The Lost Promise of Progressivism

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PROGRESSIVISM
AS NATIONAL REGIME

Between the last decades of the nineteenth century and the start of the First World War, the United States underwent a profound series of changes. Political institutions witnessed the most obvious forms of change. Up to the beginning of the 1890s, political parties ruled almost without challenge, dominating political communication and policy agendas, organizing the electorate, and dictating to office holders, both elective and appointive, the public policies to initiate, legislate, administer, and adjudicate. By the eve of World War I the system of nationally competitive political parties dominating our political culture lay in ruins. The effects of hostile regulation, changing voter values, alternative means of political expression, and centers of public power outside the system of electoral politics combined to transform the relationship of the citizen to government. (Bledstein, 1976; Burnham, 1970; Kelly, Harbison, and Belz, 1983, chaps. 19 and 21; McCormick, 1986, chaps. 5 and 9; McGerr, 1986; Skowronek, 1982; and Wiebe, 1967, chaps. 5 and 6). Although this story has been told often and well as originating in the electoral realignment of 1896, perhaps the most cogent description of the momentous shift in regime norms and practices is given by Martin Shefter:

For each of the major institutional reforms of the Jacksonian era, the Progressives sponsored an equal and opposite reform. The Jacksonians had increased the number of executive offices subject to popular election; the Progressives sought to reduce that number and to create the position of chief executive through such reforms as the short ballot and the strong mayor plan of municipal government. The most extreme version of this strand of reformism—the city manager plan of government—removed even the position of chief executive from direct popular election. The Jacksonians extended the franchise; the Progressives contracted it through registration, literacy, and citizenship requirements. The Jacksonians established party conventions to nominate candidates for elective
office; the Progressives replaced them with primary elections. The Jacksonians created a hierarchical structure of party committees to manage the electorate; the Progressives sought to destroy these party organizations or at least to render their tasks more difficult through such reforms as nonpartisan municipal government, and the separation of local, state, and national elections. Finally, the Jacksonians established a party press and accorded influence to the political editor; the Progressive movement was linked with the emergence of a self-consciously independent press (magazines as well as newspapers) and with muckraking journalists.¹

**WOMEN**

As the male electorate was being demobilized and their party leaders stripped of power and prestige, women were being rapidly mobilized, at first and necessarily outside the party-electoral system, in the Prohibition movement beginning in the 1880s, and, as parties became weaker and other forms of political power became stronger, increasingly inside the political system as organizers and activists for family-oriented issues. But whether possessed of the vote or not, beginning in the 1890s, politically active women and their male allies became leaders, publicists, and sponsors of an avalanche of local, state, and national legislation regarding child and female labor, compulsory school attendance, the age of female consent for sex and for marriage, food safety, housing conditions, and prostitution.

That women played these roles before they could vote (woman suffrage did not exist east of the Mississippi River until 1915) attested to the increasing effectiveness of "nonparty" or "antiparty" politics and to the responsiveness of elected officials to pressures from outside the party-electoral framework. The clearest symbol of the strength of this new system of "postparty" politics (Silbey, 1991, 237–54) is prohibition. Having its origins and first successes in the pre–Civil War North, the issue was revived in the 1880s and 1890s. The victories were dramatic: by 1900, thirty-seven states had local option laws; by 1906, 40 percent of the population lived in dry areas; in 1913, Congress had enough votes to override Taft’s veto and banned interstate shipments of

¹ Shefter, 1978, 232. An excellent recent summary of writings on the stalemate party regime period of the late 1870s through the mid-1890s is Skocpol, 1992, 67–88.
liquor into dry states. Taft's stand was dictated more by his concern for the Republican vote in the Midwest than by a commitment to laissez-faire: three years earlier, he had signed the Mann Act prohibiting the interstate shipment of prostitutes.

Most of these Progressive reforms were the direct result of legislation, altering the power relationships between political institutions, organized interests, and the electorate and regulating the behavior of individuals, business organizations, and public officials. As important as these directly mandated changes were—many were only symbolic and others were weakly enforced—there were equally important innovations in the voluntary institutional expression of new values and new collective purposes projected on a national scale. Women, for example, not only organized nationally as issue-oriented pressure groups (Women's Christian Temperance Union [WCTU], 1879; National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1890; College Equal Suffrage League, 1908; National Woman's Party, 1916), they also created national institutions that expressed and anchored their particular identities as women. The General Federation of Women's Clubs (1892) and its black counterpart, the National Association of Colored Women (1896); the National Consumers' League (1899); the National Women's Trade Union League (1903); and the Young Women's Christian Association (1906) all gave national focus to previously local activities and provided the base from which to organize and expand throughout the country. When one adds the Settlement House and Charity Organization Society movements, both well established and thriving in the early 1900s, it is apparent that a national infrastructure of leadership, communication, and organization for political issues of interest to women was coming into place at the turn of the century.}

2. Kelly, Harbison, and Belz, 1983, 475-77; Greene, 1984, "Temperance and Prohibition"; Clark, 1976, 101-13; and see Timberlake, 1963. On the place of prohibition in the Progressive movement, Boyer, 1978, 195-98. Congress sent the amendment to the states in late December 1917 and it was ratified by January 1919 by an aggregate state legislative majority of over 80 percent—hardly an expression of either postwar bitterness or the revenge of the ruralists. As early as 1887, twenty-seven state Republican platforms urged some form of prohibition and only one platform opposed any form (Buenker, 1978, 172).

3. Cott, 1987, 23, 33, and 53; Bliss, 1908, 1308, for statistics on women's clubs; and see Skocpol, 1992, 323-40, 350-54. See Davis, 1984, 194-217; Skocpol, 1992, 343-50; and Trolander, 1987, 3-21, on settlement house movements and Progressivism; and Boyer, 1978, 143-61, on charity organizations. Although all of these organizations transmitted political ideas to their members and most supplied leaders for Progressive political reform activities and, later, the Progressive party, other new women's organizations formed at this time expressed less directly concerns of identity and self-expression. Within a four-year period beginning in 1900, the
CHURCHES

If women as political actors symbolized a new kind of national politics, so, too, did churches, clergymen, and active Christian laymen. Like women, throughout the nineteenth century, churches and "para-church" organizations (e.g., charities, home and foreign mission societies, tract and Sunday school movements) were outside the party-political system, even though denominational affiliation and religious style had a marked effect on nineteenth-century partisan loyalties. Although the abolitionist movement and the Whig, Liberty, and American party origins of the Republican party were clearly expressions of northern evangelical Protestant values, this inclusion was weakly institutionalized and quickly became subordinated in the Republican party, first to military victory and then to electoral victories based on coalitions of local and sectional interests (Frederickson, 1965; Gienapp, 1987; Keller, 1977, 1–121; Kelley, 1979, 187–261; Kleppner, 1970; and Walters, 1977). Prior to the Civil War, Protestant churches had even developed large national networks of ecumenical organizations and publications—later termed "the evangelical united front" (Foster, 1960)—but, again, only with the demise of party and with their own huge expansion in resources, did the churches become national political forces in their own right. Spurred on by the New Theology and the social gospel, evangelical Protestantism rapidly expanded its power and reach through its thriving system of universities, colleges, divinity schools, and its newly formed city and state federations, culminating in 1908 in the founding of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. New parachurch organizations were also created or expanded at this time: Christian youth and student movements, settlement houses, mission training societies, and a host of social action organizations are the most prominent. One such set of institutions, southern Negro colleges and secondary schools established by northern mission societies, simply replaced the federal government in the South in the function of training freedmen for leadership in their communities. By

4. Jensen, 1971, and Kleppner, 1970, show this electoral relationship up to the election of 1896. The point made here is that with the decisive victory of the Republican party, the decline in turnout, and the demise of party competition in the East and Midwest, the religiously based institutions of evangelical Protestantism came to play direct roles in political life quite outside the party-electoral framework. See Clubb, 1978, 61–79, for post-1896 effects on party organizations and strength.
1914–15, eighty-five schools and thirty colleges served more than 30,000 students (2,500 in college and professional programs) with a combined faculty of more than 2,000, of whom 60 percent were black. Many clergymen and Christian laymen began working outside and even against the organized churches as evangelists for urban reform, Christian Socialism, and cooperative movements.

UNIVERSITIES

Parallel to the growing institutional power of women and evangelical Protestantism and the reform issues they espoused was the organization of specialized knowledge as a political force outside of the party and electoral system. Symbolized by the founding of Cornell in 1867, of Johns Hopkins in 1876, and of the University of Chicago in 1891 and by the rapid growth of the state universities in the Midwest, specialized graduate instruction quickly became a major component of higher education, setting the standards for both the organization of disciplines and how they were taught. With the addition of Ph.D.-granting graduate schools at the older universities (Columbia, 1880, Harvard, 1890, Wisconsin, 1892, Princeton, 1901, Illinois, 1906, California, 1909, Michigan, 1915) the numbers of graduate students expanded from fewer than 900 in 1885 to 2,382 in 1890, 5,832 in 1900, and 9,370 in 1910. Undergraduate enrollment growth was also rapid, from just over 150,000 in 1890 to 237,000 at the turn of the century to 600,000 shortly after World War I. Fueled by generous state legislators in California and the Midwest and by vast infusions of money and logistical support from private philanthropy, major national universities were

6. Kuklick, 1985, chaps. 13–17, on the theological underpinnings of social action; Handy, 1984, chaps. 4 and 6, on the social gospel and Progressivism, and 147–51 on the creation of ecumenical federations of “cooperative Christianity” in the period 1890–1908. Hopkins, 1940, on the theology and organizational structure of the social gospel movement. Dombrowski, 1936; and Dorfman, 1949, vol. 3, chap. 5, on the relationship among popular radicalism, the social gospel, and Christian Socialism. Boyer, 1978, chap. 11, on the downplaying of churches and clergymen in the urban reform revival of the 1890s—even by clergymen—in favor of laymen-led organizations that would cut across denominations and avoid sectarianism.
7. Mills, 1964, 69; Oleson and Voss, 1979, xii. The contrast to Germany is striking. Germany rapidly expanded social welfare programs in this period, but kept access to higher education strictly limited (Heidenheimer, 1981).
Progressivism as National Regime

In 1900, five universities (Harvard, Columbia, Johns Hopkins, Chicago, and California) conferred more than half of all doctorates; almost 90 percent of doctorates were awarded by the fourteen charter institutions of the American Association of Universities founded that same year. At the end of World War I, five private universities (Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, and Yale) accounted for almost half of the national total, while three public ones (California, Illinois, and Wisconsin) accounted for about one-sixth. Along with university expansion and reorganization was the foundation of professional associations and journals, especially in the newly created social sciences. These associations and their allied journals were powerful engines for political critiques and reforms, providing ideas, organizational resources, and networks. Following the founding of the American Economic Association in 1885 and the American Academy of Political and Social Science in 1890, the philosophers (1901), the sociologists (1905), and the political scientists (1906) quickly established professional groups. Both the professionalization of disciplines and the reorganization of universities were supported through new private foundations that supported research projects, created research bureaus, and funded organizations that linked these new universities together.

JOURNALISM

All of this institutionalization would not have had the decisive political effects it did unless it created strong bonds of loyalty and purpose within and between these new national organizations. Moreover, even granting the consolidation and élan of these institutions, their internal energies and external ends could not have been successfully projected into the larger social and political world without extensive networks of communication and publicity independent of and often in opposition to existing centers of authority and power. To some extent, abolition-

8. In 1899 alone, the thirty-four largest gifts for public causes totaled $80 million, of which $55 million was pledged to higher education. Oleson and Voss, 1979, xi. Between the late 1890s and the mid-1920s, the endowments of the national universities increased dramatically: Johns Hopkins, from $3 to $24 million; Yale, $4 to $58 million; Columbia, $9 to $63 million; Harvard, $10 to $86 million (Mills, 1964, 45).

9. Bledstein, 1976; Barrow, 1990, 122, on production of Ph.D.'s, and chap. 3, on the role of Carnegie and Rockefeller funds in university reorganization through the creation of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the General Education Board; and Mills, 1964, 67-73, on numbers of Ph.D.'s and the founding of graduate schools and professional organizations, and 43 on expansion of endowments.
ism, mugwumpery, and the standing ecumenical establishment had bequeathed a sizable post-Civil War literary and journalistic legacy, but its New England religious and political provincialism required a massive overhaul and the infusion of much new intellectual and financial capital to meet new national conditions and serve new national purposes. The specialized journals and reviews are too diverse to warrant mention here, but some of the older denominational organs such as the Independent and Outlook are noteworthy because in the 1880s and 1890s they became general-purpose weeklies with large advertising revenues and circulations. Thanks to the generosity of the McCormick and Armour fortunes, Chicago began to challenge New York and Boston as an intellectual center with two successful weeklies on these same lines.¹⁰ When one adds the readers of the venerable Chautauquan of the Methodists and of the Disciples' Christian Century to this list, a huge portion of a national reform constituency was created and consolidated. These weeklies were supplemented by a rash of popular and inspirational novels connecting personal piety, social ethics, and national reform. Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward of 1888 and Mrs. Humphrey Ward's Robert Elsmere of that same year were best sellers. The urban moral awakening of the 1890s was expressed in a series of popular novels. The social gospel theologian Washington Gladden (The Cosmopolis City Club) and the radical editor and journalist Benjamin Flower (Civilization's Inferno) each had their novels published in 1893, setting the stage for William Stead's If Christ Came to Chicago, published two years later. This best seller spawned many imitations, including one in 1896 by Charles Sheldon, a Congregational minister from Kansas. In His Steps sold over two million copies.¹¹

The major journalistic innovation of this period was the formation of mass circulation monthly magazines. These new monthlies created a voracious demand for material and provided new opportunities for ambitious reform-minded poets, fiction writers, and intellectuals to spread their ideas, gain a certain measure of celebrity, and in the process, even get rich. Beginning with the Century in 1881, and followed by Cosmopolitan (1886), Scribner's Magazine (1887), and McClure's


(1893), these magazines soon batten on ever-increasing circulation and advertising. *Century* and *Scribner's* each had more than a hundred pages of advertising per issue by the late 1890s; both *Cosmopolitan* and *McClure's* had equivalent advertising and even larger circulations, with the latter approaching half a million and the former passing a million in 1906. Whereas these magazines appealed to both men and women, two other late-nineteenth-century magazines, *Ladies Home Journal* and *Woman's Home Companion*, were aimed especially at women and regularly featured the leaders of Progressive causes in their articles and columns. The *Ladies Home Journal* sold over two million copies each month by the end of World War I, becoming the most lucrative magazine in the world.

**ECONOMY**

These national networks of communication and these new ways of organizing politically active publics would not have been possible without changes in the organization of the economy. National railroad transportation, national advertising, rapidly rising personal income for the increasingly urbanized middle classes, and the consolidation of both finance and production made possible the creation of economic organizations, markets, and constituencies to challenge locally based political parties and economic activities as the source of power and direction. Indeed, the huge business, financial, and labor organizations were themselves autonomous sources of political power and loyalty.

When the newly formed labor federations and trade associations and the interlocking connections between investment banking and industrial sectors are taken into account, it is apparent that locally oriented political and economic systems could neither accede to the demands of the large organizations nor wholly withstand their blandishments. Given decentralized political authority and locally based but trans-jurisdictional political parties, the stage was set for a self-sustaining and mutually beneficial system of corruption. National business corporations and railroads were systematically blackmailed and fleeced by state and local governments exercising their police powers to protect

12. Mott, 1957b, 457–80, for history of and contributors to *Century*; 480–505, for *Cosmopolitan*; 589–607, for *McClure's*; 717–32, for *Scribner's*. In 1904, *McClure's* boasted to its readers that its authors of investigative articles engaged in extensive research to back their findings and that they were paid a minimum of more than $1,000 and often up to $2,500 per story.

13. Mott, 1957b, 536–55, for history of and contributors to *Ladies Home Journal*; 756–72 for *Woman's Home Companion*. The editor in this period was paid more than $100,000 per year.
small-producer capitalists and local realty interests. The party organiza­tions would, however, for the right price, arrange favorable environ­ments across these jurisdictional boundaries to create economies of scale in production and marketing.\textsuperscript{14}

At the national level, accommodating all of these competing inter­ests was of such an order of complexity—simply bargaining over tariffs became more than Congress could handle by the early twentieth cen­tury—that major financial and industrial policies were by default set in the federal courts. Indeed, at the beginning of this period, the power of the president and the administrative capacity of the executive branch were so deficient (and deliberately so, given the power of political parties) that even the generation and diffusion of social and economic statistics were often beyond its level of competence. Thus, to coordinate and regulate transport, business and finance, foreign trade policy, and labor-management relations at the national level required much more than the political will to respond to powerfully voiced demands: it re­quired the reconstitution of the national state, a reconstitution that could be created only in opposition to the prevailing system of parties and lawyers and courts.\textsuperscript{15}

Exceptions to this description of the national political system can be produced—for example, the Civil Service Act of 1883, the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887, and the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890—but close examination of their provisions and enforcement only confirms the power of party, section, and locality. That federal appellate courts regularly intervened in national regulation was less a testimony to their autonomous power than to the incapacity of Congress to agree on clear standards. Only in the decade preceding our entry into World War I and in the bureaucratic legacy of that war can one discern "the crea­tion of the American state" as permanent and quasi-autonomous insti­tutions (Skowronek, 1982).

\textsuperscript{14} Keller, 1977, 319-42, 384-94, and 409-38; and McCormick, 1986, 311-55. Charles Evans Hughes, governor of New York and, later, justice of the Supreme Court, remarked somewhat ruefully that while "apology is sometimes made for these methods as necessary for the protection of enterprises against reckless and blackmailing assault . . . the security of business in this country cannot depend upon the debauching of legislators and the perverting of administration." Hughes, 1910, 105; see also Croly, 1909, 353, on corporations preferring state to central reg­ulation because this was "the cheapest form of blackmail they could pay to the professional politicians."

\textsuperscript{15} Skowronek, 1982, part 2; Keller, 1977, 289-438; Orloff, 1988; and Orloff and Skocpol, 1984, on the lack of administrative integrity and capacity to explain the late arrival of the welfare state and national social spending generally when compared to developments in Britain and other major European countries.
INTERNATIONALISM

A more convincing exception lies in the area of foreign policy—the one area constitutionally reserved to the national government and reserved largely in the federal executive. Although subject to the pressures of party and congressional patronage, foreign policy provided the one area where "state building" could proceed earlier and faster than in domestic areas. War, in particular, contributes to "the health of the state," and, in the American context, the clear beneficiary was the presidency. The executive was able to wrest power from Congress and professionalize the foreign policy and trade bureaucracies (Becker, 1982; Rosenberg, 1982, 52–54). A dramatic symbol of this rapid expansion of executive authority is the budget for the United States Navy. Expenditures rose from $13 to $22 to $55 million in the years 1880, 1890, and 1900—and then doubled again by 1906. In this same period exports increased much faster than either population or gross national product (GNP), from $13.50 to $20.41 per capita between 1890 and 1906 (Bliss, 1908, 969). In short, the governmental units that most rapidly began to institutionalize "state" norms and transcendent national values were those that were already somewhat removed from party control because they did not directly impinge on the network of local and regional interests.

Running parallel to and even preceding these "nationalized" governmental institutions was the rapid expansion abroad of American financial, business, and religious organizations. By the early 1890s, more than five thousand American and Canadian missionaries (60 percent women) were serving overseas. The Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) for Foreign Missions, begun in 1888 by a young Cornell graduate as a recruiting and support group, signed up in one year six thousand college students who pledged to become foreign missionaries. At this same time investment banks actively began seeking foreign outlets for U.S. capital. As soon as the gold standard issue was resolved at home, direct investment abroad quadrupled between 1897 and 1914, reaching an annual rate of $2.6 billion. Technologically advanced and vertically integrated industries shared in this overseas expansion, often quite independently of government support or sponsorship. A prescient article, "The American Invasion of Europe," appeared in a 1901 publication of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,

16. Rosenberg, 1982, 29, on SVM; Handy (1984, 115) estimates that the Student Volunteer Movement placed a total of more than 20,000 foreign mission workers by the early 1940s. Rosenberg, 1982, 25–26, on investment banks; and see Becker, 1982, for the general relationships of business to U.S. foreign policy in the period 1893–1921.
recounting the attempted expansion of American urban transit and railroad companies into Paris, St. Petersburg, and southeast England.

Both organizationally and culturally, the institutions that consciously articulated and enforced claims of a national public good were established largely outside of formal governing institutions and in direct opposition to the most powerful informal governing institution of them all—the mass-based political party. Put in a slightly different way, many of these nongovernmental organizations, like the political parties they were beginning to supplant, took on the characteristics of “parastate” institutions; that is, they claimed to speak for and to establish on a voluntary basis what they claimed to be the collective ends of the national community. Their leaders, spokesmen, and supporters often saw themselves as the “authentic nation” exercising higher forms of citizenship. Whether expressed in the religious language of “Christianizing America,” the moral language of “the new social ethics,” the social science language of “the evolution of industrial society,” or the corporatist language of “economy and efficiency,” a new and national public doctrine was coming into being in and through these parastate institutions. And as this new public doctrine gained credence and power, it both weakened and transformed the roles of parties and elections and their allied governing institutions, especially legislatures. In short, the cultural, intellectual, and institutional basis for a new political regime was being created.

AN INSTITUTIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF REGIME CHANGE

New political regimes do not just happen any more than old regimes quietly fade away. Regime changes are born of conflicts of power, of ideas, and of institutions. In America, two regime changes issued from the wars of 1776 and 1860, both of which could legitimately be called revolutionary wars. But even “electoral revolutions” in the form of massive voter realignments bear revolutionary features insofar as they are followed by dramatic shifts in institutional power and public policy. Every regime change has clear winners and losers, both at the level of power and policy and at the level of regime-legitimating ideas. From an institutional and regime-change perspective, then, the issue of whether there “really was” a Progressive movement and whether that movement had coherence is really misplaced. We would literally be incapable of a coherent description of twentieth-century American society—its political, cultural, and economic institutions and
practices—without already utilizing the new discourse and doctrines that brought it into being.

Therefore, rather than add another voice to an increasingly convoluted and often frustrating conversation regarding the meaning of Progressivism,” I proceed in this study from quite another standpoint. My primary operating assumption is that institutional relationships, practices, and purposes define political orders and distinguish one political regime from another. A second assumption is that the period beginning roughly in the 1890s and continuing until World War I witnessed the establishment of a new regime in the sense that these new institutions and practices overcame and displaced many of the institutions and practices of an earlier regime. Both the institutions defended by the old regime—local democracy, local economy, national courts, and coalitional political parties—and the attacking institutions of what became the new regime represented distinct sets of social and economic interests and cultural, moral, and religious values.

These opposing interests and values were not merely represented by institutional conflict, however, as if institutions are external to those interests and values. On both sides of this conflict competing interests and values had to legitimate the power and purposes of their respective institutions and practices. But the only way justification or legitimation of these institutions and practices can take place in a democratic political forum is in the form of a coherent ‘‘discourse’’ that mobilizes followers and empowers the leaders through their respective institutions. The creation and articulation of this institution-legitimating discourse (most clearly evident in the case of new institutions and values challenging the existing ones) also serves to constitute or ‘‘found’’ these institutions and, insofar as its creators and adherents are loyal to them, to constitute or at least transform the identities and actions of the people in them. To understand the political meaning of this period from an institutional perspective, then, requires an exploration of that political language—or discourse—which came to constitute the institutions, personal identities, and practices of what we now call Progressivism. And insofar as Progressivism weakened, demoralized, and even destroyed key institutions of the previous regime, it subordinated and devalued the ways of life or ‘‘practices’’ constituted in those older institutions. Therefore, to understand the language of Progressivism also requires an exploration of its opponents’ discourse: When and how was the previous regime constituted both as institutions and practices and as a legitimating discourse, an authoritative public doctrine?

This task is both inherently difficult and additionally complex for reasons that are unique to America. There is a tacit assumption in our culture that we have always had only "one" political order, most assuredly since the Civil War, quite certainly since the Constitution, probably since the Revolution, and possibly since the earliest colonial period. Because our identity as Americans is grounded almost exclusively in political values and political institutions—what else do we have in common?—to speak in regime terms is risky if it impeaches our core identity as Americans. Thus, there is a sort of cultural and psychological imperative to see our history as "seamless"—one political era merging into another, foreshadowed and even destined to become what each becomes—precisely to give coherence and continuity to our own identities and futures as Americans. We each have a very personal stake in our political "founders"—whoever they may be—and in the ideas we see them as embodying. We each also have a very personal stake in particular political and social institutions and practices that these people "founded," and for the same reason.

This identity imperative remains true even when we read our history as seamless in another sense, as a recurring cycle of redemption and declension, a constant battle between the forces pulling us into old world (or capitalist or advanced capitalist) corruption and those seeking to reclaim our original promise. Thus, whether history is read as ritual (the ongoing march of free institutions and democracy) or as jeremiad (the recurring battle of democracy against its enemies) a present identity is created and sustained, and simultaneously, a standpoint for political values is provided. And from either direction, the onward march as ritual or the dialectical progression as jeremiad, every act of opposition to or denial of present institutions and practices is a reaffirmation of some other set of institutions and practices as the grounds of our identity and the guide to our practices.

Our identities as Americans are therefore located primarily in political narratives—in histories and prophecies—and not in abstract theories. Because each of us exists in time, we experience ourselves as coherent because we envision a past, a present, and a future. But if our shared identities as Americans, our tickets of entry as equal members into a "people," are largely constructs of political narrative, then an attack on some identity-constituting institutions is an attack on some members' identities, and therefore on their claims to self-respect and equal membership. This attack is a necessary part of the struggle for the public recognition of new values, new institutions, new practices, and new identities. It is no wonder, then, that under the guise of agreeing with each other because we have always belonged to "one" common political order, Americans can engage in such deep political con-
conflicts over the meaning of that order and that our politics is so often a thinly disguised *Kulturkampf*.

Every attack on a given political discourse, a given horizon of meanings, a "prevailing ideology," is also a call to ground identity and personal meaning in another discourse, another horizon, another "ideology." Thus, to take a contemporary example, even when the most radical of feminists take to task the American revolutionaries, the abolitionists, or the New Dealers because of their lack of concern for gender equality, the "us" betrayed by "them" is, for all that, still an American us, an identity grounded in a political founding, a particular narrative of identity and meaning. Now it is possible, at least for some intellectuals, to avoid all this Americanist entrapment and step "outside" the problem by grounding their identities in objective social science, or in Kantian philosophy, or in Western culture, or in Marxist revolution, but the cost of this move is an effective loss of citizenship, a


19. The recent historiographical struggle over retroactive inclusion in "the Progressive Era" is most germane here. The strategy is first to deny that such a thing as "a progressive movement" with a clear identity actually exists. This assertion dilutes or reads out the foundational role of northern WASPs. "The Progressive Era seems to have been characterized by shifting coalitions around different issues, with the specific nature of those coalitions varying on federal, state, and local levels, from region to region, and from the first to the second decade of the century" [Filene, 1970, 33]. This many-sidedness in action is mirrored by a lack of programmatic coherence and even consciousness: "Urban liberalism [in the Progressive era] was not the result of a systematic program . . . [it was] the sum of countless positions taken by thousands of legislators . . . shaped by the cross pressures of social change, partisan politics, and legislative in fighting" [Buenker, 1978, 206, and see vii-ix; see also Sarasohn, 1989, vii-ix, and note 21 below on Rodgers]. Then, having foreclosed the possibility of a victory of one particular way of life against other ways of life, the next step is inclusion of everyone into this now nonexistent Progressivism. "Fifty years of intensive investigation have failed to establish any consensus on the precise meaning of that elusive word." "Until recently most accounts of the Progressive Era, either explicitly or by implication, have excluded the urban, immigrant-descended working class from participation" [Buenker, 1978, vii and 198]. "Twenty-five years ago . . . the concept of a progressive movement was first beginning to dissolve under scrutiny." "The Democrats have come to be regarded as a more effective, clearly motivated element in Progressive Era politics. . . . The Progressive Era Democrats have been resurrected. . . . Many southern Democratic congressmen [are] 'unsuspected progressives.' . . . The South has risen again in its reputation as a breeding ground for reformists' [Sarasohn, 1989, ix]. It is no wonder that Daniel Rodgers warns us that the concept of "hegemony" will not prove very useful in understanding Progressivism—especially if it is understood in a way as muddled as this [Rodgers, 1982, 121]. See also chapter 4 below on Woodrow Wilson as a Progressive.
sort of internal emigration out of the country as a historical community.

A REGIME UNDERSTANDING
OF POLITICAL IDEAS

To understand Progressivism as a distinct regime that contested and displaced another regime requires that we be particularly attentive to this special American problem of a politically established personal identity. Those who created and shaped the ideas that transformed our politics in this period neither created them out of whole cloth nor simply registered the altered material and social conditions—as if everyone else were only a bit behind them in their recognition. (This latter view is often encouraged by victors and later historians in a display of democratic inclusion and as a way to make their victory more bearable by the vanquished.) Because Progressives wrote quite consciously as Americans and because they were attacking ideas and institutions on which many of their fellow Americans—and even they themselves—located their identities, we must explore how they came to find alternative resources, alternative institutions, and alternative selves by which and through which to create an alternative public doctrine. In this way, an institutional understanding of American political regimes impels us to articulate an institutional understanding of American political ideas.

Accompanying all regime-changing ideas are newly constituted or, more exactly, reconstituted, political identities contending first for recognition and then for dominance. To study the texts containing these ideas, therefore, also requires us to study the texts' authors—who they were, how they saw themselves, with whom they identified in the past. In short, we must explore both the writers and their writings to see their "horizons" if we are to understand the meaning and power of their political ideas. Here, however, a caveat is in order. The decentralized and pluralistic nature of formal political powers in America—the lack of a coherent and centralized state—necessarily distorts and disaggregates coherent political ideas. This fact suggests that we must never start by asking what ideas Progressive political activists used at any given time to get elected or to further a reform agenda. Rather, we must focus on what ideas Progressive thinkers created or, better, reconsti-

20. This is never quite an either-or situation: the America of this "internal immigrant" may simply be relocated in a history that the historical political communities in America have never imagined or shared, e.g., America as international working class or as secular enlightenment vanguard.
tuted from the past, if we are to understand Progressivism at its intellectual origins. Very often, in fact, this creation of ideas is more a major relocation into politics of ideas previously subordinated or even "outside" of politics—a process of transporting sources of local personal identity (e.g., New Englander, mother, Methodist) into the larger society by "politicizing" issues not previously thought to be (or permitted to be) "political" at the national level. The examples of both abolitionism and turn-of-the-century feminism need no elaboration in this context.

This relocation of ideas and identities from nonpolitical (e.g., family) or regional-political (e.g., New England) locations into national political space should not be taken as suggesting that the study of political ideas from a regime perspective is simply a study of political culture. Two factors stand in the way. The first is that most "cultural politics" takes place within a given regime, so the battles are fought within a stable framework of political language and political institutions. Second, to reduce political ideas and political identities to political culture and then to political behavior begs the questions of where these culturally constituting ideas came from and, most important, of

21. Daniel Rodgers's very influential essay "In Search of Progressivism" (1982) reasons backward precisely from use and not creation: "If we imagine the progressives, like most of the rest of us, largely as users rather than shapers of ideas" (127), we can then see them employing "three distinct social languages . . . full of mutual contradictions" (123). "Only by discarding the mistaken assumption of a coherent reform movement" can we see this period for what it was: "an era of shifting, ideologically fluid, issue-focussed coalitions, all competing for the reshaping of American society" (114). By begging both the question of change in basic institutions of power and of original and systematic political ideas (perhaps Americans do not need them), the vanquished of the old regime simply disappear without a trace in Rodgers's analysis while the remaining conflict is only among the Progressives who now seem to be almost everyone. It is no wonder, then, that the beginning of Rodgers's search (and that of most historians of Progressivism) begins at the turn of the century, that is, after most of the larger theoretical and cultural battles had already been long fought and on their way to being won in the dynamic and creative reaches of American society.

22. This issue is made more complex because of federalism, which itself "localizes" all sorts of political values and identities and preserves their locality under the doctrines of states' rights and strict constitutional construction. Simply to place previously local political issues into the national agenda radically changes national politics. The so-called rise of the religious right in America during the 1970s is a result of this kind of relocation—the sudden "appearance" of previously localized identities and practices. Theodore Lowi, "Before Conservatism and Beyond," unpublished ms. 12–19, explains the rise of contemporary American conservatism in just this way.

23. The textbook example of this phenomenon is the period of political party hyper-competition and stalemate, 1876–1896. See Keller, 1977, 544–87; Kleppner, 1978; and Silbey, 1991.
why only some of these become constitutive of political identities, political movements, and political conquests. The cultural dimension of political struggle is most valuable in explaining the depth of nineteenth-century party loyalties and in connecting personal values to public policies. And it was of almost infinite value insofar as it displaced the crude and unconvincing explanations of that period based on economic interest. But without understanding more articulate and systematically formulated political ideas, the cultural dimension in itself cannot explain significant changes in the contexts of these power struggles and how and why different political institutions and practices favor different forms of "cultural politics." Only in this way can we avoid the illusion that we can or have reached some "end of ideology" in our politics, some end state where neutrality regarding ways and ends of life can be an operating political principle.

There is one last feature to a regime understanding of political ideas that bears early mention. Political ideas and the identities they carry become quite altered when they become institutionalized. Most obviously, when institutionalized governmental and enforced, these ideas become literally authoritative. This is often hard to see in America with our weak, decentralized, and pluralistic structures of authority. And, in fact, these structures do serve to distort and diffuse the attempts to translate coherent social theories into coherent policies and practices. Nevertheless, the use of coercion in our political system is certainly in plain view, and the legally enforced boundaries of authority between governing institutions following a political struggle (e.g., between courts and legislatures, or between the president and Congress) are also obvious. But even powerful "voluntary" or "quasipublic" institutions that exercise significant power over their own members and in the larger society (universities, professions, churches, corporations, the national media) are constituted from ideas that have all the markings of politically authoritative ones; each and every one of these institutions encode particular American political identities and values, include and honor some ways of life, exclude and even dishonor others. And as the boundaries between public-coercive and private-voluntary have become increasingly blurred—this in itself was an achievement of Progressive public doctrine—the coercive institutions of the national government have become the silent or not-so-silent partner in the ac-

24. This is another way of saying that because powerful institutions themselves embody particular cultural, ethnic, religious and political values, the relative power of one or another set tends to determine the grounds of which cultural-political battles are fought in the larger society. This may be why, for example, so much heated political battle now take place in universities—the assumption being that these institutions are strategic for larger conquests.
tivities of every powerful institution in our society. Because of these features of political ideas in an institutional setting, it is best to see successful regime-founding political ideas as public doctrines. "Public" ideas are those that establish and legitimate institutions that exercise public power and therefore frame the language in which our common life is understood, discussed, and conducted. These public ideas are also "doctrines" in the quasi-religious sense of constituting personal and collective meanings that become the standard for full inclusion and equal respect in the political order and, therefore, the psychic or "spiritual" bonds holding the nation America together.

Were you looking to be held together by lawyers?
Or by an agreement on a paper? or by arms?
Nay, nor the world, nor any living thing, will so cohere.

—Walt Whitman [1926, 265],
"Over the Carnage Rose Prophetic a Voice"

THE PROBLEM OF HEGEMONY
AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Because the concept of hegemony and prescriptions for its use have been introduced into American scholarship largely from neo-Marxian and feminist perspectives, it is often thought that its employment carries with it those same political postures. This is unfortunate, because the concept is particularly useful for the study of Progressive public doctrine from the institutional perspectives urged here. From this perspective and from the perspective of groups contesting for power, hegemony is not a problem but the solution. This is as true for reformers claiming to extend freedom as it is for those trying to protect advantages sustained by the prevailing order. Hegemonic control is another way of indicating that a regime is truly established and legitimate because even the vanquished accept its terms—better yet, if the vanquished have so accepted the terms that they think they were part of

25. Although it is most obvious during periods of war and war mobilization, this blending of public and private has been most fully seen as part of the working constitution of contemporary political life in Lowi, 1969.
the victorious forces. And in the American political context, where formal political power is so fragmented, where democratic norms are so valued, and therefore, where the opportunities to subvert the coherent exercise of authority are so manifold and so acceptable, the overthrow of one regime and the institution of another one requires victories across many contested terrains before the political prize is truly won.

Victory that lasts cannot be a superficial one, on the order of winning some elections and passing some laws. Indeed, such is the fugitive nature of political authority in America that the passage of laws (even laws that are actually enforced) is often more the symbolic crown of victories achieved earlier and elsewhere (e.g., the Eighteenth Amendment). In the apt words of Theodore Roosevelt regarding international political competition, mere external "political conquests" are as nothing compared to internal "ethnic" ones, by which he meant the flourishing of the "American Way of Life" in the world (Ninkovitch, 1986, 226). Whereas in the international environment this kind of extension of power is taken as both obvious and good across the political spectrum and by practically all Americans in Roosevelt's time and now (contested is what should qualify as the American way of life and what are the appropriate means of conquest), the issue of the legitimacy of domestic hegemony in this national identity sense has been highly controversial, at least since the rise of mass participation in national politics.

For Progressive intellectuals the issue of hegemony was especially pressing because so much of their political activity was explicitly directed to transforming intellectual and moral culture and to changing public opinion. The other side of this strategy was that much of Pros-

26. One of the first books to celebrate the Progressive victory and to disguise who was defeated is Benjamin Parke DeWitt's The Progressive Movement of 1915. Published by Macmillan as part of a "Citizen's Library of Economics, Politics and Sociology" series edited by Richard T. Ely, this book is now much maligned for giving credit to too narrow a band of leaders—indeed, for positing a coherent and unified movement at all. In fact, it is a beautifully crafted myth of inclusion. Part 1, "Origins and Development," has five chapters of almost equal length, each devoted to "The Progressive Movement in the [Democratic, Republican, Progressive, Socialist, Prohibition] Party." Part 2 recounts Progressive achievements in the nation (control of corporations, control of government, and measures of relief), Part 3, in the states (direct primaries, initiative, referendum, recall, and "measures to prevent and relieve social and economic distress"), and Part 4, in the cities (home rule, charter reform, efficiency, and purity). Seven of the thirty-two books published in the Macmillan citizenship series up to that point were written by four of the group highlighted in this study: Addams (two), Ely (two), Kelley, and Ross (two).

27. The issue here is when deference politics gave way to democratic interest group politics and cultural pluralism. See Formisano, 1974; Shefter, 1978; and Wood, 1987.
gressive political thought and reform was directed specifically against politics as a game, bounded only by written constitutions, elections, and formal procedures. For the Progressives, then, political reform consisted in directly calling for (and often seeking to impose) new and higher ways of life; both the Progressives and their enemies were quite outspoken on opposite sides of this issue. The last time this issue had arisen in a decisive way was, of course, with slavery. But both before and after the Civil War the standing national regime of parties and courts was largely legitimated by the claims of equal rights, limited constitutional government, and fair electoral procedures. Both the ante-bellum and the post-1876 regimes declared issues concerning ways of life off-limits in national politics. This is exactly what the Democratic party and the South claimed and the Republican party denied just prior to the Civil War and what even the national Republican party was usually forced to declare after 1876 in order to remain competitive. In any event, with the exception of the Civil War period, there is a compelling logic in the liberal tradition of American political thought that would prompt one to conclude that the bare exposure of "hegemony" in national politics is proof of an infringement of rights and therefore a threat to democracy: hegemony is "aristocracy" and both are un-American.

It is thus fair to say that discussion of what we today call "hegemony" was reintroduced both by Progressives on the offensive and by their opponents on the defensive. The opponents claimed that a rights-based regime of limited national government and rule of law was

28. For example, even though a vast majority of state Republican party platforms called for prohibition in the 1880s and 1890s, the national platform did not even mention the issue until 1888, and then only following the main body of the document as "Offered by Mr. Boutelle, of Maine," which "sympathizes with all wise and well-directed efforts for the promotion of temperance and morality." In 1892, but by then in the main body of the document, it again sympathized with considered efforts "to lessen and prevent the evils of intemperance and promote morality." No mention of the issue appeared in 1896 or thereafter (Johnson and Porter, 1975).

29. The Democratic party, consisting of a coalition of more disparate cultures, religions, and regions than the Republican, was always a more consistent adherent to this egalitarian and "rights-based" language of liberalism. Theirs was a more consistent anti-hegemonic politics as defense against the increasingly powerful core economy and core culture. This difference will be discussed more fully in chapters 4 and 5 below.

30. This was standard party politics during the stalemate period, 1876–1896. Only as the Republican party became the permanent majority and Progressive ideas began to dominate political discourse both inside and outside electoral politics was the culturally defensive language of the Democratic party permanently subordinated under a new public doctrine. Although it is rather late in the day to try to get even, John Buenker calls this side of the Progressive project an "American Kultur-
in fact neutral as to ways of life and (with the exception of all women and all nonwhite races) neutral and agnostic regarding American citizenship: we are all equal members if we obey the law and display an appropriate democratic humility. "Equal rights for all and special privileges for none" applied not only to individuals, but to regions, religions, and subcultures as well. In this way, the defenders of the old regime exactly reproduced Tocqueville's observation that patriotism, or the sense of belonging to a single country, in early nineteenth-century America,

is, so to speak, nothing more than an aggregate or summary of the patriotic zeal of the separate provinces. Every citizen of the United States transfers, so to speak, his attachment to his little republic into the common store. . . . In defending the Union he defends the increasing prosperity of his own state or county, the right of conducting its affairs, and the hope of causing measures of improvement to be adopted in it which may be favorable to his own interests; and these are motives that are wont to stir men more than the general interests of the country and the glory of the nation [Tocqueville, 1981, 83].

And in many respects, Tocqueville was right: pre–Civil War America was not one nation, even though Tocqueville thought that northern culture would inevitably prevail. To the Progressives, as to their abolitionist ancestors, fell the burden of trying to create one nation. To them, too, therefore, fell the task of overcoming Tocqueville's understanding of American citizenship and American identity. They provided the intellectual basis for concerted efforts locally and nationally, coercively and through "free institutions" (e.g., compulsory public schools), consciously to define, inculcate, and reward "national" ways of life over "local" ones. That they were more than willing to do so—indeed, their evolutionary social science rested on hegemonic assumptions and contained hegemonic strategies—is a most important horizon to consider, not the least because these Progressives are today so often exposed in current scholarship for doing exactly what they set out to do, namely, to exercise "social control."  

31. One of the most successful books in the social sciences was Social Control by Edward Ross. First published in 1901, it remained in print until 1932.
ninst and neo-Marxist scholarship, then, cannot lie in its uncovering of vices that the exposed already knew as virtues. Rather, this contemporary scholarship of exposure is valuable because it has familiarized us today with a strategy of analysis used then by the Progressives. To them, too, the issues were whose horizon, whose hegemony, which ways of life. There can be no strict neutrality in these matters even when the way of life contended for is more cosmopolitan and universalistic than those of its opponents. Indeed, the Progressives claimed that the rights-based regime of nineteenth-century America specifically privileged narrow, conformist, and ignoble ways of life under the guise of neutrality and fairness. The perfect examples were the defense of slavery before the Civil War and the denial of women's rights after. Thus, the charge that the Progressives were "hegemons" seeking, not emancipation and justice, but social control and dominance is very true but also very trivial both in the context of their own writings and for our understanding of them. And as creators of the role of university professor and journalist-intellectual as social guardians and social critics—replacing the New England clergy as the high priests of the religion of the American Way of Life—understanding the Progressives on these terms may teach us more than we care to learn about ourselves.

When John Adams was nearing the end of his life he was asked in a letter, "Who then was the author, inventor, discoverer of indepen-

Charles Cooley's *Human Nature and the Social Order* [1902] and *Social Organization: A Study of the Larger Mind* [1909] address these same themes. The latter book had a publishing life of twenty years. Ross [1918, 245] even translates the striving for high personal ideas into a form of social control: "The moralists with their 'self-realization,' 'beauty of virtue,' 'moral ideal,' assure us they are not controlling the individual, they are simply enlightening him. . . . They are merely trying to show the individual what is most worth striving for. That the moral values they commend to him tally so closely with values for society is a mere coincidence." Ross then adds that the sociologist must not be fooled by these disclaimers: "It is simpler and more elastic than certain outworn means of control. It is peculiarly compatible with that higher evolution of personality for which society exists."

32. American historical scholarship is a series of battles on this issue, especially regarding the Whigs, the abolitionists, and the Progressives. The arguments on each side—and even the patterns of evidence—are practically interchangeable. See an excellent discussion of this issue by Howe [1990]. Because the subtext in all these discussions is the standing of the Puritan myth of America and the felt need or fear of collective duty, one can almost trace the present standing of this myth by seeing who seems to be winning the battle over history in any or all of these periods. On this measure, the Puritan myth of America has staged an amazingly rapid comeback since the final death of the New Deal in the late 1960s. A recent exception is Dawley, 1991, 191 and 254–94, resulting in a need to distinguish between "good" and "bad" Progressives.
"His answer is both deft avoidance and powerful expression of the New England narrative of America. He said that neither he, nor Jefferson, nor Otis, nor any of the other titular founders should take the laurels—all they did, singly and collectively, was to 'awaken and revive... the original fundamental principle of [seventeenth-century] coloniza-
tion'" [Adams, 1851, 359]. The task of discovering the 'inventors' of what became the public doctrine of Progressivism will not go back quite that far. The search must go back far enough, however, to identify voices that are not simply parroting or popularizing the unamended ideas of others, whose arguments are deep criticisms of regnant national political ideas and institutions, and whose alternative ideas become constitutive of the new complex of public and private institutions and practices that were instrumental in bringing about a new regime.

This task meant that the search began much farther back in time than when party-political and political reform activities began. And insofar as Progressivism sought to destroy and supplant the prevailing system of parties, one must seek to discover the institutions and organizations that were to take its place. Innovation, then, is simultaneously intellectual and institutional; indeed, the new institutions embodied and represented new ideas and new ways of life, all of which were simultaneously seeking public recognition and public power.

From a variety of specialized studies of the intellectual and cultural life of this period, I generated a large list of potential candidates for the title 'inventor' of Progressivism. From other studies of organizational and institutional innovation I discovered still more. I reduced the first list to those who wrote serious and largely original books and articles, beginning in the 1880s or early 1890s, that were deeply critical of prevailing American political and economic ideas and practices and that sought to redefine the way we view our moral, social, economic, and political life. My next task was to see how influential their writings were. Here I resorted to two measures of simple market success. The first is whether they had established their ideas and reputations sufficiently to write textbooks or other broadly definitive books in their special fields. The second test was to trace the number of years these books were continuously published. Through both bibliographical and biographical sources, I then explored the extent to which these same authors were organizationally and institutionally innovative. Did they write for a wider audience, organize professional associations, found specialized journals and academic specializations, and engage in other activities to spread and give effect to their ideas? This process was far less systematic in the doing than in the telling, but it did yield about twenty-five prolific and influential writers, most of them academics.
After dropping some of these for want of originality and others for lack of evidence that they and their writings were actively engaged in progressive reform activities and argument, I then turned to others who were not primarily academics, but who were organizationally innovative in ways that complemented reform ideas and activities. Here I added two innovative editor-journalist-publicists and four women who were both feminist intellectuals and actively engaged in progressive reform institutions and causes. The list is not intended to be "representative" in the sense of encompassing the entire range of reform movements, causes, or ideas. What it does represent is a core group of intellectuals whose writings and institutional innovations first defined the larger terms by which Progressivism was defined in all its inner variety and inner conflict. In that sense, the aggregate of writings of this group, but certainly not the writers, are more radical and more conservative, more religious and less religious, more utopian-romantic and more scientific-technical than most of the more programmatic and directly "ideological" writings and political activists that followed. That is the nature of formative ideas and institutions, and of theoretical activity generally. That is what distinguishes reflective and articulate ideas from serviceable ideology and, for that matter, hegemonic victory from passing fashion.

THE AUTHORS OF PROGRESSIVE PUBLIC DOCTRINE

HENRY CARTER ADAMS (1851–1921). Professor of political economy, University of Michigan (1886–1921). Grinnell (Iowa) College; Andover Theological School; two years at Heidelberg and Berlin universities; received the first Ph.D. degree awarded by Johns Hopkins. Born in Iowa, son of Ephraim Adams (New Hampshire descendant of early seventeenth-century English settlers, an early antislavery activist, cofounder of Iowa [Grinnell] College and member of the "Iowa Band," a group of New England evangelicals dedicated to erecting a Christian commonwealth in the Midwest). Cofounder of the American Economics Association in 1885, he was also the first to note America's unique administrative environment and attack the intellectual foundations of English political economy in "The Relation of the State to Industrial Action" (1887). The Science of Finance: An Investigation of Public Expenditure and Public Revenues [Holt, 1898–1924].

seventeenth-century English settlers; prominent Republican state senator who had organized and led a military company during the Civil War. Active in the woman’s political and labor movements. Founding member, American Sociological Society (1905). Seconded Theodore Roosevelt’s nomination at the Progressive party convention (1912). Became a peace activist during World War I and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931. *Democracy and Social Ethics* (Macmillan, 1902–1926); *Twenty Years at Hull House* (Macmillan, 1910–1949).


**JOHN ROGERS COMMONS** (1862–1945). Professor of political economy at the University of Wisconsin (1904–32). Oberlin; Johns Hopkins (no degree). Born in Ohio, son of John and Clarissa Commons (she was New England descendant of early settlers and a graduate of Oberlin; he was a descendant of North Carolina Quakers; both were ardent abolitionists). John Rogers was named after a sixteenth-century British Protestant martyr. Co-founder of the American Institute of Christian Sociology (1893) and, with Richard T. Ely and others, the American Association for Labor Legislation (1906). Assisted Ralph Easley, secretary of the National Civic Federation
progressivism as national regime

1902–4. Headed a research bureau for Milwaukee's socialist mayor (1911–13); appointed by President Wilson to the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations (1913–15) to investigate causes of labor unrest. Conceived and drafted a series of innovative social reform measures for the state of Wisconsin: its civil service law (1905), public utility law (1907), and workmen's compensation act (1911), culminating in the formation of the Wisconsin Industrial Commission that same year. Served as president of the National Consumers' League (1923–35). Races and Immigrants in America (Macmillan, 1907–30); (with John B. Andrews) Principles of Labor Legislation (Harper and Brothers, 1916–36).


John Dewey (1859–1952). Professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago (1894–1904) and Columbia University (1905–52). University of Vermont; Johns Hopkins, Ph.D. Born in Vermont, son of Archibald Sprague and Lucina Artemisia Rich Dewey (both descendants of longtime Vermont farmers; in 1861, at age 50, Archibald sold his grocery store and enlisted in the Union Army, remaining in it until 1867). At Chicago Dewey was active with Hull House, the National Civic Federation, and Chicago's public schools. With his wife he founded the Laboratory School at the University. President, American Psychological Association (1899) and American Philosophical Association (1904). (With James Tufts) Ethics (Henry Holt, 1908–42); Democracy and Education (Macmillan, 1916–53).


ARTHUR TWINING HADLEY (1856–1930). Professor of political economy (1883–99) and president (1899–1921) at Yale. Yale, B.A. and graduate work; Berlin (no degree). Born in Connecticut, son of James and Anne Lording Hadley (he was a New England descendant of mid-seventeenth-century English settlers and professor of Greek at Yale). His 1885 study of American and European railroads was among the first to recognize the fallacy of Ricardian theories of prices in industries with heavy fixed costs. After he became president of Yale, he achieved the reputation as a sort of public moralist and lecturer throughout America and abroad. *Railroad Transportation* (G. P. Putnam's, 1885–1912); *Economics: An Account of the Relations between Private Property and Public Welfare* (G. P. Putnam's, 1896–1911).

EDMUND J. JAMES (1855–1925). Professor of public finance and administration, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania (1883–96), and president, University of Illinois (1904–19). Northwestern; Harvard; Halle, Ph.D. Born in Illinois, son of Colin Dew and Amanda Keziah Casad James (he was the highest lay leader of the Methodist church in Illinois). One of the youngest among founders of the American Economic Association in 1885, he later cofounded, with Simon Patten, and was first president of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (1889–1901) and first editor of its *Annals* (1890–96). He was a leader in shaping professional education in business and finance and in establishing institutional and intellectual connections between businessmen, political leaders, and academics.


EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS (1866–1951). Professor of economics and sociology at Stanford University (1893–1900) and the University of Wisconsin (1906–37). Coe College; Germany; Johns Hopkins, Ph.D. Born in Illinois, son of William Carpenter and Rachel Ellsworth Ross (she was a Pennsylvania descendant of early nineteenth-century Scotch-Irish settlers). Founding member, American Sociological Society (1905), and president (1914 and 1915). The most prominent American social theorist of his day, he wrote the first textbook in social psychology and, through public lectures and popular writings, showed the relationship of social science to social reform. *Social Control* (Macmillan, 1901–32); *Foundations of Sociology* (Macmillan, 1905–26); *Social Psychology* (Macmillan, 1908–25).

VIDA DUTTON SCUDDER (1861–1954). Professor of literature, Wellesley College (1892–1928). Smith; Oxford (no degree); Smith, M.A. Born in India, daughter of David Coit and Harriet Louisa Dutton Scudder (Congregational missionaires related to E. P. Dutton, the publisher). Helped establish Denison House, Boston branch of the College Settlements Association (1890); founding member and lecturer for W. D. P. Bliss’s Society of Christian Socialists; cofounder, Women’s Trade Union League (1903). *Social Ideals in English Letters* (Houghton, Mifflin and Chautauqua, 1898–1923).


By 1915, this group of nineteen intellectuals had produced over one hundred fifty books, with articles, book reviews, columns, and pamphlets running in the thousands. The twenty-seven books written by this group are highlighted above both because of their publication frequency and life spans and because they dominated collegiate instruction and the ideas of more popular writers. Whereas most of this
group's academic writing began in the mid and late 1880s, twenty-three of these books were first published between 1893 and 1910, ten alone in the period between 1895 and 1899 and another nine between 1904 and 1910. This tends to represent their more mature and authoritative work because the entire group of nineteen were born between 1847 and 1866. Eighteen of these twenty-seven books were published continuously for twenty years or more; eight were published for more than thirty years.\textsuperscript{33}

Even though only thirteen of this group held academic positions, seventeen were founding members, journal editors, or presidents of academic professional organizations in economics, sociology, and political and social science formed in the period 1885–1906. Needless to add, their educational credentials and academic connections were impressive. All but one had college degrees; all but two also did graduate work, with eleven receiving Ph.D. degrees. Only one had a divinity degree, but he did not minister; three had law degrees, but they did not practice or teach law.\textsuperscript{34} Fifteen spent at least a year abroad in travel and study, many spending two or more years. Twelve attended German universities, with four of them receiving German Ph.D.'s. Only one studied in England, but not for an academic degree. Using rather strict criteria (Dewey, for example, barely qualifies in this early period), we note that seventeen of this group helped form, actively participated in or wrote political material for specific Progressive reform causes, running the gamut from prohibition, woman suffrage, and antiproduction campaigns, to urging initiative, referenda, recall, or proportionate representative legislation, municipal ownership of utilities, prohibition of child labor, trade union recognition and compulsory arbitration, to establishment of settlement houses and charity organization societies. And despite the prestigious academic affiliations of most of this group, seventeen wrote for the popular or semipopular press, with some becoming well known as a result. At some point in their careers, a good number of the academics ran afoul of university administrators and trustees for their "radical" political, social, or religious opinions (three lost academic appointments), but none of them suffered grievously or lost professional standing for their views.

This list of similarities among these people is only statistical and

\textsuperscript{33} Examples and discussion of political economy writings are found in chapter 5 below.

\textsuperscript{34} One should note here how different this group is from the membership and professional orientation of the American Social Science Association, formed in 1865 and disbanded in the face of academic professional associations in 1909. The ASSA was composed overwhelmingly of the reigning professions—law, medicine, divinity [Haskell, 1977, 77–90 and 104–10].
says nothing about their real intellectual and political connections to one another. It was only after this list was completed that I discovered how closely interconnected these people were and on so many different levels. In the language of C. Wright Mills, it was as if I had uncovered an incredibly tightly knit power elite—except for the fact that, at this time, they had very little power and were pitted against a prevailing elite. The most obvious connection is the academic one: nine of this group were founding members of the American Economic Association (AEA); four of these same nine, plus five others, were founding members of the American Sociological Society; two of the AEA founders in turn founded the American Academy of Political and Social Science and its journal, the Annals. Immediately following its founding in 1890, this journal became the meeting point for men and women from government, academia, labor, business, and finance to address the entire range of issues on the national political agenda for the next twenty-five years. In the period from 1890 to 1918, fully fifteen of this group had written a total of ninety-four articles or extended comments on articles in the Annals. Their connection through the American Journal of Sociology is equally close. Founded in 1895 and edited for almost thirty years by Albion Small of the University of Chicago, through 1917 this journal reviewed thirty-six books written by twelve persons from this group. Over this same period, ten wrote a total of one hundred twenty articles.  

That only three held academic appointments in sociology suggests not only loose "disciplinary boundaries" but also that sociology served both as an integrator of the new social sciences and as the major source of theoretical grounding for Progressive reforms.

As an external test for the claim that this group of intellectuals was both coherent and central to the creation of Progressive public doctrine at its most articulate level, I ran two sets of "scholarly consensus vector" experiments. The first was to see how many of this group were discussed in three widely diverse books examining social reform in this period. The first is the 1908 Encyclopedia of Social Reform, a tome of more than thirteen hundred closely printed pages containing the history, organizations, writings, and ideas of social reform and packed with what seems to be every form of social statistics then known to Western man. The Encyclopedia also includes short biographies of prominent reformers, living and dead, mostly from England and America, but also from European countries. Fifteen of this group of nineteen are written up in the 1908 edition. A second source, Robert Crunden's

35. In the case of the American Journal of Sociology this must be qualified by the fact that Albion Small and Edward Ross account for eighty-five of this total, but each of the rest wrote at least two, and they average between four and five.
Ministers of Reform (1984), discusses Progressive intellectual, political, literary, and artistic culture. It includes discussion of fifteen from this group; with the Encyclopedia, the entire group is covered. Paul Boyer's 1978 study of urban reform and reformers in America from 1820 to 1920 includes nine of these intellectuals. In identifying the specific philosophical underpinnings of turn-of-the-century urban reform, Boyer discusses at some length writings by four academics, three of whom are included in the group above (Ross, Cooley, and Patten). The fourth writer he cites, Luther Lee Bernard, was a generation younger, studied under Albion Small at Chicago, and published his seminal work on social control in the American Journal of Sociology in 1911 (Boyer, 1978, 224–32).

But my criteria are more stringent than identifying Progressives as activists or even as influential ideologues for particular reform causes. If regime-changing political ideas are truly constitutive and in fact relocate the ways in which we see ourselves and our society, then this group must also be recognized by scholars who have charted the major changes in American philosophy, economics, and social and political theory over the course of American history. Do these studies feature members of this group? Dorothy Ross's recently published Origins of American Social Science and an earlier monograph include discussion of seventeen of these nineteen. Joseph Dorfman's classic study, The Economic Mind of American Civilization, vol. 3, includes discussion of fourteen from this group, with extended summaries of the writings from twelve. Sidney Fine's Laissez Faire and the General-Welfare State identifies all but one as laying the intellectual and moral foundations for the modern welfare state in America. Herbert Schneider's History of American Philosophy includes six from this group; Ralph Gabriel's The Course of American Democratic Thought, twelve.36

At this point an obvious question arises: why are Charles Beard and Herbert Croly absent from the list? The first and simple answer is that they came too late. Beard was born in 1874 and did not produce his first book until 1913, well after most of the serious intellectual innovation had already taken place and had dominated the universities. Croly was born in 1870 and did not produce his first book until 1909. But there are deeper reasons than chronology, and they involve no small degree of academic arrogance: both writers were derivative in both the content and the methods of analysis. When their first books appeared neither was seen as anything exceptional or new to this group of Progressive intellectuals. Moreover, both writ-

36. Addams, Dewey, Ely, Patten, Ross, and Small were the most frequently included, each appearing in seven of the eight. Those with six inclusions are Bliss, Commons, Giddings, Hadley, James, and Seligman.
ers were more directly "ideological" in a way that most of the earlier academics were not. This requires more explanation than will be given here, but it includes the fact that Croly and Beard wrote political histories of America that were already premised on the truths of Progressive public doctrine. Their histories, in other words, were retroactive political "proofs" of victories already envisioned for the immediate future and already clearly won at the level of intellect and culture. Ideology in this form of history is by definition parasitic on more fully articulated social theories. And this is true whether or not the decisive political victory was in fact won: activists and ideologues necessarily do a lot of whistling in the dark, presenting as inevitable futures they passionately wish to be realized. This same ground for exclusion is an implicit warning not to take as formative what might in fact be derivative. To analyze "Progressive political theory" by starting with Beard and Croly condemns the analyst to the reproduction of ideology because the texts used were written within a framework of ideas much more complex and deeply embedded in earlier work that the analyst might not know. Symbolically put, without familiarity with the writings of the sociologist Albion Small and the economist Simon Patten, much of what Croly wrote regarding the sources of American nationality and democracy as well as his larger political economy arguments will be either misunderstood or ignored. And without knowing the writings of Seligman on economic determinism, the works of Beard will remain opaque.

For the purposes of discovering the intellectual and cultural "horizons" of Progressivism, therefore, a list that excludes Croly and Beard is warranted; for the purpose of explicating and tracing the political implications of ideas within that horizon, the writings of Croly are absolutely essential and those of Beard always useful. Moreover, both writers would be central to any project seeking to understand the paradoxical passage from Progressivism to Wilsonian democracy and New Deal liberalism.

**SOME PROGRESSIVE HORIZONS**

It is now necessary to ask a final set of questions about these authors of Progressive public doctrine. How did this group and others like them find and recognize one another? What brought and held them together?

37. Stettner, 1993, 164–65, attributes to Croly the origin of the concept of "positive rights," when, in fact, it became a staple of academic and social gospel writings in the late 1880s. See chapter 6 below. And on 144–54, he treats Croly's writings on religion in the post–World War I period as a sort of Progressive disenchantment when, again, there were abundant academic and reform writings integrating "spirit" to reform in the previous three decades.

From what common sources did they derive their identities, histories, and purposes of sufficient strength and energy to project them so powerfully into American academic, intellectual, and political life? In short, what horizons did they share? As creators and shapers of what became a new political identity for America and therefore the prevailing identity available for those who wished to become fully conscious of being an American, they superseded those who shaped and articulated the political values and personal identities of the earlier regime. Simply to say that they were "modern" or "advanced" because of their academic training will not suffice because they largely created the standards by which we now measure "modern" or "advanced" training and thinking. And insofar as they created much of our horizon, explanation by tautology—no matter how sophisticated or complex—the standard method by which histories of American academic disciplines are written—will not give us knowledge of what they saw as their horizons and their origins. To say that they had widespread influence because they occupied powerful positions in academia and had strong connections to financial, business, and governmental elites is also largely circular because,  

39. There is either a pervasive "presentism" in these studies—the quest for origin as confirmation of present standards and practices—or a pro forma bow to "otherness" of origin at some (usually very early) point, and then the leap to discover their contributions to present-day fulfillment. The test for the presence of this kind of anachronism is usually the simple equation of professionalization and secularization. Bledstein, 1976; Coats, 1968; Fox, 1967; Haskell, 1977; Herbst, 1959; Hofstadter, 1955; and Veysey, 1965, are examples of this genre, disciplinary history as Ritual. A Populist or Marxian variant of "presentism" is to look for true or principled beginnings—often in religion or a passion for social justice—and then co-optation and sellout. In this way, one can at once criticize one's academic contemporaries, occupy higher or more advanced political ground, and claim adherence to traditional disciplinary origins. Lustig, 1982; Ricci, 1984; Ross, 1977; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1974; Seidelman, 1985; Silva and Slaughter, 1984, are examples of this genre, disciplinary history as Jeremiad. What both groups in this struggle over disciplinary history take for granted is that these academics and their writings are somehow constitutive of our horizons and our standards, but without serious explorations of those of their predecessors.  

40. And if not circular, simply wrong: almost all of these writers shaped their definitive theoretical positions in the early 1880s through the mid-1890s, well before most of these "structures of power" were even in place. The only covering explanation here is that these men and women of incredible self-assurance and daring and energy quickly caved in at the threatened loss of some academic perquisites. This explanation better explains the much less self-assured generation of academic radicals in the 1950s than it does the Progressives. Populist critics of the new universities often tended to blame their regional isolation and therefore national weakness on powerful forces working against them in the emerging national universities while their faculties were among the few influential people outside populist regions of the country who understood the larger sources of populists' discontent and were often sympathetic to their cause, especially compared to the more traditional
again, members of this group helped create those academic platforms, those audiences, and the vocabulary in which they were addressed—and against both strongly entrenched opposition and other possible alternatives.

Their most obvious common bonds are party-political, regional, and religious. Even though all of them voiced antiparty ideas in one form or another, every one of them came from Republican party backgrounds, in many cases with exceptionally strong evidence of party loyalty. This loyalty, however, was to the Republican party as a party against "parties," as the organized redeemer nation born in the abolitionist movement and matured in the Civil War and Reconstruction. With two exceptions, this group is not only Protestant, but overwhelmingly evangelical Protestant in family background. Here, their homogeneity is even greater than a most paranoid WASP-conspiracy theorist would have any right to expect. Fourteen of the nineteen came from Congregationalist families. To put this in perspective, as early as 1860 Congregationalists were already a distinct Protestant minority in America with 2,234 churches in comparison with Presbyterians (6,406), Baptists (12,150), and Methodists (19,883) The remaining five of the group were Methodists (2), Presbyterian, Quaker, and Jewish. Two of the nineteen dropped all church affiliation, three switched to the Episcopal Church, and the rest remained in their family churches. Except for Seligman, who was German-Jewish, and Kelley, who was Scotch-Irish and Quaker, all were English in background. More surprising is that two-thirds traced their American beginnings to New England and more than half back to the period 1630–1660. Clergymen naturally loom large in these family backgrounds; indeed, the ministry was a career choice seriously consid-

faculty in the colleges in the North and East. This led to the strange affinity between, say, Henry George, Jr.’s, 1904 Menace of Privilege, a thoroughly reactionary tract against modernity, especially in social and political thinking, and post-1960s revisionist studies of the emergence of the modern university. The bridge between the two is, of course, the Texas populist C. Wright Mills, who wrote Sociology and Pragmatism as a doctoral dissertation in the early 1940s, well before he had read Marx. This legacy lives on: Barrow, 1990; Lustig, 1982; Ross, 1977; Silva and Slaughter, 1984; Weinstein, 1968. Appropriately, Mills then wrote White Collar in 1951, bewailing the decline of rugged individualism and independence caused by the rise of the modern corporation. See Zunz, 1990, 2–4, for an interesting analysis of this book and Richard Hofstadter’s reaction to it.

41. The parents of some were party leaders, state legislators, or party appointees to office. Many had abolitionist backgrounds.

42. By 1900, this disproportion became many times greater: Congregational (5,604); Episcopal (6,264); Disciples (10,298); Presbyterian (15,452); Baptist (49,905); and Methodist (53,908). The Unitarians (455) and Quakers (1,031) declined even more rapidly than the Congregationalists (Gaustad, 1962, 43–44).
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ered by at least six. As it was, twelve of this group wrote for the religious press, either in denominational or Protestant ecumenical publications or in scholarly reviews published by divinity school faculty (e.g., *Bibliotheca Sacra*, *The New Englander*, *Andover Review*).

Although New England looms large in their collective backgrounds, its importance rapidly diminishes in their foregrounds. Seven of this group came directly from New England, nine from the Midwest, and three from the New York area. But only two remained in New England, and no one moved there; nine ended in the Midwest and nine in the New York area. A factor related to this New England out-migration is that Harvard looms so small in this composite portrait. Given the backgrounds and later positions of this group and given the role that Harvard and Unitarianism had played in earlier nineteenth-century American intellectual culture, abolitionism, and immediate post–Civil War reform, this absence is significant.  

Such was the strength of evangelical Christianity in the backgrounds of these Progressive intellectuals that only one of this group received a degree from Harvard, and no one taught there. Of equal significance to their horizons, no one was either raised a Unitarian or became one. This will become noteworthy when one explores the meaning of "secularization" when applied to Progressive social-scientific and political theories. When comparing, for example, this group of intellectuals with Ann Douglas's clergymen and female authors who dominated the popular and the liberal Protestant religious press in the two generations immediately preceding this one, the religious and regional differences are striking.**

43. Here, too, one should note the contrast to the earlier American Social Science Association (1865–1909) as discussed in Haskell, 1977, 132–36. Harvard, MIT, New England, and, presumably, Unitarianism dominated the membership and spirit of that organization. McPherson (1975, 3–10 and 396–408) studied the denominational affiliations of 284 "post-1870 abolitionists" active on behalf of the freedmen. This group preceded the Progressives in this study by one and two generations and includes a substantial number of nonevangelical Protestants, especially Unitarians and Quakers.

44. Although her group and these Progressives are not strictly comparable, each group tended to dominate moral discourse in the popular journalistic media of their day; each group was accorded the quasi-official status of "public moralists"; each group identified with and took some of their cues from their British journalistic and intellectual counterparts. Given the books they wrote, Douglas's clergymen played roles remarkably similar to those of Progressive academics thirty to fifty years later. Eighteen of Douglas's thirty women writers were raised Congregationalist and seven, Unitarian-Universalist. Fully fourteen of the Congregationalists, then a fully evangelical, if relatively liberal, church, switched to nonevangelical Unitarianism or became Episcopalians. Whereas this might constitute exceptionally strong proof for a thesis equating secularization and modernization in American intellectual life, it happened mostly before the Civil War and among those
as-modernization, a paradox immediately presents itself. The most innovative modernizers were from a religious subculture that appeared retrograde. Symbolically put, it was pious Congregational Yale that was the "national" university producing the future presidents of Cornell, Hopkins, and Chicago and serving as the model for education for the network of liberal arts colleges throughout the Midwest. Compared to Yale and its many "satellites," urban, urbane, and Unitarian Harvard was increasingly marginalized in the mid-nineteenth century, despite its stellar faculty and student body (Thernstrom, 1986, 115–20).

Although this will be discussed at length in another context later, it should also be noted that this group is singularly devoid of members of the legal fraternity. Judges, lawyers, law professors, and legal writers were not only absent from this network, they were studiously avoided and even treated with some measure of contempt. Here, Harvard's marginality can be further explained by the dominance of its law school. Just as Harvard was perfecting the case method of instruction and producing the shock troops of the emerging corporate law firms, America's innovating and leading intellectuals in economics, sociology, and political economy were writing epitaphs for formal-legal understandings of America and foretelling an age in which the artificial and arid world of law would be replaced by a real and luxuriant democratic faith.

Another way of isolating the horizon of these Progressives is to compare them to other contemporaries. This group of nineteen Progressives shared many characteristics with the leaders of the woman suffrage movement identified in Aileen Kraditor's study. The group of Progressive intellectuals includes some whose fathers or near relatives were quite prominent. Charles Horton Cooley's father, Thomas, was a noted legal writer, founding dean of Michigan's Law School and first chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission. Edwin R. A. Seligman's father, Joseph, was a very successful international private banker in New York. Charlotte Perkins Gilman (also in Kraditor's group), whose de-

who wrote scores of feel-good hymns and sentimental-religious poetry and novels, not modern social science. Twenty-five of Douglas's sample came from New England; three from the New York area; two from the Midwest. Although this group moved a lot more than mine, almost all lived most of their lives in cities along the East Coast between New York and Boston. Her male theologian-clergyman sample of thirty contains fifteen reared as Unitarian-Universalist and thirteen, as Congregationalists. Four of the Congregationalists became Unitarian and one, Episcopalian via Unitarianism. Again, if this is taken as proof of the secularization of American intellectual life (which clergymen clearly dominated in that period) it is equally proof that this secularization became an increasingly isolated and provincial subculture in the post–Civil War period (Douglas, 1988, Appendix B and discussion, 80–117).
serted mother was very poor and who herself had only a grade school education, was the granddaughter of Lyman Beecher and thus related to Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Vida Dutton Scudder was also very poor, but was connected to the Dutton publishing family. Arthur Hadley’s father was a noted professor of Greek at Yale. Kraditor’s group of twenty-six is distinguished by a relatively greater connection to wealth (the Vanderbilt and McCormick fortunes are represented) and about the same social prominence (wives or daughters of a university president, a law school dean, a congressman, and some judges). Like the Progressives, Kraditor’s group of twenty-six women, most of whom were born in the same period, were highly educated (sixteen with college degrees; nine with graduate work or degrees), well traveled (eight studied in Germany or England), and Anglo-Saxon (twenty-four).

Given these similarities and differences, a final common feature of all these groups, including the abolitionists, is their incredible self-assurance and their ambition to lead and to prevail. This horizon is not self-explanatory for either the earlier or the later groups. With the partial exception of Douglas’s clergymen (who themselves had just been disestablished), success and power were not achieved by rising within preexisting hierarchies of political status and power or entering preexisting networks of influence.46 (Remember that none of them were practicing lawyers or judges or were political party bosses or held high electoral office.) The Progressive intellectuals who created ideas, institutions, audiences, networks, publicity techniques, and opinion-shaping organs were less a “meritocracy” than a new and politically emergent “clerisy”—national public moralists in thought, purpose, and deed. For more than a generation they went from victory to victory. In this circumstance, the better question to ask is who or what were the earlier models or examples they sought to imitate. What organizations, movements, leaders, and events from the past were exemplary? In negative terms,

45. Kraditor, 1965, Appendix, 265–82. No information is given on religious affiliation or changes in affiliation.

46. In contrast, Haskell, 1977, 77–90, 100–110, and 144–89, describes the earlier American Social Science Association as consisting of preexisting elites and professionals seeking to anchor their intellectual authority in the dynamic America of the postbellum years. Even though there was some overlapping membership between the ASSA and some of the founders of the academic professional associations, attempts of the ASSA to forge institutional links with the new graduate and professional schools failed. Moreover, centers of energy and power shifted over time within the sets of groups considered here: toward women, away from Unitarians and Quakers, away from Boston, toward Chicago, and so on. Fitzpatrick (1990) looks at the careers of four of the first female graduate students in the social sciences at the University of Chicago. Even more than the men, these women had to create their own institutions—in the case of Sophonisba Breckinridge, her own professional school—in order to occupy positions of power.
what sorts of institutions, ideas, leaders, and activities from the past did they hold in highest contempt? What counterparts of these did they see in the present and seek to destroy? These questions might seem more appropriate (and easier to answer) to put to Kraditor's women or to Haskell's American Social Science Association than to my more arrivé academics and intellectuals. It is necessary to interrogate Progressive writings with these questions, however, because even at their most abstract, Progressives anchored their ideas within a larger theory of evolutionary social and moral progress. These theories of progress contain images of fulfillment or triumph that they saw foreshadowed in earlier people and events and opposed by a rather large list of enemies. Putting the issue in this concrete a way—friends and enemies—is also useful because it attunes us to hear very specific political and moral resonances in their writings. Their political and social theories contain specific echoes from the past and, if we are prepared to listen, dissonant and even discomfiting chords for those—should one say, those of us—who followed.

There are many apparent paradoxes raised in studies of Progressivism. Perhaps the overarching one is this: why were these people—who, among all those active in national political affairs, were the most cosmopolitan, scientifically trained, philosophically sophisticated, informed, and deeply critical of prevailing institutions and practices—also the most moral, religious, spiritual, and even romantically mystical in their public doctrines? And why were their opponents—those nationally active public men (I use men advisedly) who were, by all measures, more traditionally religious and incomparably narrower in their education, experiences, and political imaginations—so secular-universalistic in their public doctrines, so modern and "liberal" in their discussion of rights and institutions? The Progressives, bearing the combined language of social science, social control, community, character, piety, and memory, created systems of knowledge and institutional structures on which much of modern "liberal" America now seems to rest. Their opponents, invoking the Bill of Rights and speaking the tough legal language of constitutional powers, defended ways of life and patterns of power we now associate with an America either quaint or dangerously reactionary. To speak today from the institutional platforms created by the Progressives is, perforce, to be a contemporary "liberal," a member in good standing of cosmopolitan culture. But to say today what they said then, and from the authoritative platforms they did so much to erect, would be a profound embarrassment to the audience—perhaps the
result of some booking error, or maybe a deliberate parody to represent the "other," the enemy against whom contemporary liberalism now defines itself. Or perhaps this difference is much less great than it appears, the result of both misreading what they had to say and disguising from ourselves part of what we are saying.