

The progressive
movement was a
liberal triumph essay
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“ The Progressive movement of 1900 to 1917 was a triumph of conservatism rather than a victory for liberalism.” I disagree with this statement. The basic philosophy of “ conservatism” is that change is bad. The basic “ historian” definition of progressivism is: a movement for social change and improvement. For this reason, it is accurate to say that this era was a triumph of liberalism. The Progressive movement was a time of extreme changes where, social, urban, and economic; these essential aspects of American culture, were changed forever. This movement was famed for its change and government, which began to take a more active role in the aforementioned aspects.

Social reform came largely through the workplace. During the Progressive movement, great steps were taken to change how the government related to factories Ect. This change came in the form of regulation. This included the implementation of philosophy to increase efficiency and safety in the workplace. Frederick Taylor, also known as the father of “ scientific” labor management, was key in devising strategy to increase efficiency and production. Henry Ford, known for his success in the automobile industry, also had a major impact on workplace strategy. He believed that by lowering the price of his cars, he could make them available to mass markets and in turn be able to pay higher wages to his employees. The increased morale due to higher wages resulted in a higher production.

The Triangle Shirt Waist factory tragedy marked the beginning of workplace safety reform. When the factory caught on fire in 1911, over 150 women died due to lack of fire escapes. The government stepped in after this event and passed many new laws to better regulate building codes and keep

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workers safer. Louis Brandeis' work in the case *Muller vs. Oregon* and the later Adamson act (unrelated to Brandeis) of 1912 were both a part of this new workplace reform. Because of the low standards of society during this period, the progressive movement was utilized to create effective change and reform in the social aspects of American culture.

Urban reform was begun during a time soon after the reconstruction and industrial revolution. Although its influences are widespread, it can be said that its most critical influence was during the Progressive era. Progressive Urban reform was a movement when people began to care more about the bettering of self and others. With newer major problems facing cities, new immigrants, and immorality within the lower working class, this type of reform was much needed. The first Progressive type idea of bettering and standing up for one's self came from a book called "The School and Society" written by John Dewey, and published in 1899.

This book suggested that schools should focus on children and should teach good citizenship, how to be instruments of social reform, and build character. These ideas, mixed with the pragmatism philosophy of William James (known for psychology), gave root to the beginning of a fruitful movement. Another leader of urban reform includes Samuel M. Jones, known for his philosophy in the "Golden Rule". Many of the new reforms had to do with bettering local governments and organization of people by establishing leagues and commissions. One commission known as the City Commission was used to make the coordination of complex events easier. Another similar group was the city manager system.

Immorality problems in urban areas were largely due to alcohol problems. Reform and change led to the later signing of the 18th amendment in 1918, which came to be known as the prohibition act. Though so some of this reform did not take place during the period of 1900-1917, its influence either greatly impacted reform during this era, or was almost a direct result of progressive reform. As seen by the eventual passing of the prohibition act, Progressive Urban reform had a major impact on the changing of values and social standards throughout the cities of America.

During the Progressive era, U. S. government began clamping down on Big business. First steps in this type of economic reform were led by Theodore Roosevelt, a. k. a. "Trustbuster". Through his promotion of his "Square Deal" philosophy, he began breaking apart large trusts. The very first of these trusts involved the Northern Securities company trust. Roosevelt declared that this railroad monopoly was in violation of the guidelines laid out by the Sherman Anti-trust act. The Supreme Court ruled the company dissolved in 1902. This was only the first of many new, enforced regulations on "Big Business". Later to come would be the Hepburn Act, 1906, and the Mann-Elkins Act, 1910.

Economic reforms became so important during the Progressive era that they became the main platforms in the infamous election of 1912. This election was between the Wilson, Taft, and Roosevelt, who ran under his newly founded Bull Moose Party. The Democratic Wilson campaigned under the platform known as "New Freedom", and Roosevelt under "New Nationalism". Both platforms supported a higher regulation of big business in either the breaking up of trusts or legislative justice. The greater government

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involvement in the economy led to Bank reform. Through bank reform, the Federal Reserve act was passed and later established the FTC. Incredible advancements in efficient government were made through economic reform. These advancements would carry into the depression, and years to come.

The Progressive Movement was a triumphantly liberal period of radical change in American culture. All of society was influenced through basic reforms including social, urban, and economic. The changes made during this period helped America get through tough times in the future.