We wish, fully and entirely, to nationalize the institutions of our land and to identify ourselves with our country; to become a single great people, separate and distinct in national character, political interest, social and civil affinities from any and all other nations, kindred and people on the earth.

—American Republican, 7 November 1844

The idea of America as one nation with a common history and destiny was not an invention of the Progressives. It was, however, central to their thinking, providing the ligaments that bound together their theories of politics, society, and economy and connecting those theories to a serviceable public doctrine and program of action. On one level, then, the Progressives were heirs to a New England narrative that began with the Great Migration and the establishment of the city on the hill as a world-historical event biblically foretold. On this reading, America as "nation" was born of covenant, committing a unified people to an errand, first to redeem the wilderness and then the world. Insofar as this "myth of New England" came to constitute the "myth of America" (Bercovitch, 1977; Bercovitch, 1978; Hutchison, 1987; Miller, 1967), it provided the grounds for political nationalism evident from the Revolution onward. Whether expressed in the biblical language of millennialism, the cultural language of the American Way of Life, the economic language of plenitude, the ethnoracial language of triumphant Anglo-Saxonism, or the liberal language of the extension of freedom, it presupposed a politics of consensus, of one people.

On another level, this idea of America as one people with a singular mission and destiny, was attacked by the Progressive theory of nation. America as singular too often implied an America exempt from history, from the problems of the rest of the Western world. This reading of American nationality as uniqueness counseled a complacent conservatism—when in danger always revert back to the "law" of the Constitu-
tion—and a dangerous kind of political irresponsibility and drift. On this level, the Progressives attacked what they saw as false images of nationality, urging instead that Americans consider their country as only now entering the larger stream of world history, requiring new institutions, new ideas, and new practices both to insure older values and attain higher and better ones. The overriding event in this contest of definition and direction was the Civil War. This event both confirmed the enduring strength of the covenant myth and appeared to destroy whatever merit inhered in the myth of America's exemption from history and the American as exempt from historic duties (Fredrickson, 1965, 135). In the formation of the Republican party the Progressives saw both the rebirth of the nation and the birth of a new nation finally prepared to enter the world stage on an equal basis with European nations.

PARTISANSHIP AND NATIONALITY

Whatever the Progressives' depth of disenchantment with the policies and practices of the Republican party after 1876, its rhetoric and imagery continued to be unmistakably national and not constitutional. In contrast, the Democratic party, before and after the Civil War, remained strictly constitutionalist and thus loyal to an individual-

1. Lincoln and Jackson offer interesting contrasts in this regard. Jackson's farewell address of 1837: "Our constitution is no longer a doubtful experiment; . . . we find that it has preserved unimpaired the liberties of the people, secured the rights of property, and that our country has improved and is flourishing beyond any former examples in the history of nations." Lincoln in 1838: "We find ourselves under the government of a system of institutions, conducing more essentially to the ends of civil and religious liberty, than any of which the history of former times tells us. We toiled not in the acquirement or establishment of them—they are a legacy bequeathed us, by a once hardy, brave, and patriotic, but now lamented and departed race of ancestors. . . . That our government should have been maintained in its original form from its establishment until now, is not much to be wondered at. It had many props to support it through that period, which now are decayed, and crumbled away" (from Levy, 1988, 190, 217, and 219). Croly, 1909, chap. 4, discusses the failure of the middle period to deal with the issue of slavery as the fault of Jacksonian democratic values. See also Major Wilson, 1967, 619–44, on concepts of time and the debate over slavery.

2. This is the central thesis of Ross, 1991. Given the rhetorical tradition of the jeremiad, which calls the nation back to its covenant and prepares the nation for new challenges and conditions, it is often difficult to place writings on a simple "left-right" ideological spectrum. This is a central theme in Bercovitch, 1978. In the apt words of Wellesley English professor and labor activist Vida Scudder, "We need all the courage the past can give us; we need all the consecration it can inspire." This was said in her support of "the victims of the modern slavery of trade" (1898, 211).
ist, localist, and "small republic" tradition. In the eyes of Progressive intellectuals, this combination disqualified the Democrats from the start as an agency for national renewal. And, given the strength of the Democratic party in the white South, that entire region was also disqualified from an active role in reform. The Democratic party reliance on the Constitution as a static legal agreement among states and its insistence on maximizing individual and local liberty necessarily precluded it from serious reflection on objects of national importance.\(^3\) Contrasting the national platform language of the two parties in the post–Civil War period vividly illustrates this difference and serves as a concrete starting point for examining the Progressives' idea of American nationality.

In 1868 the Republicans officially called themselves the National Union Republican party. In 1876 they declared that "the United States of America is a nation, not a league"; in 1880, that "the people of the United States, in their organized capacity, constitute a Nation and not a mere confederacy of States." In 1908, invoking its language of more than thirty years earlier ("in the economy of Providence, this land was to be purged of human slavery"), the platform speaks of the Republican party as "this great historic organization, that destroyed slavery, preserved the Union . . . expanded the national domain . . . and gave to the nation her seat of honor in the councils of the world."\(^4\) Its Whig and Liberty party origins remained intact.

The platforms of the Democratic party in this same period read like anachronistic documents protesting British colonial domination. In 1868, a long section paraphrases the Declaration of Independence as a bill of indictment against the presence of the national government in the South, "subject[ing] ten States, in time of profound peace, to military despotism and negro supremacy," and recalls the time that "the

3. Croly, 1914, 145, correctly calls this reading "the monarchy of the Constitution" because of its limited powers, its distance from popular majorities, and the concomitant dependence on mediating courts, lawyers, and party leaders. That Jefferson had exactly this ideal—that of a very limited, liberal "monarchy" at the national level in order to insure vibrant small republics and local democracy—is persuasively argued in Sheldon, 1991, chaps. 3–5.

4. Johnson and Porter, 1975. This language strongly recalls that of John Quincy Adams. In his understanding, "union" preceded the Declaration of Independence, making that document "a social compact, by which the whole people covenanted with each citizen of the United Colonies, and each citizen with the whole people. . . . Each was pledged to all, and all were pledged to each by a concert of souls, without limitation of time, in the presence of Almighty God, and proclaimed to all mankind" (1831, 17–18). The Constitution, as third and last stage of the Revolution (the war itself is the second), represents "the formation of the Anglo-American People and Nation of North America" (1836, 5). For a prominent Progressive view repeating this same logic, see James, 1896, 401–3.
people of the United States threw off . . . subjection to the British crown.'" From then onward the ideal image is of America as "a federal union of co-equal States." Its achievement demands that the nation "return to . . . constitutional limitations of power" [1872] to avoid "corrupt centralism" [1876]. Throughout the 1880s and early 1890s the national platform language is unvarying, if less strident, on this theme, as befitted a party that had again become nationally competitive. In a paraphrase of Anti-Federalist writings almost a century earlier the 1880 platform warned of "a dangerous spirit of encroachment, which tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments into one, and thus to create [,] whatever be the form of government, a real despotism." In 1884 the same theme was sounded, but as "the preservation of personal rights, the equality of all citizens before the law; the reserved rights of the States; the supremacy of the Federal Government within the limits of the Constitution." Constitutional limitation was also the main theme four years later: "a plan of government regulated by a written Constitution, strictly specifying every granted power and expressly reserving to the States or people the entire ungranted residue of power." In the Democratic party platform of 1892 this idea was expressed as a call for "a return to these fundamental principles of free popular government, based on home rule and individual liberty" especially now that there was "a tendency to centralize all power at the Federal capital." By 1896 this language was compressed into the First Amendment ("freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of conscience"), concluding with a call for "the preservation of personal rights, the equality of all citizens before the law, and the faithful observance of constitutional limitations." After 1896 and until 1916 the only expressed idea of nation was a section on states' rights and, in 1900, a philippic against militarism—"it means conquest abroad and intimidation and oppression at home . . . a large standing army and unnecessary burden of taxation."5

By the turn of the century both major parties moderated their respective languages of nationality. Indeed, in 1912 the Republican platform had no nationalist language at all, only a reference to the Constitution and federal courts as bonds of the country. In the Progressive platform

5. Johnson, 1975. The various Prohibition parties were even more explicit than the Republicans in their image of America as one nation. The first Prohibition platform refers to America as a Christian nation, and calls for national sabbath observance and national and state provision for public schools "for the universal and forced education of all the youth of the land," including "the free use of the Bible . . . as a textbook of purest morality" so "that our children may grow up in its light and that its spirit and principles may pervade our nation" [1876]. Starting in 1888, they were also the first party to call for woman suffrage.
of that same year, however, the imagery of the earlier Republican party and the New England myth of America was revived. "The conscience of the people, in a time of grave national problems, has called into being a new party, born of the nation's sense of justice." This party founding is "the fulfillment of the duty laid upon us by our fathers" and the platform "our covenant with the people." Reviving the powerful image of the sovereignty of the whole people, the platform declares that "the people are the masters of their Constitution" (Johnson and Porter, 1975).

By 1916, with war raging in Europe and in the midst of preparedness campaigns, the Republicans rediscovered their nationalist roots. Given the circumstances and their prowar constituency, the platform language is quite moderate. Appealing to "all Americans, whether naturalized or native-born, to prove to the world that we are Americans in thought and deed, with one loyalty, one hope, one aspiration," it concluded by asking them to be true to "the great traditions of their common country, and above all things, to keep the faith." The Democratic party platform, under the heading "Americanism," was testimony to a conversion experience into the National Religion of the American Way. Recognizing "the assertion and triumphant demonstration of the indivisibility and coherent strength of the nation as the supreme issue of this day . . . it summons all men of whatever origin or creed who could count themselves Americans, to join in making clear to all the world the unity and consequent power of America." The virtues of the "small republic"—its homogeneity, its unstinting patriotism, its fraternal supremacy over all mere laws—were here translated to the whole nation. America was the gathered people, "the best of the blood, the industry and genius of the whole world . . . welded into a mighty and splendid Nation." As beffited its Tocquevillian articulation, this democratic celebration of unity was also a standing threat: "Whoever . . . creates discord and strife among our people . . . is faithless to the trust which the privileges of citizenship repose in him and is disloyal to his country." 6

6. When Woodrow Wilson returned from the peace conference in 1919, his rhetoric appropriated in its entirety the Republican version from the Civil War period: "Our participation in the war established our position among the nations . . . the whole world saw at last . . . a Nation they had deemed material and now found to be compact of the spiritual forces that must free men of every nation of every unworthy bondage . . . The stage is set, the destiny is disclosed. It has come about by no plan of our conceiving, but by the hand of God who led us into this way. We cannot turn back. We can only go forward . . . to follow the vision. It was of this that we dreamed at our birth" (quoted from Handy, 1984, 160).
THE BONDS OF NATIONALITY

The proof of hegemonic political victory in America is demonstrated not only when the defeated appropriate the ideas of the victors, but also when the result is written as democratic history, that is, as the necessary result of forces beyond the control or purposes of any identifiable group. If Tocqueville is right, then the strongest evidence of the victory of Progressive ideas of nationality is neatly recorded in a book, *The Nation and the Schools* (1920), written by two highly regarded professional educators.

Every discovery of science, every invention in the arts, every advance in industry has worked throughout the country toward interdependence and unity, toward a multiplication of common needs, common ideals, and common aspirations, and toward an insistent demand for the kind of far-reaching collective action that will meet these needs and realize these ideals and aspirations quickly and effectively. It has been through the pressure of these forces—impersonal, objective, and irresistible—that the Federation has become a Union, and the Union a Nation.

Those who struggled mightily for more than three decades to achieve this inevitability knew that they were up against formidable obstacles. Having experienced the results of the dissolution of the Civil War regime into a confused tangle of economic dynamism, social dislocation, and political impotence and having witnessed and recorded the results of German state building and British reform, they were deeply conscious of the institutional and intellectual barriers to the achievement of an authoritative nationality in America.

An analogous democratic fiction is to attribute intellectual discovery itself to necessity. A recent study of the formation of the professional social sciences speaks of the use of historicism, cultural organicism, and the concept of interdependence in American social theory at the turn of the century as a kind of "primitive recognition that the very constitution of the social universe had changed." The social experi-

7. "Historians who live in democratic ages not only deny that the few have any power of acting upon the destiny of a people, but deprive the people themselves of the power of modifying their own condition, and they subject them either to an inflexible Providence or to some blind necessity" (Tocqueville, 1981, 383).
8. Keith and Bagley, 1920, 2. Bagley was professor at Columbia Teachers College and coauthor with Charles Beard of a series of successful secondary school textbooks on American history written in the interwar period. This book, in fact, recounts a history of valiant political and cultural struggle to achieve public education in America from the Revolution to the time of its writing.
ence of reality itself, and not the values, traditions, and culture of the observers, it seems, produced the inevitable ideas that anchored the inevitable political and social reforms.9

In 1915, Albion Small wrote an essay, "The Bonds of Nationality," for the American Journal of Sociology (AJS). This work can stand as a fair copy of the larger intellectual framework of Progressive discussion of American nationality, not only because of Small's standing, but because he integrated writings of so many of his fellow sociologists and political economists from the previous twenty-five years into this essay.10 The article, he says, was written to "illustrate and elaborate two sociological concepts: first, that of 'social structure,' second, that of 'social achievement.'"11 Small then moves to a third and integrating concept, "the social bonds," in order to ask how and why groups hold together over long periods of time. Asserting that these bonds must stand "for something more vital than the external accidents which are reflected in mere group forms [i.e., constitutions]," he concludes that external or institutional forms are expressive of and reflect the cohesive power of internal factors.12 This static conception of social structure must be complemented by an analysis of social bonds as "group achievements," that is, the ways in which social structures alter their environments over time. Modifying Lester Ward's discussion of this dynamic, Small concludes:

These personal, or human or moral values . . . consist, first, in the control which men have gained and may gain over nature; sec-

9. Haskell, 1977, 15-16. In fairness to the author, this argument is soon retracted: "The systems of belief by which men live possess a tenacity so powerful that assumptions shape experience far more often than they are shaped by it. The lesson is not new, but never before [Thomas Kuhn's Structure of Scientific Revolutions] has it been taught so forcefully" [22]. Given the remarkably homogeneous religious and cultural backgrounds of the early social scientists and their followers, understanding paradigms shifts in social theory in America is of a piece with understanding our cultural history more than our social-economic history. Only afterward do the material factors of wealth and power shape the reception and direction of that shift. And in pluralistic and democratic America, old paradigms never die, they only go underground for a time to emerge reformulated as if they were new.

10. In 1904, Giddings wrote a short article, "Sociological Questions," for Forum, a popular monthly, which is a precis of Small's themes and arguments. Giddings, 1904, 245-55.

11. Small, 1915, 629. These concepts are from Georg Simmel. Small refers here to thirteen of his previous articles in the AJS and to his General Sociology (1905), where he summarizes and discusses Simmel's work.

12. Small, 1915, 631. This is equally true for governments; Arthur Twining Hadley began his lectures on citizenship in 1903 with the statement that "form of government is an unimportant thing as compared with the spirit in which government is administered . . . this internal character or spirit of a government is far more important than any of its external characteristics" (Hadley, 1903, 1-2).
ondly, in the control which they have gained and may gain over themselves as individuals; thirdly, in the types of co-operation which they have achieved and may achieve, for more effective control of nature, and for more effective correlation of moral forces, to the end of progressive sublimation of human qualities, in progressively efficient combinations of activities for progressively higher ranges of achievement, in cycles to which our knowledge can assign no end (Small, 1915, 632).

Small quickly dismisses the first factor as significant independently of the other two social resources (mere "economic achievement" as control of material resources "would be halting at a point in the rear of the picket line of human progress") to turn to "control over the individual self, and control over human association" as the basis for discussing the bonds and progress of American nationality. Here, the individual as resource is treated almost as summarily as is power over nature. Noting that the individual is an autonomous resource only if he is loyal to others in systems of social cooperation, Small finds the issue becomes how individuals "by influences from within" maintain "fidelity to their posts in doing what their fellows have a right to expect of them." Thus, the issue is the difference between "adequate and defective individual working ideals of responsibility to the group." These ideals are socially constructed and maintained. Summarily stated, "a population of Herbert Spencers would probably perish of social sterility in a generation" (Small, 1915, 633, 635).

A corollary to this way of viewing the individual as social resource is that different individual qualities are demanded at different stages of human progress. Even granting that earlier in our history individual initiative and autonomy have been paramount in the economic sphere, Small says that this was never entirely true in our political life and even less so "in the realms of higher thought and religious belief." He recognizes that many claims of American individualism are bogus in any case (here he cites Tocqueville on our slavelike conformity to conventional ideas); even where they are true, especially "in our struggle for economic gain," they are no longer a social resource or bond of nationality. Indeed, the present circumstances of American life call for "transformation of these standards and corresponding remolding of individuals. . . . We are demanding that each shall fall into the ranks of the social battle."13

13. Small, 1915, 636–37. At about this same time, the historian Ephraim Douglas Adams of Stanford (and brother of Henry Carter) declared to a lecture audi-
It is only when he turns to group bonds that Small's analysis of nationality properly begins. The concept "group" or "association" quickly becomes "institutions" and bonds become "the social tradition." Four "institutions" are then underlined as the embodiment of the most important social traditions for national cohesion. The first is a common language, by which he means a specifically "American language [as] the master key to American ideals" and therefore the means by which "spiritual communication of all with each" is achieved. Because "language carries the valuations of the group that uses it" we should not wonder that "conquering peoples have always tried to impose their language upon the conquered." Americans "believe almost fanatically in the efficiency of the American language in making Americans" both for its spontaneous effects and for its universal applicability. This belief also explains the need for universal education and the system of public schools.

When Small turns to his second "institution," that of race solidarity, he first feels compelled to explain exactly what he means by race. Borrowing the term "consciousness of kind" from Giddings, Small's notion of race means only "that differences of ancestry cease to be mischievous in partitioning the population." Earlier, in fact, he used the term "melting pot" to mean the same thing. The creation of one people on these terms is not achieved spontaneously. Granting that "a population made up of successfully blended racial elements" will have great social strength, in the interim, he writes, "diversity of racial elements is in itself a national weakness" because of the expenditures of effort required to blend "heterogeneous stocks." Reminding the reader

cence at Yale that "industrial liberty, equality of opportunity, must yield in part, at least, to the organic sense of the nation—to fraternity" [Adams, 1913, 147].

14. Small, 1915, 639. Hadley used a Rousseauist image of general will in this same sense. Maintaining that the general will is a public sentiment constituting a people, he declares that this sentiment "includes all good men, minorities as well as majorities, who support the government not as a selfish means for the promotion of their own interest, but as a common heritage which they accept as loyal members of a body politic" [Hadley, 1903, 34]; see also Hadley, 1901, 139-40.

15. Small, 1915, 643 and 641. This same idea carried one step further by Hadley, 1901, 141, is that sharing the same moral language is to substitute the power of public opinion for governmental coercion. "Just as in private morality there is an alternative between self-government by one's own conscience and the compulsion of external authority, so in public morality there is a similar alternative between self-government by public sentiment and the tyranny of a dominating power." And see Hadley, 1903, 74, where he says that the history of man is not the eighteenth-century version, that is, from "a system of authority to a system of liberty," but the more historically accurate one of "a passage from a system of obligations imposed by the community to a system of self-imposed obligations."
that "race solidarity in the strictly ethnic sense is largely imaginary," Small points out that even the term "Anglo-Saxon" is so capacious that only one or two generations are required to "assimilate citizens of the most heterogeneous origins" into "the amiable fiction that we are all of one blood." The psychic nature of unity should not detract us from the fact that felt diversity in matters of race "is functional disunity" and that so long as "minor groups distinguished by physical, mental or moral traits which are in contrast with those of the nation as a whole, and which are thought of by the larger group as race traits, the situation is relatively weak" (Small's italics).

By far the longest section of Small's essay is devoted to the third source of national cohesion, that of "A Coherent Family Type." Depending upon the kinds of individuals produced by the family, a nation is strong or weak. The burdens Small places on the family are extensive but center on the need to inculcate the virtues of loyalty and service to others—in his words, "a quick sense of other people's values, and prompt response to requisitions upon obligation to respect those values." The best citizens, therefore, are those "men and women who are tempered and fitted to the loyalties implicit in the family association." There are many and varied threats to this key nation building institution, but the most dangerous enemy of the American middle class family "is the comparative freedom and desire to pursue individual interests." Whatever the source of this individualistic system of values, its power is such that, at present, "the American middle-class family is a dubious social asset" as producer and conservator "of the primary social loyalties."

The last institutional bond of nationality is "a convincing religion." This may seem curious coming from one who abandoned the ministry and helped found academic sociology in America. But if one makes a firm and consistent distinction between "church" (dogma, ritual,

16. Small, 1915, 643, 644, 648. Small's reference here is to the South and the problem of Negroes. Until it is solved, the race question stands as a permanent barrier to unity among whites and also among blacks. W. E. B. DuBois, 1897, 6, expressed a national idea of race this way: "What, then, is a race? It is a vast family of human beings, generally of common blood and language, always of common history, traditions, and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life."

17. Small, 1915, 650, 653, and 655–57. At this point in his discussion, Small digresses at length on the effect on the middle class of recent feminist attacks on the family and on child rearing and on the bad example set by the "pseudo-rich," that is, those whose incomes are such that they can mimic the marriage patterns of the idle rich without the stigma attached to the latter, and therefore serve as more effective transmitters of their vices to the middle class.
rules) and "religion" and then extends the idea of religion into something like "an integrated system of social explanation and personal meaning," Small's conclusion is both logical and central to his understanding of American nationality and national citizenship. To Small it goes without question that psychic unity and shared values are essential to nationality; the only question is the way in which these common beliefs are experienced and held. He insists that for a religion to be both convincing and powerful it must be voluntarily held "as the most plausible competitor among conceivable interpretations of the believer's [social] experience." This requirement precludes not only officially promulgated (church) creeds, but also the imposition of creeds based on the experience and interpretations of one people upon those whose "experience and interpretations have been of a different order." Although any conformity produced by these methods may "be effective for repression," they are poor substitutes "for the spur and lure of a faith which blends all one's mental and moral insights" [Small, 1915, 671, 673].

It is at this point that Small makes a significant turn, one that is essential for his larger argument and for Progressive social theory. Religions in America, he says, are not so much divided by denominations or faith traditions—for example, Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Jews—as each of these, in various ratios to be sure, are divided by traditionalist and modernist understandings. And insofar as traditionalist views prevail, Americans will remain mired "in at least two worlds," that of their lived experiences and that of "their religious conventionalities" [Small, 1915, 673].

The crucial problem at the present stage of religious development is not whether this, that, or the other doctrinal formula or system is correct; but the incalculably more radical problem is whether religion is a hand-out from an external authority or a deposit of the evolving output of men's objective experience and subjective interpretations and valuations [Small, 1915, 675].

The hope for a common religion, then, can only be sustained with the victory of modernism—what came to be called mainstream or liberal Protestantism—and this victory (here the reference to James and Dewey is obvious) depends upon overcoming the dualism between particular "church" traditions of religious belief and a faith-integrating common experience. But here he parts company with James and Dewey and turns to sociologists. Through their professional vocation, it is sociologists who
have volunteered to represent among scholars the conviction that the world's knowledge... must be capable of demonstrating its objectivity in part by its composability into an organization of knowledge, each portion of which shall corroborate and vitalize every other portion. Nothing less than this is conceivably adequate intellectual support for a religion that should convince all men... [that it is] the only conceivable creedal basis for social unity at its highest power.\[18\]

On this series of steps Small has carried us to a central tenet of Progressive social theory as both national and personal identity and public doctrine. Whereas all religions are, ideally, "religions of humanity," only sociologists, by articulating the present condition of man's "social consciousness" in terms of its connections to "the remembered traditions of the race," can "invent"\[19\] a national religion as a national bond. Again, paraphrasing Dewey, this "modernism is not iconoclasm. It is conservation and renovation and reconstruction."\[20\] The political result of this national religion will be a democratic public.

On one level, Small is here calling for a project that had already been largely completed, intellectually if not institutionally and politically. The modernist impulse of the social gospel, beginning in the late 1870s, and historical criticism of the Bible, begun at Andover Seminary and Yale in the 1840s, had long since yielded a Christian social ethic and a Protestant ecumenical theology increasingly placed within a larger theory of social evolution (Kuklick, 1985, chaps. 11-13; Stevenson, 1986, chaps. 3 and 6-8). Indeed, twenty years earlier, the first two volumes of Small's own journal serialized what immediately became the most powerful single summary of this viewpoint, Shailer Ma-

18. Small, 1915, 676. This understanding of the purpose and function of social theory is radically at odds with the way disciplinary histories of sociology are now written. The same holds in discussions of John Dewey's achievements. See, for example, Haskell, 1977, 9-16. A good recent study of the relationship between sociology and religion is Curtis, 1991.

19. Small, 1915, 678. He deliberately uses the term "invent" in this context because earlier, in playing off of Voltaire's aphorism about the need to invent God if none existed, he had added: "That nation is weak in which the invention of religion is not a protected industry" (669). Although the meaning here is not entirely clear, he may be referring to the need for academic freedom and university autonomy.

20. Small, 1915, 680. This idea of preserving the past in the future as essential for progress was earlier stated by Giddings (1900, 53) this way: "Progress... is the continuous harmonization of a continually appearing likeness of feeling, thought and purpose... with a vast central mass of already established agreements."
Thus, by 1915, Small is really codifying the results of a long-standing theological-ethical enterprise when he concludes that the symbolic centerpiece of this "new" national religion is the now historically recovered "Weltanschauung of Jesus" excavated from barbarism, superstition, church, and dogma. Sociologists are not enemies or competitors to churchmen and should not ever "[assault] the minds of men in general with anything like ab-

21. American Journal of Sociology, vols. 1 and 2. Nine articles by Mathews, The Social Teachings of Jesus. To this must be added, in vols. 1–3, thirteen articles of what became E. A. Ross's Social Control [1901]; see especially, chap. 16, pp. 196–218, on "Social Religion." In addition, books on social Christianity by Washington Gladden and Lyman Abbott were reviewed in those same volumes. See also Commons, 1894, 8–23, on Christianity and Sociology: "Sociology has rightly been said to be one half of religion; theology is the other half" (19–20). "[The minister] should begin with the organic nature of society, showing that it is based properly on Christian ethics; then the nature and functions of the State as a mighty force in furthering God's kingdom and establishing righteous relations among men; then the family and the home" (20–21). And Ely, 1889, chap. 1: "What has the Church done with the second commandment, which, in its elaboration, becomes social science or sociology?" [9]. A meeting of Wisconsin Congregationalists in 1895 proclaimed "the right of sociology to demand that theology be ethicized" and declared that "the best book for social guidance is the New Testament; the best commentaries are the works of scientific sociology" [quoted in Thelen, 1972, 108–9].

22. Small, 1915, 680. Charles Horton Cooley, in his textbook on social psychology, put it this way: "The relative truth [religious creeds] once had . . . are now, for most of us, not creeds at all, since they are incredible; but creeds of some sort we must have. . . . we need to believe, and we shall believe what we can. . . . The perennial truth of what Christ taught comes precisely from the fact that it was not a system, but an intuition and expression of higher sentiments. . . . All finality in religious formulas is discredited philosophically by the idea of evolution" [1909, 375–78]. And see 191–203 on conflation of American democracy and this reading of Christianity. Simon Patten, 1899, 408–9, stated this same idea of democracy and progress as incarnation at the conclusion of his study of the history of English thought from an economic perspective. And see Patten, 1896, chap. 5, on the victory of abundance or the pleasure economy over scarcity or the pain economy running parallel with the victory of the "Christ ideal." See also Vida Scudder, 1898, 313–18, on the "remarriage" of democracy and Christianity in socialism. In the writings of a decidedly non-Christian Herbert Croly, this same ideal is expressed as a metaphorical parallel between America and New Israel. "The Law, as written in the books and as expounded by the holy doctors [lawyers, judges], had been [America's] schoolmaster, for whose instruction during their national religious adolescence they might well be grateful; but once Christianity was revealed, the schoolmaster lost his peculiar authority. Thereafter the high road to salvation was traced by an uncompromising faith, the constructive effect of which was incomparably greater than was conformity to any Law or the study of its learned commentaries. . . . A loyal progressive democracy is emancipated not merely from the authority of a legal formulation of social righteousness, but from bondage to a mechanical conception of social causation. The beauty of faith consists in the freedom with which it endows the faithful" [Croly, 1914, 169 and 174]. For a discussion of this religious side of Croly's writings, especially in the 1920s, see Stettner, 1993, 148–59.
The Nation as History and Destiny

strait and doctrinalized modernism." Rather, as keepers of man's entire social and intellectual heritage, their task is "never intentionally [to] undo a religious conviction, except through the process of enlarging the individual or group experience, and of assisting to reconstruct the conviction, so as to accommodate the new experience" (Small's italics). Small ends his essay by quoting from one of his earlier university sermons. This vision of sociology he terms "a vision of the American Religion" (Small's italics), one that can be grafted onto the trunk of Catholicism, Judaism, and Protestantism so that "each might contribute to his rendering of religion all the spiritual force there is in his distinctive beliefs." This conclusion is, of course, an almost exact precis of Will Herberg's Protestant, Catholic, Jew written forty years later and hailed then as a "discovery" at once of American religious pluralism and, in what Herberg called "The Religion of Americans," a national religious unity.33

On another level, however, Small is already becoming somewhat anachronistic in his use of overt evangelical and explicitly biblical language. In John Dewey's writings, for example, "the method of democracy" becomes the "Religion of America," and the schools become the churches of the national democratic faith. In many other Progressive writings the sociological and economic "proofs" of the progress of this faith seem to overwhelm and even displace their religious causes.24 In its stead, democracy itself becomes a faith in the American Way of Life, which includes, but now transcends, its earlier regional, denomina-

---

23. Small, 1915, 681 and 682. Small's colleague at Chicago, the theologian Shailer Mathews, put it most aptly when he called for making Christianity "a religion fit for [American] democracy" (Mathews, 1918, 121). Herberg, 1983, "The Religion of Americans and American Religion." This delay should not be surprising. In an article written in 1990, one of the most perceptive historians of American religion calls our attention to a "quid obscuram" that cuts across all organized religious communities in America, namely, traditionalism and modernism, and to the high church of modernism, which has been hegemonic in the twentieth century, the American university (Wuthnow, 1990). This "new" thesis receives contemporary political relevance in Hunter, 1991, where we are warned of an alliance of Protestant fundamentalists, Orthodox Jews, and Catholic conservatives against the Enlightenment tradition represented by secularists, reform Jews, and liberal Catholics and Protestants. A Catholic priest and ex-law school dean recently called for a new religious establishment consisting of all sensible Protestants, Catholics, and Jews against religious fundamentalism from whatever quarter (Mooney, 1990).

24. One should not make too much of this displacement. Evangelical Protestant pleas for the Christianization of the "West" were replete with social, economic, and demographic statistics and made the public schools as important as the churches in this task. See, for example, Beecher, 1977; Strong, 1963; and discussion in Handy, 1990, 281–301; and Ross, 1918, 175–79, on public schools and their religious functions.
tional, and even biblical formulations.\textsuperscript{25} However formulated, Progressives insisted that democracy and democratic reform required a national will strong enough to generate bonds of sufficient strength to encourage sacrifice for social justice and the common good. Small's seemingly "conservative" formulation was an integral part of his economic "radicalism" as expressed in his contemporaneous writings on the social gradations of capital and on the transition from capitalism to democracy [Small, 1914; 1913; see also 1919].

WHEREVER CHILDREN OF PURITANS ARE FOUND

A curious feature of Small's analysis of American nationality was a long digression on the legacy of the Hebrew ideal of family. Quite outside any framework of social evolution, Small states that the "Hebrew (i.e., Old Testament) conception of family loyalty . . . is far above the ideal practiced or professed by large sections of Americans" and that "the typical family life of modern Jews [is now] a salutary factor in American society." A similar philo-Semitism finds expression in Ly-

\textsuperscript{25} Dewey, 1916, chaps. 6–7 and 18; and Kuklick, 1985, chaps. 13–17, especially 242–46. See also Giddings, 1912, 585–89, on the same topic as Small's, in his presidential address to the American Sociological Association. The theme is national unity and fulfillment charted through mass consumption patterns, the triumph of scientific or universalistic views of nature, thereby purifying religion, and the assimilative effects of class struggle in the achievement of social justice through direct democracy. The origin of the term "Religion of America" or "The American Religion" used by Small and, later, Herberg, remains obscure, but E. D. Adams, 1913, 122, has a reference to a book or article by an English Catholic, William Barry, titled "The Religion of America." The famous expression, "nation with the soul of a church," is G. K. Chesterton's. The idea of American democracy as itself a faith is articulated throughout Dewey's writings. It also constitutes the somewhat mystical ending to Croly's 1914 Progressive Democracy and is articulated earlier in chapter 8 in contrasting faith to the "law" as external "works." Samuel Zane Batten, a social gospel theologian wrote, "There are many indications that the great movement for human freedom and social justice, begun in the Reformation, is about to take on new life and complete itself in what may be called the democracy of all life. . . . For democracy, we have come to realize, is less a form of government than a confession of faith; it is the confession of human brotherhood . . . it is the recognition of common aims and common hopes. . . . To confess this faith against the world, to follow this ideal . . . is the best evidence that man can give that he is working in line with the great purpose of God in the world" [1898, 253–54]. Lyman Abbott repeats this same idea. America represents democracy in the world, but had not always been "conscious of the spirit which has possessed her." Now, however, we have come to realize that "Democracy is more than a scheme of government . . . a theory of economics . . . a plan of education . . . a form of religious institutions. Democracy is a great religious faith: a superstitious faith, if you will, but a great religious faith. It is faith in man" [1901, 196–97].
man Abbott's lectures on the rights of man and American democracy. Framing all history as a struggle between Rome and Israel, he concludes that the modern age represents the final victory of Hebraism as democracy over Rome as aristocracy and imperialism. America as the New Israel of the Puritan founding is the exemplary Hebraic nation because it combines Christianity and Democracy, thereby making universal—in biblical language, "fulfilling"—the original Hebraic principles. Abbott puts this historical-evolutionary theory against the false one "that the consent of the governed confers authority" and, in so doing, makes American democracy the final achievement of history. As the fulfillment of this original Hebraic promise America is a kind of democratic theocracy "pervaded by the spirit, not merely of good will toward man, and of large hope for man, but also of faith in man."

While expressions of this same Hebraic covenant ideal can be found in other contexts, the primary source within American history is the Puritans. No matter what the context—economics, philosophy of history, sociology, psychology, or literary criticism—Progressive writings on American nationality are filiopietistic to the core. At first glance, this might appear somewhat paradoxical and even self-defeating. New England at this time was in cultural, economic, and demographic decline, its ancestral religion shrinking and many of its intellectuals either looking inward or living in imagination in England. Like the

26. Small, 1915, 651. Abbott was editor of Outlook, a leading Progressive weekly, for more than three decades, and pastor of the leading Congregational church in America. This series of twelve lectures came with a bibliographical guide that constitutes a pantheon of Progressive intellectuals and their precursors: John Morley, T. H. Green, Lecky, John Stuart Mill, Sir Henry Maine, Frederic Harrison, and T. H. Huxley from Britain; Josiah Strong, Giddings, Hadley, and Ely from America; Hegel from Germany.


28. The social gospel movement with its "kingdom" ideal is explicitly Hebraic and implicitly "theocratic" in a cultural sense. This equation is made in Ely 1889, chap. 2; Commons, 1894, chap. 4; and Batten, 1898, 235–53, and 1911, 207–27. And see Dombrowski, 1936, chaps. 4 (Ely), 5 (Protestant seminaries), and 13 (Herron), Crunden, 1984, 39–51 (Commons), and 56–68 (Dewey); and Handy, 1984, chaps. 4 (social gospel theology) and 6 (cooperative Christianity). And see Curtis, 1991, for a larger analysis of the social gospel and American culture.

29. Soloman, 1956, on response to Irish immigration and loss of political power. By 1906, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire were all more than two-thirds Catholic. Another sign was the Boston-centered Anti-Imperialist League as a protest against the dynamism and expansion of America that left
South, New England was increasingly on the defensive against the dynamism of the core culture and economy represented by the twin poles of New York and Chicago. This ambivalence is nicely expressed in the conclusion to a book that was originally a Ph.D. thesis at Radcliffe at the turn of the century:

When one notes how many of the cities and towns of New England are to-day controlled politically by those who have neither Puritan traditions, Puritan background of ancestry, nor Puritan ideals, one feels dismayed, for it would seem the old order had passed away save in memory and in history. But it is not an unintelligent and sentimental optimism alone which asserts that New England is still a living force, and Puritan traditions and ideals still working models. Such an assertion is proved to be undeniable fact when the sons and daughters of New England have been sought out in the West. The history of New England is not confined to six states; it is contained in a greater and broader New England wherever the children of the Puritans are found (Mathews, 1909, 272).

The study of what this author termed "Great Migrations" as a continuum of the great seventeenth-century migration to America traces the extraordinary influence of New Englanders in shaping the political institutions and culture of the dynamic states in the Midwest. This same idea was expressed in the 1920s by the president emeritus of the University of Colorado when he said that "Puritan standards have become the public standards of America, and you will find more of New England in Colorado Springs, Boulder, or Greeley (i.e., college towns), than in most towns of Massachusetts. This is not a partisan claim, but

New England behind. William James expressed this New England alienation in a way that repudiated both American expansion and American nationalism: "Damn great Empires! . . . I am against bigness and greatness in all their forms, and with the invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual. . . . The bigger the unit you deal with, the hollower, the more brutal, the more mendacious is the life displayed. So I am against all big organizations as such, national ones first and foremost; against all big successes and big results" (Perry, 1935, 315). Boston's Anti-Immigration League expressed this same retreat. James's friend and fellow member of the Metaphysical Club, John Fiske, was its first President. Lasch, 1973, 70-79, discusses the anti-imperialism of both New England and the South in terms of their growing peripheral status. A third indicator was the demise of the Boston-centered American Social Science Association. Haskell's analysis (1977) of its rise and fall would be augmented by a combination of regional and religious analysis: the new academic professional associations were much more nationalist, expansionist, and "evangelical," thoroughly at home in the dynamic industrial core of America.
recognition of fact" (Grimes, 1967, xii). But the chief connecting link of Puritanism to Progressive conceptions of American nationality and Puritanism is Abraham Lincoln—"father Abraham"—and the Civil War.

Ida Tarbell, famous as a muckraking journalist, achieved even greater fame as a biographer of Lincoln. The culmination of her very successful magazine- and book-writing enterprise came with In the Footsteps of the Lincolns, which traces the progress of the family from New England to Illinois. As preface to this lavishly designed book is John S. Phillips's poem "Lincoln," written in 1908, part of which reads:

In him distilled and potent the choice essence of a race!
Far back the Puritans—stern and manful visionaries,
Repressed poets, flushed with dreams of glowing theologies!
Each new succession, out of border hardship,
Refined to human use the initial rigor of the breed,
Passing to the next the unconscious possession of a perfecting soul!...
Each axman and each plowman added
Another filament of ruggedness;
Unknowing minds dumbly cried for liberty;
Mute hearts strove against injustice....
At last was ready the alembic, where Nature stored and set apart
Each generations finest residue,
Waiting for the hour of perfect mixture—
And then the Miracle!

In less grandiloquent terms, this use of Lincoln and the Civil War as bearer of the spirit of Jerusalem into the new dynamic core of America was restated in many forms in the writings of Progressive academics and intellectuals. The new urban middle class evidently shared in this revival of the memory of Lincoln and the Civil War. The first of the new monthly magazines to achieve a large subscription base was the

30. Ida M. Tarbell, 1924, Preface. See Croly, 1909, 85–99 and 427; Hadley, 1901, chap. 1; E. D. Adams, 1913, chaps. 2 and 5, although, in fact, Adams's entire book, Power of Ideals, is simply a recounting of migration and nationality. The radical labor activist and English professor, Vida Scudder (1898, 204–6), charts our literary progress as fulfillment of American ideals, concluding: "To realize a spiritual democracy for the victims and outcasts of the Old World is a task before which we may indeed quail, unless we believe it to be God-given. But, turning back to the lives of our fathers, surely we see in the warfare against the slavery of the negro a prophecy of our larger conflict against evil less evident, but more deeply imbedded in the social body. The Civil War lies behind us as a great symbol, and its limited and clear-cut struggle may well inspire our generation as we face the more confused and widespread forces of industrial bondage that hold our laboring classes in a spiritual deprivation as complete in some ways as that of the slave" (210–11).
Century in 1888–89, with a series on the Civil War. Published later as a book, this series earned the Century Company more than a million dollars.\(^{31}\) This success was followed by a book on Lincoln by Hay and Nicolay, first serialized in that same magazine, which earned the authors more than fifty thousand dollars. Other magazines and book publishers quickly joined this Civil War remembrance enterprise, a boom that lasted for twenty years. Significantly, the journals and book publishers that did this were also those that were the major vehicles for Progressive reform ideas and ideals (Mott, 1957a, 457–80, 510–16; 1957b, 589–607).

An earlier indication of the power of Puritanism and the rise of new conceptions of American nationalism was the popularity of books by John Fiske. Although he was too much of a Bostonian to be a Progressive,\(^{32}\) his histories of the New England settlement, the American Revolution, and the constitutional founding were all placed within a social evolutionary and Hegelian-Christian view of history. The books on the colonial and the constitutional foundings were extraordinary publishing successes.\(^{33}\) An earlier and more philosophical book set the theme for the three histories and established their interconnection; it was titled *American Political Ideas Viewed from the Standpoint of Universal History* and was published continuously from 1885 to 1917.

Within the horizon of Progressivism, biblical typology or evolutionary sociology (they were usually interchangeable) served as a theology of the fulfillment of America as a historic nation. Its future destiny is implicit from the start and can be traced back through the chain of obligations from those who preceded us and forward through the legacies given to our descendents. The sociologist Cooley wrote in an early textbook of "our need to recall vanished persons" as a primary cause of our ideas of goodness and justice (Cooley, 1902, 389). The psychologist James Mark Baldwin wrote in his textbook of the ways in which significant human actions are institutionalized and therefore constitute part of "the social heritage of our descendents" (Baldwin, 1906, 473). In a Hegelian-romantic rendering of this same idea, the germ of American nationality is the particularism of the first New England theocracies

---

31. The early success of this theme dictated the enormous scale of this project. Volumes 7 and 8 of the magazine, consisting of about 1,800 pages (including advertisements), include more than 250 separately written contributions, not including poetry. There were fourteen major articles on the deteriorating condition of the freedman in the South.

32. See note 29 above.

that, through the successive stages of ever higher dispensations marked by the great events of our national life, have grown into America as a great democratic nation. Social justice and human brotherhood are the modern fulfillment of this earlier spirit. Like the religious expressions preceding it, this spirit must never be entrapped within the formal confines of trained clergymen and institutional churches, but must pervade all aspects of life—the family, the school, the market, and the workplace.

THE ADVANCE GUARD OF SOCIAL PROGRESS

American ideals of nationality shaped by Progressive academics and intellectuals might appear less contentious—and less politically relevant—when stated as history than when stated in terms of the contemporary political and economic struggles between regions, social groups, and institutions. For the Progressives, however, contemporary struggles were inseparable from this evolutionary history as prophecy. The connection becomes clear when one seeks in their writings the identity of the primary agents and agencies of nationality. The first and most obvious identity would be geographical: the vanguard regions of the country had become the mid-Atlantic and Midwestern regions of the country. One reading of this regional or geographical identity of the growth of American nationalism has already been suggested above: "wherever the children of the Puritans are found." Symbolized by Lyman Beecher's *A Plea for the West* and continuing through Josiah Strong's *Our Country* and *The New Era, or the Coming Kingdom*, the religious energies of New England were projected first into upstate New York and northern Ohio and then westward, following almost exactly the path of demographic and economic expansion. Almost every Progressive academic and intellectual highlighted in this study was a product of or participant in this movement and of the economic, cultural, and political institutions it left in its wake. Not a single one came from or identified with the South.

This sense that the dynamic core of America as a nation lay on an axis from New York to Chicago and from Chicago radiating south and west to the rest of the continent, can be expressed in a number of other images. The most obvious is the trunk line railway system, created in the first session of the first Republican-controlled Congress in 1861.34

34. Keller, 1977, 165–67. Between 1862 and 1872, the national government subsidized trunk line railroad construction with one hundred million acres of public
Less obvious are the ways in which national magazines, women's clubs, moral reform movements, and the planting of churches and colleges spread in this same way. This same core region was the site of the great electoral struggle for national political supremacy in the post-Civil War period: whoever won the Midwest conquered the political nation (Jensen, 1971). This same region was assumed by all to be the battleground on which church denominations fought for dominance and, later, when ecumenical and "parachurch" institutions worked more closely together, sought to Christianize the culture. In the economic sphere, it was here that the great trusts and pools of investment capital were formed, mechanized agriculture thrived, the labor movement was first solidly organized, and the emerging patterns of industrial relations were established. And it was here that the great industrial cities of America were born and grew to immense size and power.

If America was to become a coherent nation; if America was to usher in the Kingdom of God; if America was to achieve social and economic justice; if America was to conquer the world for Christ or for democracy or for export markets for goods and capital, this geographical core would have to lead. But to do this, the core itself had first to be conquered, socialized, and organized. This required the creation of powerful national institutions in the core. These institutions had to then mobilize and discipline the intellectual, moral, and material resources for the task. Who would create these institutions and give them power and purpose? Who would point the way?

In the two decades following the Civil War the cultural answers to these questions seemed obvious: moral and intellectual leadership fell to the evangelical churches and churchmen. It was they who would provide the ideals, establish the organizational forms, and raise the money required to achieve the conquest of the West. But this obvious answer was also an increasingly wrong answer—and it was largely the theologians of the social gospel in alliance with Progressive social scientists who first showed how and why it was wrong.

Churches had separate institutional and denominational interests that compromised their larger social and political roles; most churchmen were wedded to particularistic theological and doctrinal systems that constricted the depth and reach of religion in the daily life of the larger society; many denominational colleges were parochial, defen-
sive, hopelessly unprofessional, and anti-intellectual. In the words of Washington Gladden, if "every department of human life—the families, the schools, amusements, art, business, politics, industry, national politics, international relations—[is to be] governed by the Christian law and controlled by Christian influences" (Handy, 1984, 140), churches as denominations and creeds and clergymen were hardly up to the task. Indeed, churches were as often barriers to the Kingdom as they were its harbingers, their "otherworldliness" a surrender to complacency and respectability in this one.36 As Rauschenbusch, Ely, Ross, Commons, Dewey, and Cooley maintained from the start, churches and clergymen themselves needed to be "Christianized" (or democratized or socialized) on new terms.37

The import of this argument was not to reform the church and theology and clergymen so they could reattain the leading intellectual and cultural role in directing America.38 Rather, if churches were to substitute a social ethic for theological creeds, they would be doing no less than what the Progressives expected of all other emerging national institutions and their leaders. If "social righteousness" was to permeate all life, then the role of clergymen in the church was hardly different

36. "Whenever an agreement has been reached between the Church and the world, the terms have been a division of territory as it were ... the world has transferred the domain of dogma and the future life to the church, but has kept for itself the present life" (Ely, 1889, 53). Ely's book, Social Aspects of Christianity (1888) originally appeared as articles in the Congregationalist and was required reading in the major Protestant seminaries (Dombrowski, 1936, 50). Ely was one of the few academic Progressives who used the word "church" in the singular, but his meaning was never entirely clear in the American context. "While Christianity has awakened higher ideals of life among the masses and made them restless, the church has opposed the realization of those ideals in the life where they most are needed" (Commons, 1894, 10).

37. Rauschenbusch in Handy, 1984, 143–44; Commons, 1894, chaps. 1 and 2; Cooley, 1909, 5 and xxxii; Ely, 1889, chaps. 2 and 5; Ross, 1918, 208–17 and 370–72.

38. This is not entirely true. Before other reform institutions became firmly institutionalized, someone like John Commons in jeremiads to Protestant churchmen could say: "I long to see the day when the leadership in the social movements of our time will be taken from the lawyer and the newspaper and given to the Christian minister. We cannot expect to have a society based on righteousness so long as our social philosophy is given to us by editors and lawyers. They are put forward to favor special interests. But where is the advocate of the masses, of the great brotherhood of man? Where is the truly judicial mind, whose purpose it is to bring to pass the kingdom of God on earth? (1894, 23). This, in turn, must be qualified by what he said as preface to this hope: "The minister should devote one half of his pulpit work to sociology ... sociology has rightly been said to be one half of religion; theology is the other half. ... Theology considers man in his relations to God; sociology to his relations to his fellow-men" (19–20). But see Herron, 1894, 8, on the church as only one means among many to achieve "the kingdom of God, which is the just social order."
from that of the members of reform organizations, or the teacher in her school, or the businessman in his firm, or parents in their families, or social workers in settlement houses—or professors in their universities.

This identification of nationality with the institutions and values of the dynamic core of turn-of-the-century America sometimes encouraged a rhetoric of triumphalism in the writings of Progressive intellectuals. It was their reform organizations and institutions that appropriated the prefix "national" in their names as if by right.\(^{39}\) The extraordinary growth of the evangelical churches and the success of their domestic, urban, and foreign mission activities in the late nineteenth century had already provided the language for this triumphalist rhetoric.\(^{40}\) The wave of reform measures that swept the country in the period 1905–7 seemed especially to confirm that America was finally and permanently committed to a future Progressive intellectuals had marked out. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, their professional associations and journals were on a solid footing; their university departments and endowments were rapidly growing; their books and articles dominated intellectual and higher political discourse; their students and colleagues were actively sought by state and national political and reform bodies; and reform journals and journalists were disseminating their ideas to ever growing audiences.\(^{41}\) Even

---

39. This was especially true of women's organizations. For a general sample of such organizations, Bliss, 1908, 806–10.

40. Methodist clergymen and theologians were especially outspoken in this regard, which is understandable given their phenomenal growth in the urban areas of the North and Midwest. James King of New York, in 1887: "Christianized Anglo-Saxon blood, with its love of liberty, its thrift, its intense and persistent energy and personal independence, is the regnant force in this country. . . . God is using the Anglo-Saxon to conquer the world for Christ" (Handy, 1984, 91). Daniel Dorchester, Methodist clergyman and editor of Christianity in the United States (an 1895 compendium which declared that, of the 165,000 churches in America, exactly 151,172 were evangelical): "Christ, reigning over a territory hitherto unrivaled in extent, great benevolences, awakened and sustained by a deeper religious devotion; rapidly multiplying home, city, and foreign mission stations, the outcome of intelligent consecration; magnificent departments of Christian labor, many of them heretofore unknown, and none of them ever before so numerous, so vast, or so restlessly active; the great heart of the Church pulsating with an unequaled velocity; the fires of evangelism burning with unwonted brightness . . . and a religious literature such as has characterized no other age, eminently practical, intensely fervid and richly evangelical . . . God has a living church within the churches, towering amid them all in its mightiness" (Handy, 1984, 101–2). As Handy wryly notes, "there is much implicit internationalism in social gospel thought" (1984, 146). These themes are discussed in chapter 7 below.

41. The clearest indications of popular success was the sudden growth and prosperity of the magazines featuring Progressive intellectuals and reform themes. In
Walter Rauschenbusch, the most programmatic of the social gospel theologians, declared in *Christianizing the Social Order* (1912) that, of the five great sectors of the social order, four had by then been largely Christianized, the family, church, school, and politics. Only business, "the seat and source of our present troubles," remained unredeemed (Handy, 1990, 296).

Among the Progressive economists and sociologists this triumphalism was less obvious, but it pervades their writings nonetheless. In their research monographs and textbooks they take great care in pointing out that the triumph of democracy and social justice would work only by a process of adopting the innovations produced by America's most advanced individuals and institutions. Charles Horton Cooley located progress in the opinions of specialized groups and, of these, only in those that "function through [their] most competent instruments," because the worth of all well-constituted groups "is nearly always superior . . . to the average capacity of its members." And in his discussion of social classes, he takes care to show that "the real upper class, that which is doing the most for the onward movement of human life, is not to be discerned by a visible sign. The more inward or spiritual a trait is, the less it is dependent upon what are ordinarily understood as class distinctions."  

1906, Albert Shaw declared that his *Review of Reviews* had "the largest circulation in the world for any magazine not publishing fiction" (Mott, 1957a, 661). McClure's began its muckraking series of articles in 1903 and in 1908 announced that for ten straight years it had carried more advertising than any other monthly magazine in America. *Cosmopolitan*, another monthly vehicle for Progressive intellectuals, had more than a million circulation in the middle of that decade. The influence of women and the growth of women's magazines are other strong indicators of the growing popularity of Progressive ideas. With more than a million circulation, *Ladies Home Journal* had regular contributions from Jane Addams, Lyman Abbot, and Theodore Roosevelt. But it was Addams herself who clearly registered the popularity of Progressive values. Helped by her own publicity skills and by popular journalists such as Ida Tarbell, who dubbed her "The First Lady of the Land," she was voted "best woman in Chicago" in 1906. In 1908, *Ladies Home Journal* anointed her "First American Woman." In a poll of its members conducted by the New York Woman Suffrage Association to select the twenty-five "greatest women in history," Jane Addams came in third, but first among the living. In a 1913 readers' poll conducted by the *Independent* magazine to select the ten most useful contemporary Americans, Addams came in second to Thomas Edison, beating out Andrew Carnegie (Davis, 1973, 198-200).

42. Cooley, 1909, 124–25, 252, and 254–64. And see Cooley, 1902, chap. 9 on personal ascendancy and chap. 12 on freedom.
Chapter Two

the rest of society." The sudden explosion of wealth in the industrial urban centers was seen by most of these Progressives as as much an opportunity for as a threat to the attainment of social justice. Indeed, they witnessed and helped shape the rationale for the creation of the great charitable foundations and trusts that came into being at this time—and they, their students, and their universities were often major beneficiaries.

In short, the signs of success that they saw were not only most evident in this new industrial core region of America, they were largely confined to that region and its mechanized agricultural extensions further to the west. The academic Progressives were not only at home in urban industrial America, they were among its first inhabitants and surely the first to seek a systematic understanding of its wealth and power. And they equated this core with the authentic nation, saying

43. Addams, 1902, 161: "The danger of professionally attaining to the power of the righteous man, of yielding to the ambition 'for doing good' on a large scale, compared to which the ambition for politics, learning, or wealth, are vulgar and commonplace, ramifies through our modern life; and those most easily beset by this temptation are precisely the men best situated to experiment on the larger social lines, because they so easily dramatize their acts and lead public opinion." Her advice to them was to perform social experiments that exemplified a higher social ethic so that the larger public could decide whether or not to adopt them. "Such experiments," she says, "enable the nation to use the Referendum method in its public affairs" (164).

44. In obvious response to Veblen, Small (1915, 662) defends the philanthropy and social innovation of the responsibly rich families this way: "A brilliant contribution to historical and contemporary knowledge might be written under the title 'The Debt of Civilization to Its Leisure Class.' Some of the most important social services in progress in America today would be lacking if they were not performed by volunteers from our leisure class."

45. It seems curious to speak of Progressives as "small town" in reference to their origins and values, as if there were others in America who were not "small town," who were more "at home" in these new cities than they were. To say that their values were "traditional" is a variant of this, as if to say that there were others in America whose values were modern—say, peasant immigrants from Ireland and Southern Europe or Jews from Central Europe and Russia. This is the more curious because it was these same "small town" Progressives who provided the research, the intellectual framework, and the language by which urban America came to understand itself and who edited the journals and mass circulation magazines that explained industrial urban America to the rest of the country and made it acceptable. They were also the first to introduce European urban models to American audiences and to urge their study for use in America. Perhaps this characterization, which first came into use in the 1940s, was a way for academics of that era to use the cosmopolitan perspectives of Progressive social science to accuse earlier authors of being provincials in order to mark their own allegiance to New Deal liberalism and cultural pluralism. Charles Forcey, obviously drawing on Richard Hofstadter, says in his 1963 Introduction to Croly's Promise: "The reformers of Croly's day called themselves Progressives to indicate a bold grappling with the fu-
as their clergyman counterparts had in the mid-nineteenth century, that the future of the country rested on the power and justice of this core. Their persistent nationalism, therefore, was both a geographic regionalism of the core and a psychic regionalism of a covenant people that was being fulfilled in the institutions and practices of that core. In this double sense—children of the Puritans and founders of its reincarnated promise—the Progressives were at the cosmopolitan forefront of American life and spearheads of a region-as-nation conquest. Against this idea of nationality the parochial peripheries, through their party and legal spokesmen, had only the empty universalism of what Herbert Croly called a distant and abstract "monarchy of the Constitution"—a document that Progressives read as a barrier to democratic national purpose and a guarantor of local elites, small towns, and constricted lives.

...