

The Policies of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson

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Period 4

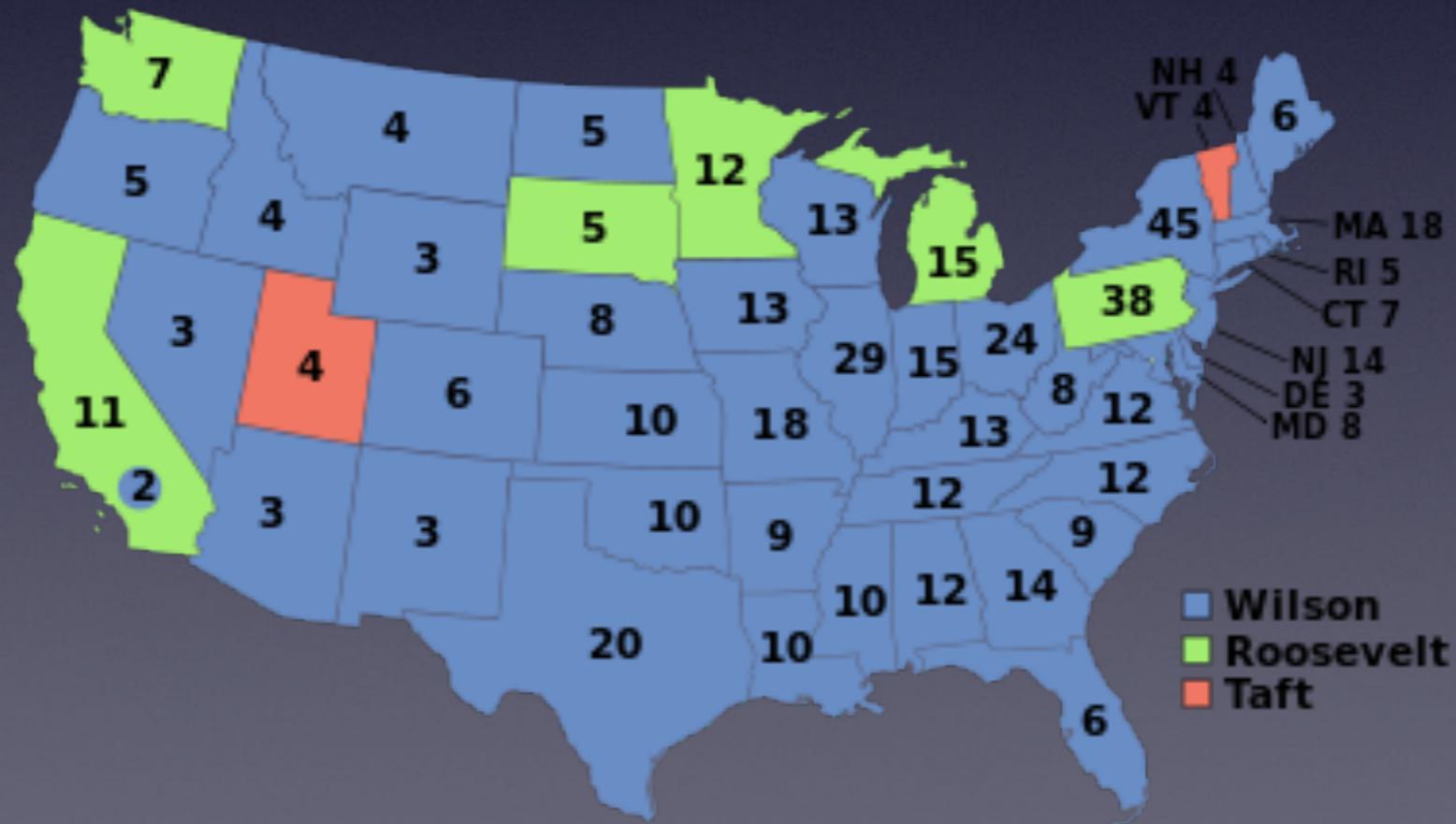
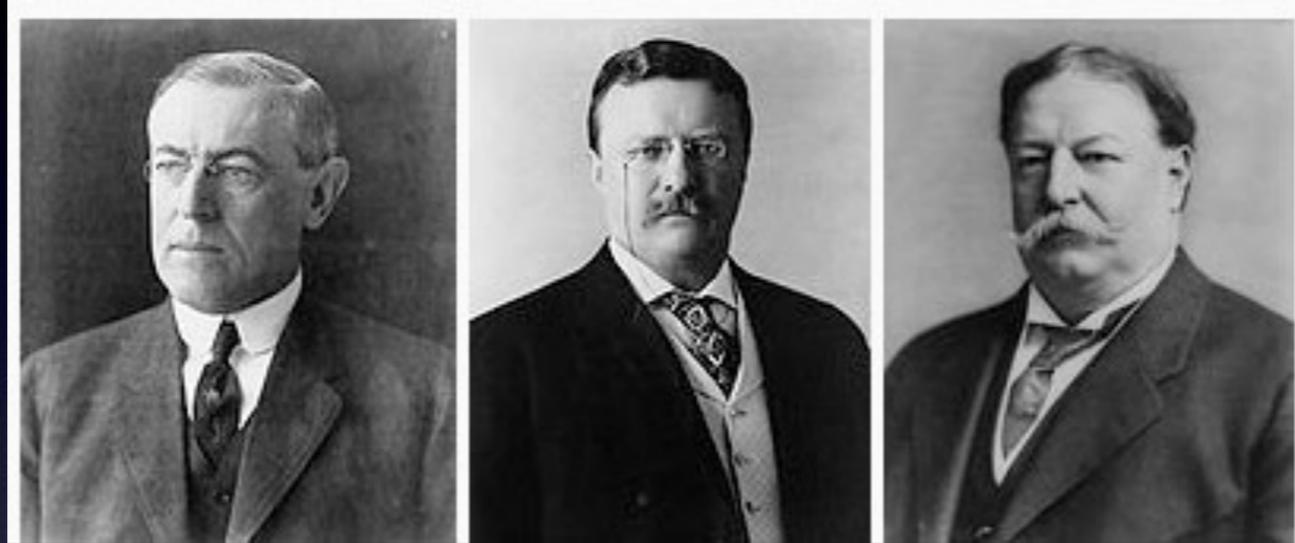
Prompt

Compare the goals and proposals of TR's New Nationalism and Wilson's New Freedom.

Thesis

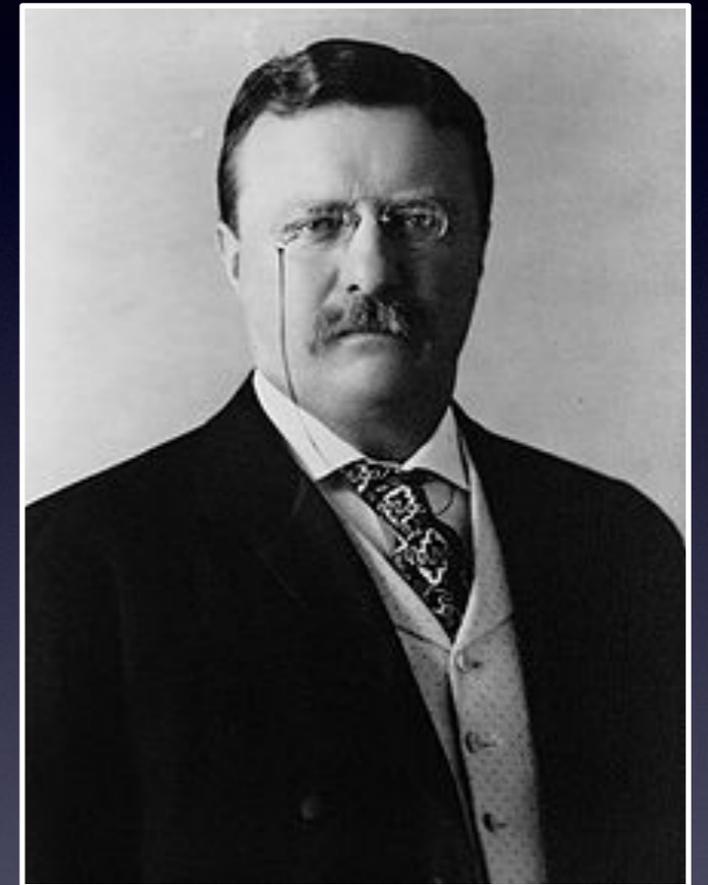
The election of 1912 saw a heated battle between the third-party Progressive Republican Theodore Roosevelt and the Democrat Woodrow Wilson. William Howard Taft ran on the Republican ticket, but his electoral gains were minimal. The election took place in the middle of the Progressive Movement, and its importance showed: each candidate's campaign depended upon appeasing the members of the movement by claiming social justice.

Election of 1912



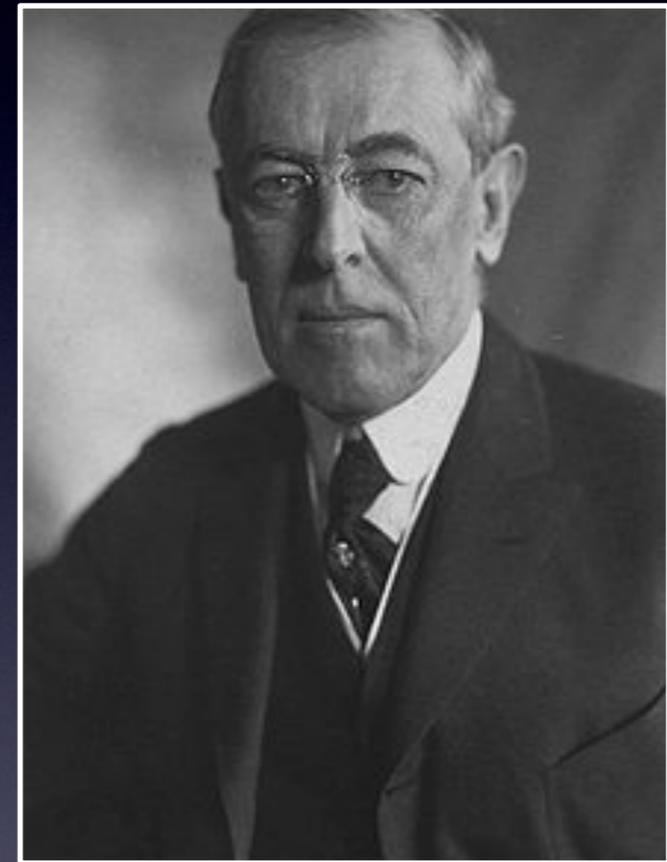
Theodore Roosevelt

- Roosevelt proposed a plan he dubbed "New Nationalism," which entailed many objectives, including women's suffrage, social welfare, more aggressive Progressivism, and increased regulation of big business. TR's main value was government protection of human welfare and property rights, with human welfare being more important than property rights. TR believed in a powerful federal government that could regulate the economy and guarantee social justice. He wanted executive agencies, specifically not the courts, to regulate business.



Woodrow Wilson

- To battle Roosevelt, Wilson put forth his plan of "New Freedom." The plan included: favoring of small enterprise, increased individual competition, vigorous enforcement of anti-trust laws, and a free market for the economy. The three areas of reform that Wilson supported were tariff reform which resulted in the Underwood Tariff Act of 1913, business reform demonstrated in the 1914 Federal Trade Act, and banking reform through the creation of the Federal Reserve System.



Similarities

New Nationalism and New Freedom had many similarities. Both obviously catered to the Progressive movement, were anti-big business, and favored the rise of the "little man." Social equality was the main driving force each plan, though the magnitude of such measures varied.

Differences

The two policies differed in what means would be used to achieve these ends. Roosevelt's New Freedom proposed broad social welfare, much like that seen in the 1930's from Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Wilson violently opposed welfare, saying that the little man must be forced into competition without head starts from the government. Both favored a sort of free market for the economy: Wilson favored the pure market, Roosevelt allowed those who had losses to be given another chance. Wilson won the election, but not necessarily because his New Freedom was superior: the Republican vote was split between Taft and Roosevelt, making Democratic victory a certainty.

Conclusion

The election of 1912 demonstrated America's major weakness: a huge gap between the destitute and the wealthy. All three candidates attempted to best perpetuate social justice in each respective campaign platform.