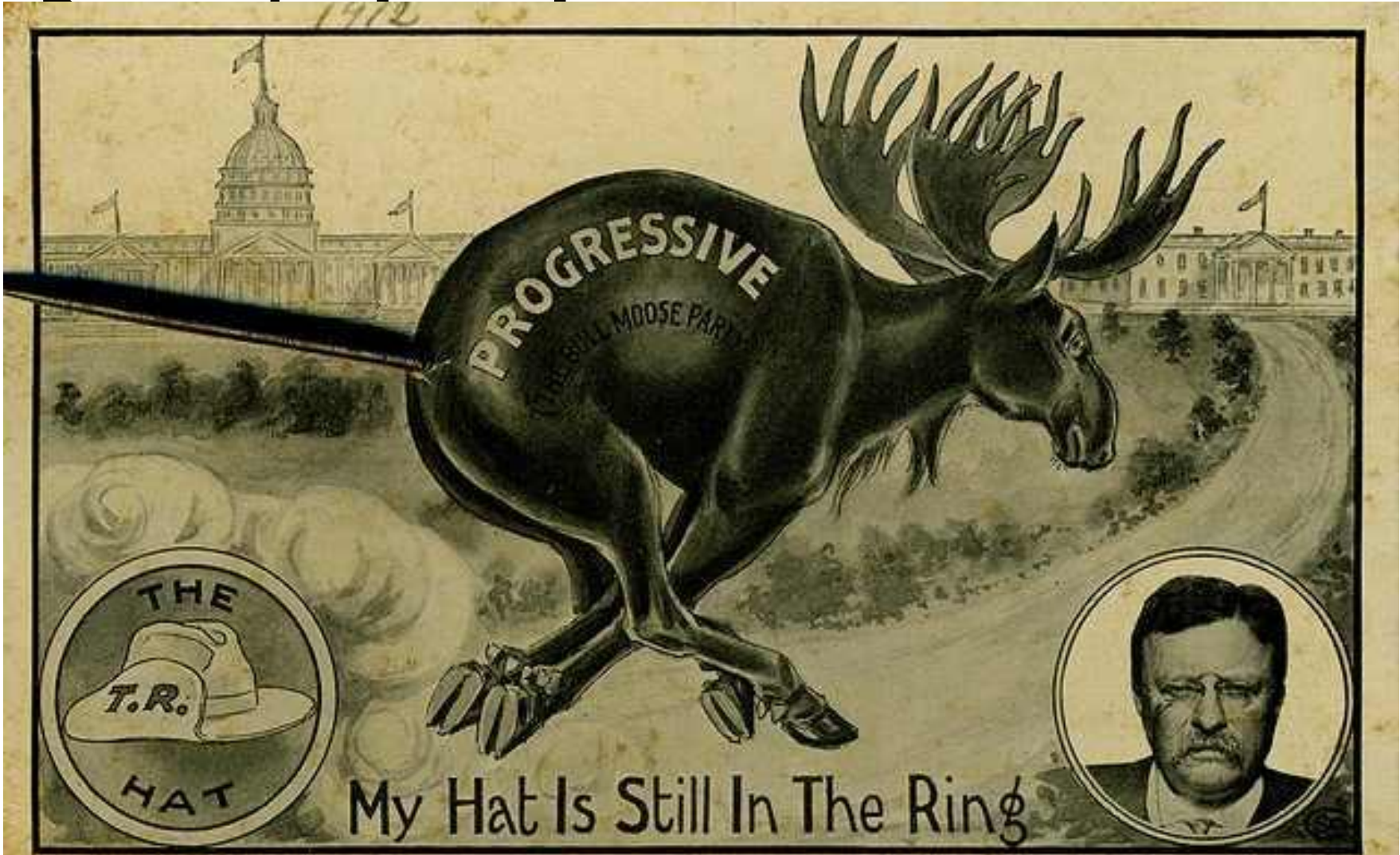


V. Presidential Election of 1912

A. Republican successor Taft proved to be less progressive than T.R. in the areas of tariff reform and conservation. (Back to Policies of the *laissez-faire forgettable presidents*)

- 1. Payne-Aldrich Tariff (heralded by Taft as "the best tariff passed by the Republican Party") protected industries and kept consumer prices high.**
- 2. A public land sale scandal in Alaska pitted Pinchot against Secretary of Interior Ballinger. Taft fired Pinchot**

B. Theodore Roosevelt organized the National Progressive or "Bull Moose" Party after Progressive Republicans bolted the Taft-controlled Republican convention. Party platform included long list of



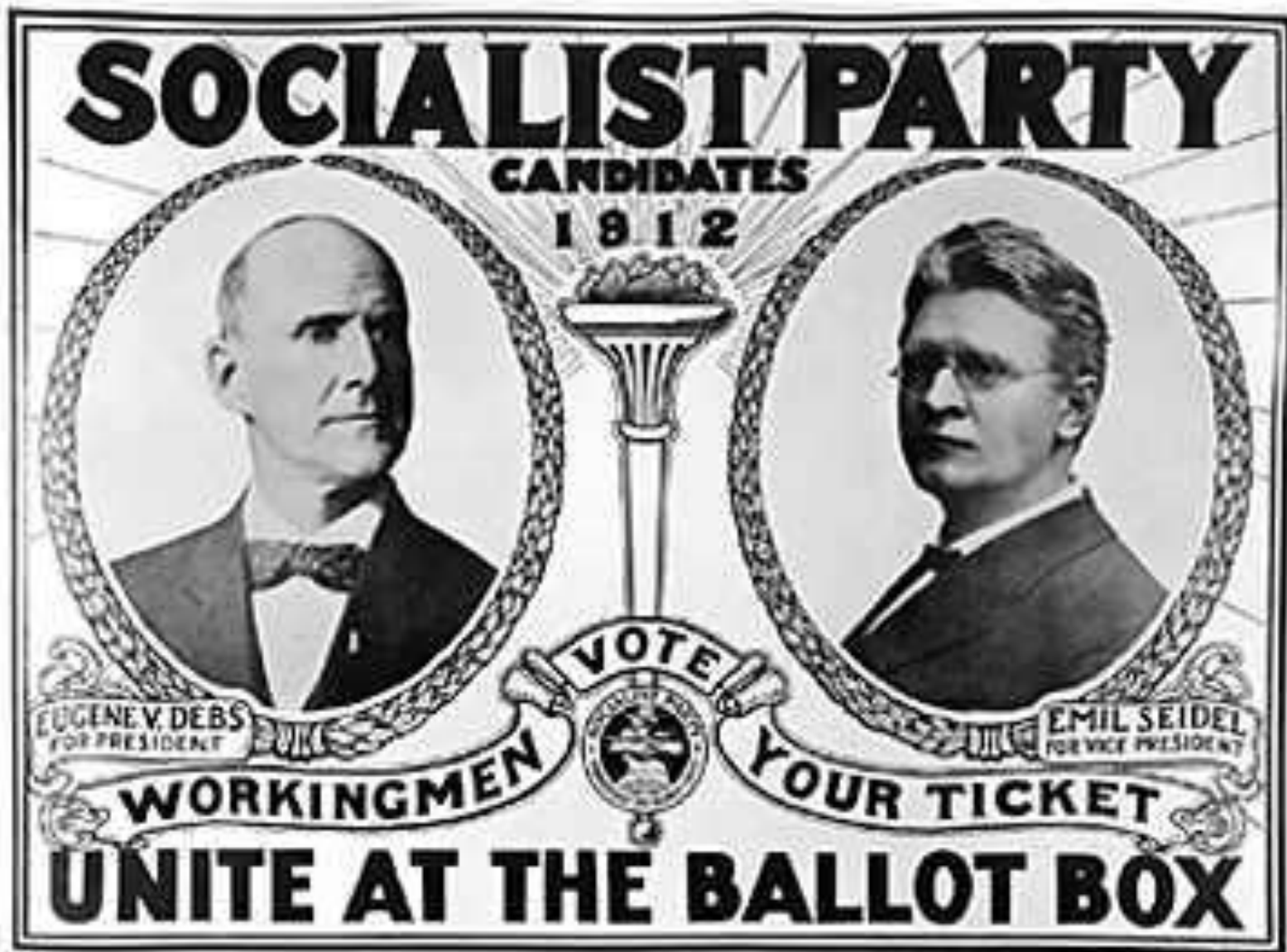
C. Democrats nominated Woodrow Wilson, the scholarly governor of New Jersey, who called for moral revival and reform, including low tariffs, the breaking up of all monopolies.

<http://symonsez.wordpress.com/2010/05/07/woodrow-wilson-did-he-know->

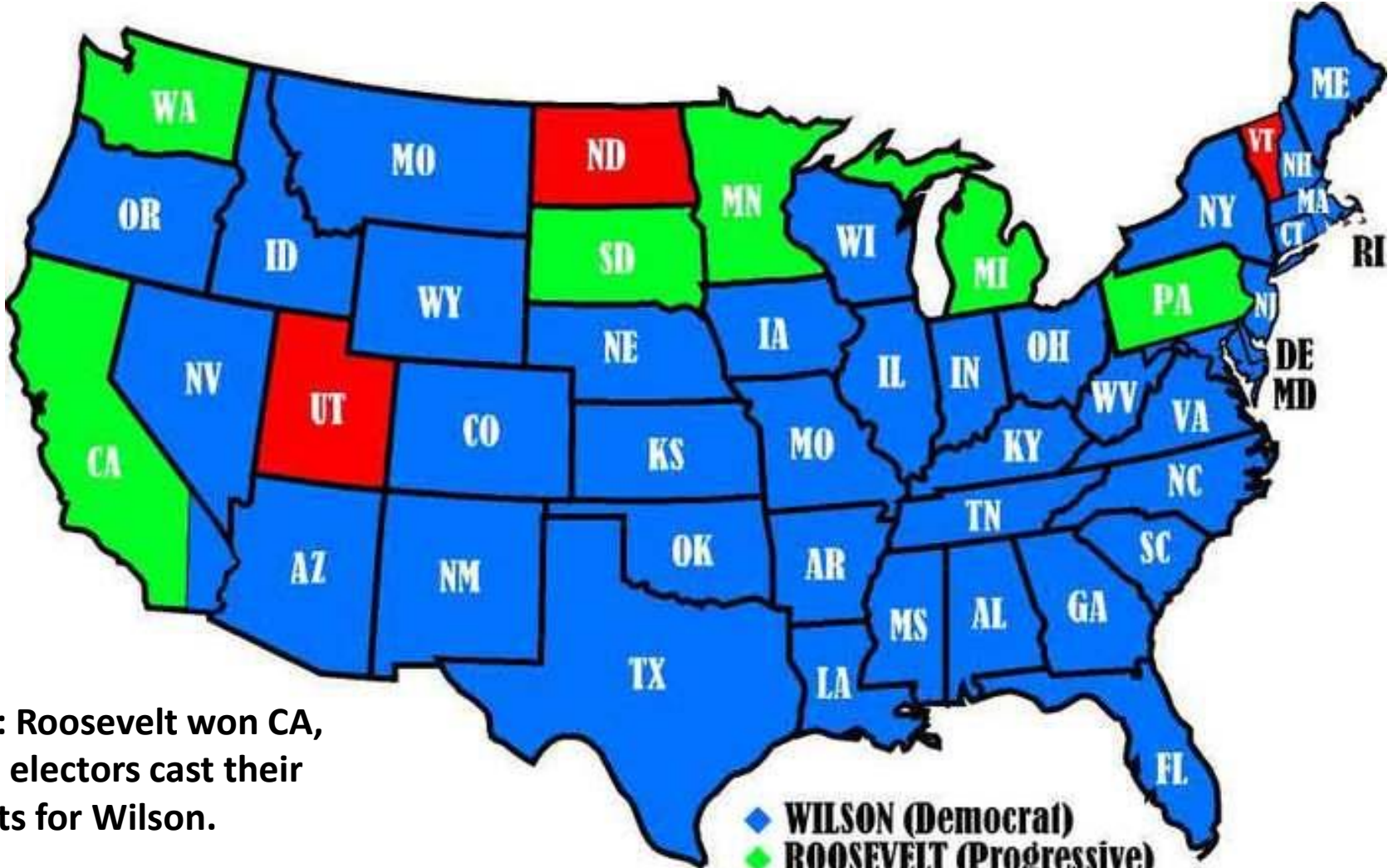


He wanted government to be an impartial umpire in disputes between labor and business.

D. Socialists nominated Debs, who called for public ownership of all natural resources and major industries.



E. Wilson won 40/48 states as Republicans were split between Taft and Theodore Roosevelt. Height of Progressivism as Wilson, TR, and Debs totaled 11 million votes to 3.5 million for Taft.



Note: Roosevelt won CA, but 2 electors cast their ballots for Wilson.

- ◆ **WILSON (Democrat)**
- ◆ **ROOSEVELT (Progressive)**
- ◆ **TAFT (Republican)**

VI. Wilson's New Freedom and Progressivism

A. Tariff reform--Underwood Tariff (1913) gave first significant tariff reduction since 1860s as Wilson personally delivered his goals to Congress.



B. Currency and banking reform--Creation of Federal Reserve System.

1. Acted as bankers' banks to prevent "runs" on bank assets.
2. Federal reserve notes issued a flexible new currency to the banking system.

DECEMBER 24, 1913--SIXTEEN PAGES--PRICE TWO CENTS

PRESIDENT'S SIGNATURE ENACTS CURRENCY LAW

Wilson Declares It the First of Series of Constructive Acts to Aid Business.



Makes Speech to Group of Democratic Leaders.

Conference Report Adopted in Senate by Vote of 43 to 25.

Banks All Over the Country Hasten to Enter Federal Reserve System.

Gov-Elect Walsh Calls Passage of Bill A Fine Christmas Present.

WILSON SEES DAWN OF NEW ERA IN BUSINESS

aims to Make Prosperity Free to Have Unimpeded Momentum.

HOME VIEWS OF CURRENCY ACT

FOUR PENS USED BY PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.—President Wilson signed the currency law today at 4:05 o'clock under a shower of applause of the staff and the Congressional Club. The Congressional Clubmen in banking and currency and the cabinet leaders in Congress gave him a cheer.

With a few words of the law, the President addressed the staff.

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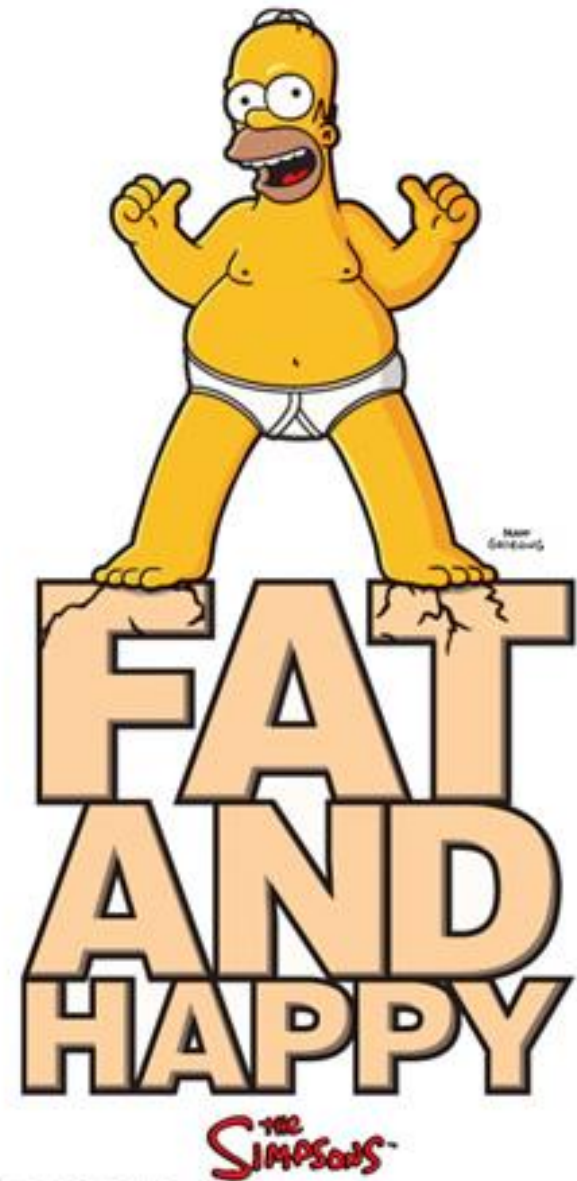
C. Clayton Antitrust Act (1914) to restrict monopolies and set up a Federal Trade Commission to stop unfair practices which may arise.



VII. Evaluation of Progressivism

A. Weaknesses of Progressive reform.

1. Material progress of Americans weakened zeal of reformers
2. The growing number of Progressive goals were often confusing and contradictory
3. Outbreak of World War I dampened enthusiasm of attempts to use governments to create just societies on earth.



B. Progressive accomplishments



Musicxray.com

1. Trust-busting forced industrialists to notice public opinion
2. Legislation gave federal and state governments the tools to protect consumers.
3. Income tax helped build government revenues and redistribute wealth