

#3 Analyze the reasons for the popularity of the Progressive Movement during the first two decades of the 20th century

Thesis

- * The progressive movement, lasting roughly through the first two decades of the 20th century was a reform movement through which Americans struggled to cope with a wide range of social, economic, and cultural changes. The progressives differed in their perception of the nation's problems and the best way they believed to achieve it. Progressives believed that unregulated capitalism and urban boom required stronger government supervision and intervention. Specifically, the progressives of the progressive movement wanted to regain control of the government from special interests, such as railroads and trusts, while protecting the rights of organized labor, women, and blacks.

The Progressives vs. Populists

- * Unlike the Populist movement, which primarily consisted of America's minority class citizens, the Progressives came from the middle class and consisted of a majority of Americans in the Republican and Democratic Party.
- * The Populists had the intention to unite together and improve the working conditions of farmers and other lower income jobs requiring intensive labor. They supported a graduated tax, direct election of senators.
- * On the other hand, the main intention of the Progressives and the Progressive Movement was to institute some of the labor reforms of the Populists. The Progressives were mainly focused on government regulation of industry and the exclusive practices of "robber barons", which at that time was in control of all the stocks in the U.S. The "robber barons" all of the oil, coal and farm produce delivered in the east. This meant that any farmer or rancher in the West could still grow their own food, but the prices were fixed for selling.

How the Progressives achieved their goal

- * The achievement of its goals made the Progressive Movement one of the most popular movements during its time. Their main approach to reform was through the use of legislation and courts. While Populism was a movement of group action, Progressivism was more home-oriented, meaning that it was in homes, universities, courts, and the halls of legislation. Because of this, Progressivism was characterized by interests in intellectual pursuits and efficiency.

More reasons for popularity

- * Progressivism also earned its popularity through the use of scientific investigation for gathering information in empowering the rights of women, reforming the government, renewing the fight for blacks' rights, and producing presidents who focused on reforming businesses and social services.
- * consequently, the media also picked up the methodical approach and applied it to journalism. This new journalism, called muckraking, exposed problems and injustices in America.

Theodore Roosevelt

- * First progressive president in America.
- * Consistently tried to control the power of corporate businesses.
- * He established the Bureau of Corporations, which investigated business practices, but the Supreme Court ruled that it violated the Sherman Anti-Trust Act.
- * He began a program called the Square Deal, through which the government asserted power over corporate businesses for the first time since the Civil War.

CONCLUSION

- * Overall, the Progressive Era made huge impacts on different aspects of American life. This is attributed to the members of this movement that came from all different social groups and backgrounds. The progressive influence reached women, the working-class, blacks, and corporate businesses through progressive presidents, such as Theodore Roosevelt. Without the progressive movement, America would not have been able to overcome the trials brought on by urbanization and industrialization.