

The gilded age america and the progressive era

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The Gilded Age America and the Progressive Era The Gilded era in United States, refer to a period of rapid economic and population growth that followed the civil war in the post reconstruction era towards the end of 19th century. It is the founding period of the present day industrial economy, during which there was massive construction of communication, transport infrastructure and setting up of industries across the country. During this period, many cities and new factories were borne attracting many people of diverse ethnicities including foreign immigrants looking for work in industries (Elisabeth and Karen 47). The progressive era saw a flourishing social activism and political reforms that sought to clean the government of corruption and political mechanization of systems. There was also increased use of technology in replacing manual processes by emphasizing on engineering, medical, and scientific solutions that created efficiency. The era began at local levels in work places, churches, farms, and industrial zones before finding its way into the states and later the national level. Through the early 20th century, many reforms occurred in the economic, industry, education, and governance sectors with adoption of policies to regulate each of the respective sectors (Leon 35). A common feature of these eras of the United States history is the struggle for power, racial equality, women rights, better working conditions and remunerations, especially by workers in the industrial sectors. These the proponents of the movements achieved through a number of ways including; Formation of labour unions; these were for championing better working conditions, improved wages and control of unions over the plight of workers. The common mode of voicing these concerns by the unions included strikes, go slows and demonstrations which more than often ended up being violent and destructive. Later on in early

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20th century the unions entrenched the progressive agenda in their activism, forming alliances with political parties to fight for better services as well as setting of proper industrial dispute resolution courts that ruled justly without favouring the employers. Worker gained substantial control of their situations by assuring transparency and humane treatment of employees in work places by the masters (Elisabeth and Karen 299). Exposing of official corruption was another tool used during this two post construction eras. The press was particularly helpful to the workers in exposing all the dirty under dealings that various companies, industries, government departments and private institutions were engaging in. Through this technique, workers put their managers under watch as promotions begun taking a merit dimension and proper remunerations were assured. Modernization; being passionate modernizers, the proponents of both movements campaigned tirelessly for adoption of mechanised systems in industries to prevent human injuries and deaths as well as assure efficiency. Believing in science and technology achieved through education as the best solution to problems facing the society, there was a shift in prevalence to setting up urban societies, improving environmental conditions, economy and living conditions. Championing for democratic governance that enabled citizens to directly participate in leadership and eliminate political bossing was another way that workers used in gaining power. Notably the progressive movement in Oregon State instituted voting through ballots in to their system, allowing the citizens to select preferred candidates to leadership positions as well as recalling non-performing ones. This development spread into other states across the nation in the years that followed as the best way for reducing political boss mechanisms. Senators were under this period subjected to

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election directly by citizens instead of the legislature, which they controlled. Undertaking of municipal reform was another tool used to gain power especially during the progressive era. The objective was to assure efficiency in service delivery as well as ensure that election of mayors was by people and with clear mandate. There were several constitutional changes to fix reforms undertaken by proponents of these movements permanently in the countries regulations. Most notable amendments include the prohibition and women suffrage amendments, the income tax and senator election amendments. Enactment of the prohibition amendment outlawed manufacture, distribution and sale of alcohol at all levels of governance. Although Christian movements mostly backed this amendment, workers championed for the sole reason of improving efficiency in work places while reducing casualties incurred due to drunkenness. Later towards the mid 20th century, this amendment was repealed with the support of a majority of progressives sighting individual freedoms to choice. Education was the other tool that workers in these eras used to champion for reforms at the local levels. Due to accumulation of populations in the major urban centres, there was increasing need to construct schools for the children of workers. A majority of states passed legislation for compulsory schooling with particular emphasis on public health, hygiene and physical fitness (Leon 145). In conclusion, workers in both the post construction periods of the gilded age America and the progressive era employed various methods to champion for their rights and gain power. Workers unions in partnership with political parties mostly championed for these efforts to end the misery that they underwent in work places, through embracing technology and electing leaders into the local and state governments who fought for their rights. The <https://assignbuster.com/the-gilded-age-america-and-the-progressive-era/>

movements achieved greatly in streamlining working conditions and promoting fairness and equality in industries and other places of work. Work cited Elisabeth, I. Perry and Karen M. Smith. *The Gilded Age and Progressive Era: a student companion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Print. Leon, Fink. *Major problems in the gilded age and the progressive era: documents and essays*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001. Print.