

PRINCIPLE OR POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY: THE  
PROGRESSIVE REPUBLICANS, 1910-1916

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PROGRESSIVE REPUBLICANS, 1910-1916

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the  
North Texas State University in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

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Denton, Texas

January, 1966

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## CHAPTER I

### THE TRUMPET SOUNDS

Republican politicians walked on the proverbial thin ice during the politically cataclysmic years 1910 to 1916. Progressivism, which had invaded the conservative-controlled Republican party, provoked a split that affected local politics as well as the party's national leadership. The rebellion engulfing the party demanded that each Republican clearly define his position, whether it meant remaining within one of the factions of the party or creating entirely new political alliances. The available choices, ranging from reaction to insurgency, required that the professional Republican politician be painfully specific. The dilemma faced by these politicians, particularly those of the rank and file who were sympathetic with progressive ideals, is the major concern of this study.

The revolution that resulted after 1910 was dependent on the evolution of the Republican party in the initial ten years of the century. Throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, the tide of progressivism rose within the ranks of the Republican party. The seeds of revolt were being generously sown. Beginning in the cities the crusading

progressives gradually moved into state politics and ultimately challenged the standpat attitude of the Republican party leaders in Washington. The movement directed its efforts toward eliminating the appalling abuses created by the rapid industrial development in the United States. Progressives sought through legislation to solve these problems by increasing governmental power over economic activities and by providing the people with more direct control of their government. These changes required public awareness of existing problems and ultimately a fight against the privileged interests who stood to lose from the transition.

Articles of exposure published in popular magazines enlightened the public about the corruption existing in American society. Lincoln Steffens' article entitled "Tweed Days in St. Louis", published in October, 1902, is recognized as officially ushering in the era of muckraking exposure.<sup>1</sup> Before 1910, a host of journalists, like Steffens, were attacking the crime and corruption which saturated all elements of society. S. S. McClure, the editor and publisher of McClure's magazine, defined the situation when he wrote:

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<sup>1</sup>C. C. Regier, The Era of the Muckrakers (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1957), p. 55.

"Capitalists, workingmen, politicians, citizens -- all breaking the law, or letting it be broken. Who is left to uphold it? . . . There is no one left; but all of us."<sup>2</sup>

The agents of exposure, the so-called muckrakers, carried on an extensive and factual campaign that ultimately convinced the public that corruption blanketed society from top to bottom. Steffens' article "Tweed Days in St. Louis" initiated a series of articles exposing dishonesty in American cities. He discovered that municipal dishonesty was a stepping stone to political depravity within the state governments. Exposing the criminal conditions in Missouri, Illinois, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Ohio, Steffens found that the political party dominating the state made little difference as to the degree of corruption. Before 1910, almost all of the states had been subjected to muckraking.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, writers were publishing articles attacking the federal government. Again Steffens led the way, but the results of his investigation proved too innocuous to satisfy the typically sensational standards of muckraking. David Graham Phillips severely attacked the Senate in a series

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<sup>2</sup>Richard Hofstadter, The Progressive Movement, 1900-1915 (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1963), p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York, 1955), pp. 202-203; Regier, The Era of the Muckrakers, pp. 59-107.

of nine articles. He charged the majority of senators, both Republicans and Democrats, with representing business interests for their personal benefit. Phillips' assault on the Senate was one among many that have been given some credit for the passage in 1913 of the seventeenth amendment, which provides for the direct election of senators. Other than these onslaughts, there was little investigation into the federal government due to Theodore Roosevelt's popularity among the muckrakers. Roosevelt's successor, William Howard Taft, would not be so fortunate.<sup>4</sup>

The business community also came in for a major share of muckraking. Ida M. Tarbell, in a series of articles entitled "The History of the Standard Oil Company", exposed the special privileges granted to the trust. Investigation into the railroads, life insurance companies, and financial institutions among other representatives of the business community disclosed similar malpractices.<sup>5</sup>

Through the muckraking campaign of exposure, the public was made aware of the cost of industrial development. The captains of industry, the bosses, and the machine politicians

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<sup>4</sup>Regier, The Era of the Muckrakers, pp. 108-115.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 120-140.

became recognizable malefactors.<sup>6</sup> This enlightenment provoked an increasing public demand for reform legislation.

Housecleaning started in the cities. The rampant political corruption in the big cities by the turn of the century was characterized by boss-controlled political machines, monopolies, and special privileges. As a result, the municipalities suffered from slums, and inadequate transportation, sewage, and water facilities. The job of eliminating the slums and raising the standards of public health was assigned to local progressive politicians. Although headway was made in the 1890's, most effective reforms came after 1900. Thomas L. Johnson, the progressive mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, stimulated a more democratic government in Cleveland by assailing the city's privileged elements. Samuel M. Jones was another mayor dedicated to municipal reform. His success in Toledo came as a result of applying the Golden Rule to politics. Other cities undergoing progressive reform included San Francisco, Denver, Minneapolis, Boston, Jersey City, Milwaukee, Springfield, New York, St. Louis, Kansas City, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati. From these attempts to govern the cities more effectively came new forms of municipal

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<sup>6</sup>Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, p.195.



government. Both the commission and city-manager plans, developed in the early twentieth century, encouraged the application of specialization in city government.<sup>7</sup>

It was soon apparent to local reformers that substantial progress within the cities hinged on progressive changes at the state level. Finding themselves stymied by the control of the state legislature, many local reformers moved into state politics. For example, Joseph W. Folk, the reform mayor of St. Louis, was elected governor of Missouri in spite of opposition from state corporations and the more conservative members of his own party.<sup>8</sup> Reform within the state government was most dramatically achieved by Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin who overcame the state political machine to be elected governor in 1900. During his three terms as governor, the dynamic "Battling Bob" successfully fought for an outstanding list of reform measures in Wisconsin including a primary election law, increased taxation and regulation of the railroads and utilities, and a host of laws regulating civil service, lobbying, labor, state banks, conservation and water

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<sup>7</sup>George E. Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912, The New American Nation Series, edited by Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris (New York, 1958), pp. 59-62; Russel B. Nye, Midwestern Progressive Politics, A Historical Study of Its Origins and Development, 1870-1950 (East Lansing, Michigan, 1951), pp. 188-192.

<sup>8</sup>Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, p. 75.

power franchises.<sup>9</sup> During the first decade of the twentieth century, other reform governors coming mostly from the Midwest and following La Follette's lead included Albert B. Cummins of Iowa, John A. Johnson of Minnesota, George H. Prouty of Vermont, George Sheldon of Nebraska, Coe Crawford of South Dakota, John Burke of North Dakota, Walter Roscoe Stubbs of Kansas, and Charles Evans Hughes of New York. Generally, these governors, as well as other state reform politicians, had to do battle with big business and the regular party machine. To various degrees they sought to limit bossism through regulation and to extend popular control of the government by the passage of such measures as the initiative, referendum, recall, direct election of senators, and the direct primary.<sup>10</sup>

While the progressive reformers were shaking the lethargic conservatives at the local and state levels, progressivism was gradually penetrating the federal government. In light of a long-standing conservative Republican domination, the odds in favor of reform coming from Washington appeared negligible. Chances were not improved in 1900 when

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<sup>9</sup>Belle C. and Fola La Follette, Robert M. La Follette, June 14, 1855 - June 18, 1925, Vol. I, 2 vols. (New York, 1953), pp. 191-192.

<sup>10</sup>Nye, Midwestern Progressive Politics, pp. 225-234; Mowry, Era of Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 73-80; Merlo J. Pusey, Charles Evans Hughes, Vol. I, 2 vols. (New York, 1951), pp. 200-209.

William McKinley was reelected President of the United States, and the majority of both houses was composed of regular Republicans. On September 6, 1901, the security of the Republican stronghold was threatened when an assassin shot President McKinley. Within a week, McKinley was dead, and Theodore Roosevelt had been sworn into office. The foreboding experienced by the standpat Republicans was epitomized by a comment reportedly made by Mark Hanna, the boss of the national Republican party, at the time of McKinley's death: "I told William McKinley it was a mistake to nominate that wild man at Philadelphia . . . Now look, that damned cowboy is President of the United States."<sup>11</sup>

The conservatives had only to review Roosevelt's relatively brief political career to become upset. Unlike most other young men coming from the comfortably wealthy class, Roosevelt had chosen to actively enter politics after graduating from Harvard. Serving first as an assemblyman in the New York legislature, Roosevelt in rapid succession was appointed to The United States Civil Service Commission, head of the police board of New York City, and Assistant Secretary of the Navy.<sup>12</sup> In each post, Roosevelt had supported a limited number of

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<sup>11</sup>George H. Mayer, The Republican Party, 1854-1964 (New York, 1964), p. 272.

<sup>12</sup>Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, A Biography (New York, 1931), pp. 120-180.

reform measures. In 1898, Roosevelt was elected governor of New York under the auspices of Boss Thomas C. Platt's political machine. By 1900, Platt was anxious to get the crusading Roosevelt out of the state, and the vice-presidency was convenient.<sup>13</sup> To the conservatives' discomfort, Roosevelt accidentally became President.

At first the apprehension expressed by Republican leaders appeared to be unfounded. On taking office, Roosevelt announced that he would follow McKinley's policies and would ask the cabinet members to remain at their posts.<sup>14</sup> Before writing his first message to Congress, Roosevelt sought the counsel of a number of the conservative Republicans so that when the message was delivered, it was almost sterilized by equivocation.<sup>15</sup>

Roosevelt's initial timidity was due mainly to the conservative framework within which he had to work. In the Senate, the dominant Republican figures were Nelson W. Aldrich of Rhode Island, John C. Spooner of Wisconsin, Orville H. Platt of Connecticut, and William B. Allison of Iowa. Joseph G. Cannon, a Republican conservative, began his reign over the House as speaker a few months after Roosevelt took office. As a practical politician, Roosevelt generally cooperated with these sovereign forces.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 216-223.

<sup>14</sup>Theodore Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt, An Autobiography (New York, 1926), p. 350.

<sup>15</sup>Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 244-245.

<sup>16</sup>Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 115-122.

On occasion during Roosevelt's first term he upset the conservatives. In 1902, he unexpectedly charged the Northern Securities Company, a gigantic holding company, with violating the Sherman Act. George E. Mowry has suggested that Roosevelt's trust-busting activity came after he realized that he could not pass legislation which would control the trusts as long as Congress was dominated by conservatives; therefore, his only alternative was to apply the existing antitrust laws. The standpat Republicans were shocked by the President's independence a second time in 1902 when he appointed a commission to arbitrate the disagreement between the striking anthracite coal miners and the operators who dominated the industry. At one point in the negotiations, Roosevelt, angered by the operators' recalcitrance, threatened to seize the mines and to reopen them under government direction. The final settlement issued by the arbitration commission was a compromise. Significantly, the settlement had not followed the traditional pro-business pattern.<sup>17</sup>

Roosevelt's actions delighted the progressive Republicans. Although the clamor he created may have lacked some substance, the progressive Republicans began to see him as a champion of the progressive cause. They applauded his trust-busting campaign and, in spite of the fact that they were not pro-union, supported the concept of the federal government arbitrating

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 130-139.

the controversies between capital and labor. They were also excited by Roosevelt's occasional references to a downward revision of the tariff.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, Roosevelt's support of the Newlands Reclamation Act of 1902, which provided for federally-constructed irrigation dams in the West, met with their approval.<sup>19</sup>

In these first years, Roosevelt measured his actions in light of the effect they would have on the approaching presidential election.<sup>20</sup> Behind the scenes, he initiated during his first year of office a campaign against Mark Hanna for control of the Republican party organization. He was so successful in using the presidential powers to bolster support that little doubt remained by 1903 of Roosevelt's nomination as the Republican candidate in 1904. Nominated unanimously, Roosevelt overwhelmingly defeated his Democratic opponent, Alton B. Parker. For the next four years, the trust-buster was to be President in his own right.<sup>21</sup>

During his second administration, Roosevelt carried on an extensive campaign for the passage of a law which would provide for more effective regulation of the railroads. To

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 126-133.

<sup>19</sup>George E. Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement (Madison, Wisconsin, 1946), p. 19.

<sup>20</sup>Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, p. 164.

<sup>21</sup>John Morton Blum, The Republican Roosevelt (Massachusetts, 1954), pp. 38-70; Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 350-354.

encourage support for the bill, Roosevelt threatened to provoke an issue over tariff revision. He recognized that the standpat Republicans objected to railroad regulation and tariff revision, but that the progressives would fight for both issues. In essence, Roosevelt hoped that he could force the standpatters to agree to his railroad proposals by holding the threat of tariff revision over their heads.<sup>22</sup>

Roosevelt's political acumen was vividly illustrated in this intricate fight. In addition to inserting the issue of tariff revision, which had the potential of dividing the party, Roosevelt adeptly used publicity and threatened to call a special session of Congress unless a railroad bill was passed. While threatening the conservatives, Roosevelt flirted with the midwestern progressives. In the end, he denied the temptation of joining the left and appealed substantially to the Republican center. Nevertheless, the progressives aided Roosevelt in his bid for railroad legislation. In the Senate where the battle was most severe, Senator Jonathan P. Dolliver of Iowa led the Republicans who were moving toward progressivism against Senator Aldrich's conservative leadership. Progressive governors such as Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin and Albert B. Cummins of Iowa were also encouraging more effective federal railroad regulation. Roosevelt's political tactics were rewarded

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<sup>22</sup>Blum, The Republican Roosevelt, pp. 73-89.

in 1906 by the passage of the Hepburn Act, which significantly strengthened the regulatory power of the Interstate Commerce Commission.<sup>23</sup>

The public sentiment manifested in the debate over the Hepburn bill and other contemporary issues convinced the politically alert Roosevelt that the influence of progressivism was increasing at the expense of conservatism. By 1906, a number of state insurgents were invading the stately chambers of Congress. Roosevelt's reaction to the progressive tide was to move with it. In his final two years as President, Roosevelt, while romancing the progressives, alienated the conservatives. He violently attacked big business as an obstacle to reform and the federal courts as being reactionary. In his final messages to Congress, Roosevelt advocated a host of progressive measures that would provide for more federal regulation of the business community and improved conditions for labor.<sup>24</sup>

In these last two years, Roosevelt championed the cause of the growing number of progressive Republicans and, by doing so, enhanced their responsibility. In spite of the threat the insurgents posed to Republican unity, Roosevelt skillfully maintained a degree of unity in the Republican ranks.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Blum, The Republican Roosevelt, pp. 92-102; Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 198-205.

<sup>24</sup>Mowry, Era of Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 209-225.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.



The increasingly difficult task of continuing to hold the party together fell to William Howard Taft, Roosevelt's hand-picked successor. Taft's job was magnified by the success of the midwestern progressive Republicans in the 1908 elections and the increasing number of conversions to progressivism. Before 1910, the Senate housed a group of progressive Republicans who maintained some unity of action. Prominent among the Senate progressives were Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin, Jonathan Dolliver and Albert Cummins of Iowa, Joseph Bristow of Kansas, Moses Clapp of Minnesota, and Albert Beveridge of Indiana. In the House, numerous insurgent Republicans appeared, including George Norris of Nebraska, Victor Murdock and Edmond Madison of Kansas, John Nelson and Irvine Lenroot of Wisconsin, Miles Poindexter of Washington, and Charles Lindbergh of Minnesota, among a host of others coming mostly from the Midwest and Far West.<sup>26</sup>

The mushrooming progressive faction within the Republican party made Taft, who was essentially a conservative, uncomfortable. In spite of his public announcement that he would carry on Roosevelt's policies, Taft immediately began to move toward an alliance with the standpatters. The first substantial indication of Taft's true sentiment came during the debate on tariff revision in a special session of Congress in 1909.

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<sup>26</sup>Nye, Midwestern Progressive Politics, pp. 262-265.

Although Taft initially supported downward revision, he ultimately supported Senator Aldrich's reactionary amendments. In spite of an organized effort in the Senate by the Republican progressives to defeat the revised duties, the Payne-Aldrich bill was passed.<sup>27</sup> Taft's move toward conservatism, epitomized by his cooperation with Senator Aldrich, had begun.

The progressives' disenchantment with Taft deepened during an administrative controversy between Richard Ballinger, Secretary of the Interior, and Gifford Pinchot, Chief Forester. From this debate, it appeared to the progressives that Taft was attempting to shelve the popular conservation program which had been created by Roosevelt during his second term. In the process of the argument, Pinchot, who symbolized Roosevelt's plan for conserving the public domain, was dismissed, while Ballinger, considered by the public to be opposed to the conservation program was defended by Taft. For the progressives who identified with Roosevelt, Taft's actions were heresy.<sup>28</sup>

Progressive disdain for Taft grew again during an attempt by the House insurgents to restrict the powers of Joseph Cannon, Speaker of the House. Although Taft had committed himself to the overthrow of "Cannonism", he was inconsistent. Finally, the insurgents initiated the assault without Taft's support.

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<sup>27</sup>Nye, Midwestern Progressive Politics, pp. 266-67; Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 242-246.

<sup>28</sup>Nye, Midwestern Progressive Politics, pp. 267-68; Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 250-57.

In 1909, the insurgents led by George W. Norris failed in their first attempt to reach Cannon because of the protection offered him by the regular Republicans. During the next session of Congress, the insurgents were more successful. Norris was able to accumulate forty-four Republican votes for a bill restricting Cannon's control over the Rules Committee. A coalition with the Democrats provided enough votes to pass the bill. Cannon retained his position as Speaker, but the insurgents had limited his extensive powers. Instead of being associated with this progressive achievement, Taft was becoming almost inseparable from the regular Republicans.<sup>29</sup>

By 1910, the space that separated the progressive and conservative factions of the Republican party had become a gulf. Taft, unable to cope with the rising tide of progressivism, had settled into a more comfortable alliance with the conservatives. Nevertheless, the insurgents continued to bolster their forces in preparation for a fight that threatened party unity. After 1910, every Republican, particularly those who sought reform, faced the dilemma inherent in an intraparty conflict.

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<sup>29</sup>Alfred Lief, Democracy's Norris, The Biography of a Lonely Crusade (New York, 1939), pp. 105-6; Nye, Midwestern Progressive Politics, pp. 268-69; Mowry, Era of Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 239-42.

## CHAPTER II

### RIDING HIGH

In 1910, despite the fierceness in the Republican party's internecine war, the insurgents did not intend to destroy the party organization. They were continually concerned with the extent to which progressivism could be carried within the party framework. Ray Stannard Baker, a perceptive political journalist, defined this dilemma in an article entitled "Is the Republican Party Breaking Up?" in which he wrote: "The Insurgent Movement is indeed torn between the timidity of not going far enough and the terror of going too far."<sup>1</sup> The point reached by individual insurgents, and whether that position proved feasible or disastrous, determined the complexion of the Republican party for the first half of the twentieth century.

Although the extent of insurgency attained by Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin, Albert B. Cummins and Jonathan Dolliver of Iowa, Albert Beveridge of Indiana, Moses Clapp of Minnesota, and a host of other insurgent Republicans during this trying period is well known, less prominent progressives, who faced the same dilemmas and experienced similar hardships and rewards,

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<sup>1</sup>Ray Stannard Baker, "Is The Republican Party Breaking Up?" The American Magazine, LXIX (February, 1910), 446.

have received far less attention. For example, La Follette's stature in Wisconsin overshadowed a figure such as Irvine L. Lenroot, who served in Congress throughout the politically traumatic second decade of the twentieth century. Accordingly, Charles A. Lindbergh of Minnesota, to a lesser degree, was obscured by Moses Clapp. A similar fate befell other figures under investigation in this study including Jonathan Bourne of Oregon, Joseph L. Bristow and Victor Murdock of Kansas, William Kent of California, Asle J. Gronna of North Dakota, and Miles Poindexter of Washington. Ultimately these more obscure politicians became the bulwark of progressivism within the Republican party.

The political lives of the rank and file progressives were as seriously threatened by the Republican party schism as were those who by virtue of being more prominent received greater attention. By choosing insurgency these progressives brought down upon themselves the entrenched forces of conservatism. Between 1910 and 1916 the decisions they made had the capacity to prolong or to terminate their political careers. These decisions were to various degrees tempered by principle and by political expediency. For those who miscalculated the public temper there awaited what Leon Trotsky in an earlier revolution had called "the dust-bin of history."

The dilemma facing insurgent and regular Republicans in 1910 required them to weigh the variables on which their

political existence depended and to take a stand. For Taft and his conservative cohorts this meant that the party had to be purged of the outspoken dissenters. The insurgents' increasing militancy and strength would challenge any Republican activity which could be judged reactionary. The lines were clearly drawn. Republican politicians at all levels of government were being compelled to commit themselves in unequivocal terms.

The initial battle for control of the Republican party ensued during the state primary elections in 1910. Both wings fought for position on the state and national tickets. In almost every state progressive candidates were placed against standpatters. An unusual degree of unity was manifested by both factions. In spite of their typical individualism, cooperation flourished within the insurgent ranks as the state Republican primaries were getting underway in the summer of 1910. Many of the insurgents who were not standing for reelection campaigned in states where progressives encountered regular Republicans. Victor Murdock of Kansas toured Washington speaking for Miles Poindexter, a progressive who sought election to the United States Senate, and Dolliver, Cummins, and Clapp campaigned in Indiana for the reelection of Senator Beveridge. The most impressive manifestation of insurgent unity came in Wisconsin, where La Follette and Irvine Lenroot among other progressive candidates were running for election. During this

campaign thirteen progressive leaders stumped Wisconsin, making a total of one hundred eighty speeches for the state Republican insurgents.<sup>2</sup>

The harmony among the insurgents enhanced their chances of success, but the entrenched forces of conservatism in the Republican organization did not allow this threat to go unchallenged. President Taft and Senator Nelson Aldrich initiated a campaign in early 1910 to establish a fund for use by regular Republicans against the insurgents. The President also brought the power of patronage to bear upon the malcontents. As early as mid-February La Follette's Weekly Magazine charged Taft with holding up the insurgents' recommendations for federal appointments in order to encourage them to support the administration's policies. This weapon was used initially to break down insurgent opposition to the Payne-Aldrich Tariff in the Senate and to stifle the rebels' offensive against Cannon in the House. During the primary elections of 1910, Taft, who was determined to force the insurgents into line, maintained his policy of "disciplining" them.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ray Stannard Baker, "On The Political Firing Line, An Account of the New Program and Leadership of the Progressives of the West," The American Magazine, LXXI (November, 1910), 4-6; La Follette's Weekly Magazine, September 17, 1910.

<sup>3</sup>George E. Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement (Madison, Wisconsin, 1946), p. 99; La Follette's Weekly Magazine, February 19, 1910.

Without exception, these pressures were applied to the insurgents. Lynn Haines, author of Law Making in America, had such threats in mind when he defined "A fire-tested insurgent . . . as . . . a Congressman or Senator who has demonstrated the strength to withstand two big temptations. Presidential patronage--is one fire test; congressional favors, the other."<sup>4</sup> The insurgents' political security depended significantly upon employing a certain number of their supporters. Without the spoils to compensate their followers, the progressives would be replaced by others who could provide the compensation. In the 1910 primaries the figures of this study sought reelection without offering the spoils to their adherents. They gambled that the public was interested enough in progressive reform to overlook this shortcoming.

Miles Poindexter of Washington, who sought the Republican nomination to the United States Senate in the 1910 primaries, had served during the two previous years as a Republican congressman. On entering Congress in 1909, the aggressive Poindexter immediately had assumed a role of leadership among the insurgents.<sup>5</sup> In the conflict with Cannon and the Old Guard he had advocated " . . . a reorganization of the House of Representatives, so that that branch of Congress, at least, shall be

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<sup>4</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, December 14, 1912.

<sup>5</sup>"Poindexter Carries Washington," The American Review of Reviews, XLII (October, 1910), 398; "Senator Poindexter, Who Wants to be President," The Literary Digest, LXIII (December 6, 1919), 80.



as it was intended to be, responsive to public opinion."<sup>6</sup> His fight, which was basically in opposition to the privileged interests, had led him to support progressive proposals such as the physical valuation of railroad property and increased power for the Interstate Commerce Commission.<sup>7</sup>

During the 1910 Republican primary campaign, Poindexter faced those same forces that he had attacked for the past two sessions of Congress. President Taft, who was actively engaged in supporting the regular Republican candidates in the primaries, convinced the Washington conservatives that to defeat Poindexter it would be necessary to unite in support of only one of their aspirants. In Taft's opinion " . . . a more blatant demagogue and Democrat never existed" than Miles Poindexter.<sup>8</sup> Secretary of the Interior, Richard A. Ballinger, formerly a Seattle, Washington lawyer, virtually selected the standpatter who opposed Poindexter in the primary election. Having felt the sting of Poindexter's invective during the public debate on the administration's conservation policies, Secretary Ballinger unhesitatingly used the state Republican machine against him.

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<sup>6</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, July 16, 1910.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Taft to J. L. Wilson, May 16, 1910, cited in Henry F. Pringle, The Life and Times of William Howard Taft, A Biography, Vol. II, 2 vols. (New York, 1939), 562.

In a public statement Ballinger said: "I do not consider Representative Poindexter a Republican. He is a rank Socialist or if he is not one, he will be one soon."<sup>9</sup>

In face of this impressive opposition, Poindexter welcomed the support of progressives who were willing to champion his cause in the primary campaign. Several insurgents, including La Follette, responded to his call.<sup>10</sup> In addition to insurgent endorsement, Poindexter was particularly interested in gaining Theodore Roosevelt's support. In early July, Roosevelt received Poindexter at Oyster Bay and from their statements to the press it appeared that the ex-president planned to support him against the Taft-Ballinger candidate in the Washington senatorial race. The implication that Roosevelt was in sympathy with his position was apparent when Poindexter stated that he ". . . found Col. Roosevelt unchanged. He is just the same as ever. He and I have worked together always, and he assured me that we would always work together. I am delighted with the result of the visit."<sup>11</sup> Roosevelt did not, however, actively campaign for Poindexter in 1910. The Rough-Rider, having recently returned from his African safari, at that point was more interested in settling party differences than in campaigning actively for

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<sup>9</sup>New York Times, July 6, 1910; La Follette's Weekly Magazine, July 15, 1910.

<sup>10</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, July 16, 1910; Belle Case and Fola La Follette, Robert M. La Follette, I, 283.

<sup>11</sup>New York Times, July 6, 1910.

known insurgents. Nevertheless, Taft found their agreeableness irritating, particularly in light of a statement Poindexter had made in April in which he announced his preference for Roosevelt as the Republican presidential candidate for 1912.<sup>12</sup>

Despite Roosevelt's reluctance to actively support him and Taft's animosity, Poindexter carried on an effective campaign. He accused the standpatters of abandoning Republican principles and cited the Payne-Aldrich Tariff as vivid testimony. He stood on a solidly progressive platform, advocating conservation of natural resources, government regulation of the railroads, and competition, rather than monopoly, in business. Like most other progressives, Poindexter mixed demagoguery with principle. For example, he called for the creation of a tariff commission ". . . with full power to investigate and report all facts necessary to an enlightened tariff schedule, rather than a grab and barter system of Aldrich and Cannon."<sup>13</sup>

The conservative Republicans in his state had initially regarded Poindexter's candidacy as a joke, but were dismayed over the results of the primary elections. The returns showed that he had won the Republican senatorial nomination by a majority of 45,000 votes. In fact, insurgents carried all but one of the Congressional districts in Washington.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.; Elting E. Morison, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, The Days of Armageddon, 1909-1914, Vol. VII, 8 volumes (Massachusetts, 1954), 283.

<sup>13</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, July 16, 1910.

<sup>14</sup>"Poindexter Carries Washington," Review of Reviews, p. 398; La Follette's Weekly Magazine, September 24, 1910.

Poindexter's smashing electoral success against great odds was matched by many other progressive Republicans in 1910. Irvine L. Lenroot of Wisconsin was among them. His action during the two years he served in Congress prior to the 1910 primary elections clearly placed him in the group that President Taft and the standpatters sought to purge from the party. He consistently voted with the insurgents. Instead of adhering to the party line, Lenroot encouraged congressmen to assume ". . . greater individual responsibility." In the insurgents' conflict with Joseph Cannon he established his independence by asserting that all Republicans ". . . should remember that the success of the Republican party does not depend upon its so-called leaders, but upon the rank and file of the Republican party and they desire that this body be made a representative body."<sup>15</sup> Lenroot continued to act on the basis of such heretical views.

The conservative faction of the party, which had the support of the Taft administration, also challenged Lenroot in the 1910 primaries. The standpatters in Wisconsin held a convention on June 8, 1910 and pledged allegiance to Taft's brand of Republicanism and pledged opposition to the state insurgents. Taft endorsed the Wisconsin convention while his Vice-President, James S. Sherman, delivered the keynote address.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, August 6, 1910.

<sup>16</sup>Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, pp. 111-113.

Taft's efforts on behalf of the Wisconsin conservatives failed to stem the tide. Lenroot with the assistance of numerous insurgents carried on an effective campaign mainly directed against "Cannonism." It was not surprising that in Wisconsin, the seedbed of progressivism, all of the progressive candidates in the Republican primary were nominated.<sup>17</sup>

In Kansas, where Victor Murdock, an insurgent, sought reelection to Congress, progressivism again rebuked the administration's forces. Murdock, as well as the other progressive candidates in the Kansas primaries, encountered organized "Taft Republicanism" which received financial contributions from Senator Aldrich's campaign fund. Also, the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee sent men and money into Kansas, as in other states, in order to get the standpatters nominated in the primaries.<sup>18</sup> Joseph Cannon was among those who entered Kansas during the primaries to campaign for conservative candidates. Cannon made clear his dislike for Murdock during the campaign when he stated, "I recognize no insurgency in the ranks of the Republican party. Murdock and his whole crowd are Democrats, trying to disrupt the party."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Kenneth W. Hechler, Insurgency, Personalities and Politics of the Taft Era, No. 470 of Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, edited by the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University (New York, 1940), 39 ; La Follette's Weekly Magazine, September 17, 1910.

<sup>18</sup>Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, p. 116 La Follette's Weekly Magazine, August 13, 1910; "Men We Are Watching," Independent, LXVIII (March 3, 1910), 474-475.

<sup>19</sup>New York Times, August 3, 1910.

Cannon and the others who opposed Murdock's nomination in 1910 remembered that the Kansas congressman had been in the mainstream of regular Republicanism only a few years before. During his first term in the House, Murdock received his share of the "trimmings" and was given a relatively good committee position for his party loyalty. Joseph Cannon introduced him to Washington society as one of his most promising congressmen, but initial cordiality was brief. Before his second term had expired, Murdock, after discovering that the federal government had been paying the railroads \$5,000,000 a year too much for carrying the mails over the past thirty-five years, committed heresy by ignoring party objections and trying to force a bill through the House to remedy the abuse. From that time on, Murdock earned his prominent position in the insurgent ranks.<sup>20</sup>

The opposition Murdock faced in 1910 was ominous, but he was not without support. By 1910, Kansas had been caught up in progressivism, which in part was reflected by the large number of state newspapers espousing insurgent ideals. In addition to Murdock, who was a journalist by profession, Senator Joseph L. Bristow and William Allen White were prominent among the progressive writers in Kansas.<sup>21</sup> There

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<sup>20</sup>Hastings Macadam, "The Insurgents," Everybody's Magazine, XXVI (June, 1912), 771-774; "Murdock, The Red Insurgent," Current Literature, XLVIII (February, 1910), 149-150.

<sup>21</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, May 21, 1910.

was also the inactive support of Roosevelt. On July 2, 1910, Murdock, Bristow, and E. H. Madison, all insurgents from Kansas, met with the Rough-Rider at Oyster Bay. They left the conference in obvious good humor with a statement that they were pleased ". . . to find Col. Roosevelt absolutely unchanged in his attitude toward public questions." Roosevelt added to the impression given by the Kansas progressives when he told reporters, "Those three Kansans are among my most loyal supporters, and were during the seven years I was in the White House."<sup>22</sup>

Two of "Those three Kansans", Murdock and Madison, who were seeking renomination in the Republican primaries, defeated their standpat opponents. Of the six regular Republicans standing for renomination in Kansas, only two were successful. The other four were beaten by progressive candidates. The progressives in Kansas were riding high.<sup>23</sup>

In preparation for the approaching elections, Kansas Republicans assembled to draft their platform. Despite continued conservative opposition, the insurgents drew up a progressive program. Amid constant cheering from the convention floor, Murdock read the platform, which endorsed his own actions as well as those of other Kansas progressives in the

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<sup>22</sup>New York Times, August 3, 1910.

<sup>23</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, August 13, 1910.

fight against "Cannanism," denounced the Payne-Aldrich Tariff, and pledged unequivocal support for strengthening the Interstate Commerce Commission, reinvigorating Roosevelt's conservation program, amending the Constitution to provide for an income tax and direct election of United States senators, and for passing legislation calling for the physical valuation of railroads and the election, rather than appointment of federal judges. Significantly, Murdock continued his reading with a message to Roosevelt: "We send our greeting to Theodore Roosevelt, the new world's champion of the rights of man in the world-old contest between rising humanity and the encroachments of special privileges. And as Republicans we stand ready to enlist under his banner in the fight for human rights."<sup>24</sup>

On August 31, the day after the Kansas Republican platform had been read, Roosevelt delivered his famous speech at Osawatomie, Kansas. Although he would return to equivocation before the 1910 campaign had ended, Roosevelt on that day advanced beyond most progressives in his demands for reform. He called for a revision of the tariff by a group of experts, income and inheritance taxes, labor laws for women and children, an efficient conservation program, and additional authority for the Bureau of Corporations and the Interstate Commerce

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<sup>24</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, September 10, 1910; September 17, 1910.



Commission to regulate business and industry. Roosevelt's "New Nationalism" excited insurgents throughout the country."<sup>25</sup>

Ray Stannard Baker's comments earlier in the year about the uncertainties of the insurgents seemed prophetic in August. He had suggested that the insurgent movement needed some stimulant ". . . to draw the scattered groups together, and point the place of attack. The movement is well supplied with Garrisons and Phillipses and Sumners. What it needs is a Lincoln." It appeared at Osawatomie that the insurgents had found their Messiah.<sup>26</sup>

Among those insurgents elated by Roosevelt's "New Nationalism" was William Kent, who sought the Republican nomination for Congress from the second district of California. Although a millionaire himself, Kent agreed wholeheartedly with Roosevelt that the federal government should expand its control over the economy in the public interest. During the California campaign, Kent encouraged Californians to realize that combinations were inevitable and that ". . . competition can no longer be trusted to remedy overcharge. Capital can no more be forced to competitively fight capital than men can by law be forced into personal encounter with their neighbors. Control is the only remedy."<sup>27</sup> Even among progressives, Kent's adherence to this economic concept of regulation instead of competition was unusual.

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<sup>26</sup>Baker, "Is The Republican Party Breaking Up?" p. 446.

<sup>27</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, October 22, 1910.

Despite this so-called socialistic viewpoint, the other statements made by Kent fit the pattern set by most progressives. In the typical insurgent spirit, Kent asserted that most people were not concerned with "partisan politics or in the spoils of office, but that rather they wish to elect men willing and able to carry out the mandates so clearly given from end to end of the nation."<sup>28</sup> In announcing his candidacy, Kent stated that he would fight "Cannonism" and work for tariff revision, the revitalization of Roosevelt's program for the conservation of the nation's natural resources, a merit system for public employment, increased regulation of common carriers, and the direct election of senators.<sup>29</sup> Also, Kent supported a graduated income tax which would ". . . tend toward a levelling of property-holding which is a desirable thing in a democracy" and an inheritance tax which would ". . . tend to dissipate great fortunes."<sup>30</sup> If any doubts remained as to Kent's position in 1910 he removed them in concluding his announcement, when he said:

If my ideas seem independent or radical, and if, by chance, I may be listed as a prospective "insurgent" I shall accept the epithet as a high compliment and shall hope that it may be my privilege to bear some little aid to those who, while serving the nation, are

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> La Follette's Weekly Magazine, August 6, 1910; October 22, 1910;

<sup>30</sup> Kent to McKinley, July 6, 1910, Kent Manuscripts, cited in George E. Mowry, The California Progressives (California, 1951), p. 121.

incidentally tending to dignify and save the Republican party.<sup>31</sup>

In the primary campaign, Kent, along with other insurgents, challenged the enthroned railroad interests of California. Again progressives came to encourage the election of men who would bolster their forces. Gifford Pinchot, among those who spoke for Kent during the primaries, suggested that Kent should be elected " . . . because he has given more time and thought to the things which really concern public welfare than almost any other man I know. . . ." <sup>32</sup> La Follette's Weekly Magazine ran several feature articles on Kent, characterizing him as ". . . a Republican of the Abraham Lincoln type. . . ." <sup>33</sup> Even Roosevelt gave him support which, according to Kent, ultimately meant the difference between defeat and victory. Congressman Duncan E. McKinley, Kent's opponent in the primaries, accused him of illegally enclosing a vast tract of government land. A letter from Roosevelt, who had been President during the time that the enclosure was supposed to have taken place, was made public declaring the charge to be false.<sup>34</sup>

The efforts of Kent and his supporters against almost overwhelming odds resulted in a progressive victory. His campaign was more than simply an emotional appeal in opposition

<sup>31</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, August 6, 1910.

<sup>32</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, October 5, 1910; New York Times, August 18, 1910.

<sup>33</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, May 28, 1910.

<sup>34</sup>Elting E. Morison, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, VII, 118.

to the California railroad interests, "Cannonism," and the Payne-Aldrich Tariff. He asserted a positive program of reform and, without offering his constituents rewards, candidly told them that "If elected, I should consider that I hold a commission from my district to do my best for the whole nation."<sup>35</sup>

Less dynamic than Kent, but with the same qualities of independence, Charles A. Lindbergh of Minnesota also was committed to insurgency in the 1910 primary elections. While Kent had yet to face Lynn Haines' insurgency test, Lindbergh was among those already classified as a "fire-tested insurgent." In the fight against Joseph Cannon's extensive control of the Rules Committee Lindbergh had sounded the call of rebellion. Since "select committees" chose to pigeonhole certain bills which had popular support, Lindbergh had suggested that the members of the House should ". . . by a direct vote do directly the will of the House, and now is the time for us to act in accordance with that will."<sup>36</sup> Throughout his first term in Congress, Lindbergh fought "Cannonism." His uncompromising attitude made him a consistent vote for insurgency, but excluded him from a role of leadership. John H. Nelson, congressman from Wisconsin, described Lindbergh's dependability

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<sup>35</sup>Ray Stannard Baker, "Seeing America: A Philosopher in Congress," The American Magazine, LXXVIII (October, 1914), 56.

<sup>36</sup>Alfred Lief, Democracy's Norris, p. 103.

as well as his inflexibility when he said that "when Lindbergh stood with you, he was with you until Hell froze over."<sup>37</sup>

Another veteran of insurgency who stood for renomination to Congress in 1910 was Asle J. Gronna of North Dakota. From the time he entered the House in 1905 Gronna was labeled an insurgent. His first act of revolt came when he blocked the passage of some legislation which would have released public lands to private interests. In addition to maintaining his aversion to the exploitation of the country's natural resources, Gronna by 1910 advocated a downward revision of the tariff, regulation of the railroads on the basis of a physical valuation of their property, postal savings banks, employee's liability, and an income tax. Like all progressives, he waved the bloody shirt of "Cannonism" in the primary elections.<sup>38</sup>

Both Lindbergh and Gronna encountered the usual pressures of the conservative Republicans. Presidential patronage was utilized and the standpatters mobilized their state forces against the heretics. Nevertheless, both were renominated in the Republican primaries.<sup>39</sup>

By October the returns were in from the state primaries. The insurgents had won a distinct victory in this round of the

<sup>37</sup>Hechler, Insurgency, Personalities and Politics of the Taft Era, pp. 40-41.

<sup>38</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, June 11, 1910.

<sup>39</sup>Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, p. 116.

fight. They fortified their stronghold west of the Mississippi and even made some advances in the East. The insurgent triumph was illustrated by the fact that only one insurgent congressman who sought renomination was rejected, while forty regular Republicans were denied another chance in Congress.<sup>40</sup>

In view of the approaching elections, Taft relinquished his policy of "disciplining" the insurgents and began to make an appeal for party unity. Any question that remained concerning Taft's use of the patronage power was answered in the publication of the so-called Norton letter. On September 15, 1910, the New York Evening Post printed a letter that was supposedly sent by Charles D. Norton, the President's private secretary, to a Republican in Iowa. The letter, which went undenied by the administration, graphically explained the President's reasons for using the patronage power as he had during the primary elections and the reasons why he planned to change this policy in mid-September. In the letter Norton wrote:

While Republican legislation pending in Congress was opposed by certain Republicans, the President felt it his duty to the party and to the country to withhold Federal patronage from certain Senators and Congressmen who seemed to be in opposition to the administration's efforts to carry out the premises of the party platform. That attitude, however, ended with the primary elections and nominating conventions, which have now been held, and in which the voters have had opportunity to declare themselves. The people have spoken, and, as the party faces the fall elections, the question must be settled

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

by Republicans of every shade of opinion, whether the differences of the last session shall be perpetuated or shall be forgotten.

After making a plea for party unity, Norton concluded:

The President feels that the value of Federal patronage has been greatly exaggerated, and that the refusal to grant it has probably been more useful to the affected than the appointment would have been. In Wisconsin and Iowa and elsewhere, he was willing, in the interests of what the leaders believed would lead to party success, to make certain discriminations, but the President has concluded that it is his duty now to treat all Republican Congressmen and Senators alike, without any distinction. He will now follow the usual rule in Republican congressional districts and States, and follow the recommendations made by Republican Congressmen and Senators.<sup>41</sup>

Along with the President's "indiscriminate" policy other attempts were made to close the party's ranks. Roosevelt, in spite of his Osawatomie speech, remained determined to unite the party by campaigning for regular as well as progressive Republicans. The promiscuity of Roosevelt's support in the 1910 elections was manifest in his willingness to campaign for Republicans as opposed to each other as were Albert Beveridge of Indiana and Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts. The National Republican Congressional Committee, which had been aligned with the standpatters in the primary elections, denied the charge that it intended to support only regular Republicans in the fall elections. On September 26, one of its spokesmen announced that the Committee would support all Republican nominees.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Congressional Record, 61st Congress, 3rd Session, vol. XXXVI (Washington, 1910), p. 3551: La Follette's Weekly Magazine, September 24, 1910.

<sup>42</sup> "The Recent Election," The Independent, LXIX (November 17, 1910), 1107-09: La Follette's Weekly Magazine, October 1, 1910.

The failure of these belated efforts was revealed in the returns of the November election. The Democrats gained a majority of the House and narrowed the Republican advantage in the Senate. During the campaign, they had effectively used popular sentiment by continually attacking publicly recognized abuses which were associated with the Republican regime.<sup>43</sup> Review of Reviews expressed a popular interpretation of the 1910 election results when it stated that "It was not so much that the Democrats were in favor as that the Republicans were out of favor."<sup>44</sup> This public disenchantment was with the regular, not the insurgent Republicans. Progressive Republicans maintained their strength in the West. Of the more prominent insurgent congressman only Beveridge was defeated. Otherwise, progressives such as William Kent were elected to Congress for the first time and experienced congressional insurgents like Lindbergh, Murdock, and Lenroot were returned to the capital. Among the new Senate members were several tested insurgents including Poindexter of Washington and Gronna of North Dakota.<sup>45</sup>

The success of the insurgents in 1910 had depended upon two elements -- popular support and unity. Their task for the

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<sup>43</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, November 19, 1910.

<sup>44</sup>"Prospects in the Early Summer," The American Review of Reviews, XLII (December, 1910), 644.

<sup>45</sup>Edward G. Lowry, "Some Lessons of the Election," North American Review, CXCVII (December, 1910), 725.



future was to maintain these two ingredients. As long as they remained united in their cause and geared to public sentiment, the insurgents would retain their position.

Among the first questions to be answered by the insurgents in 1910 was to what degree the November elections had been a mandate for reform. Were the elections a blank check or would the public stand behind only a limited amount of reform? The dilemma posed by Ray Stannard Baker in February, 1910, had not disappeared. There remained the problem of discovering the practical limits of progressivism. The insurgents' decisions continued to be influenced by the party machinery which in spite of the 1910 Republican setback remained in the hands of the regulars.

Whatever the individual limits selected by the insurgents, Roosevelt would certainly be a factor in that decision. By 1910 Poindexter and Murdock were encouraging Roosevelt to run in the 1912 presidential election. In addition, Kent had revealed affinity for the sort of sophisticated state called for by Roosevelt at Osawatimie. In general, few progressives failed to appreciate the impression made by the Rough-Rider when he was crusading for a cause. The extent to which Roosevelt chose to represent progressivism would affect the future course of all insurgents.

The motivation for the course chartered by the insurgents in 1910 is definable only in the most general terms. There existed for the insurgent two major stimulants -- principle

and political expediency. In 1910, the difference between the two was almost imperceptible. Public sentiment coincided with the principles of progressivism. To champion one was to exercise the other as well.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PRICE OF ARMAGEDDON

The insurgents were intoxicated with their 1910 victory. They had challenged the entrenched forces of Republicanism and won. Kent revealed his elation in a letter to Roosevelt filled with condescending advice. The ex-president responded by describing Kent as ". . . a really good fellow, but he is fresher than paint. . . ." Roosevelt explained that Kent had been extremely anxious to gain his support during the 1910 campaign, but that as soon as the election returns were in Kent assumed himself to be a ". . . remarkable instance of successful wisdom and virtue, and that it was his duty to set me right on various subjects."<sup>1</sup> Kent and the other insurgents had correctly interpreted public sentiment in 1910, but the unpredictability of political developments threatened to leave them out on the proverbial limb, unless they regained their equilibrium.

To an extent their unsophisticated reaction, exemplified by Kent's patronizing letter to Roosevelt, reflected political immaturity. Without exception the politicians of this study were twentieth century progressives. Not one of them had been

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<sup>1</sup>To Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., December 5, 1910, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, VII, 177-178.

elected to a national post until after the turn of the century. Murdock, in 1903, was the first of the group to reach Congress and Kent the last to make it in 1910. Most of them had not held a local or state elective office prior to entering Congress. They emerged from the waves of progressivism that arose in the states during the initial decade of the century, and were therefore more a product of reform sentiment than of Republican party politics. As a result, they failed to develop the strong ties that held the Republican party together. They owed their position in 1910 to an ability to reflect public sentiment rather than an unquestioning adherence to party policy.

A sense of security nurtured their independence. In 1910 Kent was a millionaire, Bourne was president of several companies in Oregon and owned the Bourne cotton mills in Massachusetts, and Bristow owned a Kansas newspaper. The others either maintained a law practice or held a prominent newspaper position. They were all college graduates from such institutions as the universities of Michigan, Washington, Yale, and Harvard.<sup>2</sup> Their independence, in addition to their demonstrated ability to sense the public temper, made them increasingly dangerous to the empowered conservative Republicans.

Nevertheless, in 1910 the insurgents won a battle, not a war. The Republican party organization remained in the hands of the regulars--Taft occupied the White House, the Senate

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<sup>2</sup>Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1779-1961, (Washington, 1961), pp. 577, 599, and passim.

majority remained Republican, and federal appointees, from the local to the national level, owed their loyalty to the regular Republican party. Although many in the latter group sympathized with progressive ideals, their jobs depended upon an allegiance to Taft Republicanism. These veterans did not break ranks under the insurgent siege.

The heretics of 1910, however, maintained their pressure upon the Old Guard after the November elections. They remained united in their struggle with them and continued to wield an unreliable, but for the time being, effective weapon--public opinion. Most insurgents, in spite of their independence and their loyalty to reform, recognized their dependence upon the party organization. Breaking from the party meant floating adrift without a machine to provide the necessary political sustenance. In the long run their real success depended upon effectively using the public's endorsement of 1910 as a bargaining instrument within the Republican party. Ultimately, they sought control of the party's machinery which they had attacked so vociferously in 1910 as an agency of corruption and inefficiency.

The insurgents took the first big step in their fight to gain control when in January, 1911, they formed the National Progressive Republican League. The organization was conceived a few weeks after the 1910 elections when La Follette, with the advice of Bourne and Bristow, drafted a constitution and a set of principles which served as the basis of the League.

According to the Declaration of Principles, the object of the organization was ". . . the promotion of popular government and progressive legislation." The organizers of the National Progressive Republican League included eight senators, sixteen representatives, six governors, and nineteen other prominent progressive leaders. All of the insurgents of this study joined. Bourne served as president and Bristow, Lenroot, and Kent served on the executive committee. The entire insurgent clan appeared to be included with one conspicuous exception--Roosevelt. Several insurgents invited him to join, but he declined. In answer to an invitation from Senator Bourne, Roosevelt wrote ". . . that with my present knowledge, while I am entirely in sympathy with the purposes set forth in your letter, I am doubtful whether the particular form you propose is wise." At that point the ex-president continued to chart his moderate course.<sup>3</sup>

The League ostensibly directed its efforts toward the passage of reform legislation that would bring the state and federal governments under more direct popular control. In particular, the League advocated legislation which provided for the direct election of United States senators, direct primaries to nominate elective officials, the direct election

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<sup>3</sup>Belle C. La Follette, Robert M. La Follette, I, 316; La Follette's Weekly Magazine, February 4, 1911; "The Progressives Organize," Current Literature, I (March, 1911), 244; Ray Stannard Baker, "The Meaning of Insurgency," The American Magazine, LXXII (May, 1911), 59; to Jonathan Bourne, January 2, 1911, 196, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, VII, 5374.

of delegates to the national conventions, the initiative, referendum, and recall for all state constitutions, and a national corrupt practices act. Significantly, these reforms were political rather than economic. The league made no mention of the more basic economic problems that plagued the country. Most insurgents believed that once given the power the people would use their increased influence to overthrow the existing order by voting for progressives. Bourne expresses this confidence in the people when he wrote: "The people are not only fully capable of governing themselves, honest and intelligent in the composite, but they are also decidedly the best judges as to those individuals to whom they shall delegate the truly representative power."<sup>4</sup>

Despite its publicly announced objectives the League directed its major effort toward unseating Taft in favor of a progressive candidate in 1912. After their success and the administration's setback in 1910, the insurgents looked upon Taft as a vulnerable target. In 1911, Bourne, as president of the League, suggested that the next presidential election would find Wilson and La Follette competing. According to Bourne, the progressives continued to consider Roosevelt as a possible candidate in 1912. In answer to a rumor that the progressive Republicans planned to establish a third party,

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<sup>4</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, February 4, 1911; "The Progressives Organize," p. 244; Baker, "The Meaning of Insurgency," p. 63; Jonathan Bourne, "Oregon's Struggle for Purity in Politics," The Independent, LXXVIII (June 23, 1910), 1378.

Bourne said "If there is a new and third party it will be made up of the reactionary element of both the old parties. But the progressives of both parties will get the control!" Yet conversely, Ray Stannard Baker wrote that ". . . it requires no very vivid imagination to see the progressives in the convention [National Republican Convention of 1912], balked in their efforts to control the party, marching out of the hall to form a convention of their own." Baker was a better prophet and Kent indicated as much in a letter to the Colonel, in which he wrote that he would rather see the Republican party broken up than Taft renominated.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, the insurgents revealed an increasing amount of cooperation in the special session of Congress which Taft called in April for the purpose of passing a bill providing for a reciprocity trade agreement with Canada. During the first session of the Senate, La Follette requested proportional representation on the committees and chairmanship assignments for the thirteen progressive Republican senators. Among those insurgents who demanded the rights of a separate party were Senators Bourne, Bristow, and Poindexter. Despite the rejection of their demands, they made it clear that they would continue to challenge regular Republicanism. The progressive Republican congressmen declared their independence and announced

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<sup>5</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, April 1, 1911; Baker, "The Meaning of Insurgency," p. 62; William Kent to Theodore Roosevelt, September 13, 1911, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, VII, 343-344.



that they would no longer follow the dictates of the regular Republican caucus.<sup>6</sup>

In spite of this seeming unity in the ranks of the insurgents there existed basic differences among them which related to both principle and political expediency. These subsurface differences appeared in the congressional debates on the Canadian reciprocity treaty over which the insurgents of this study almost equally divided. Congressman Lindbergh gave voice to the basic reason he, Lenroot, Bourne, Bristow, and Gronna were opposed to the agreement when he said, "It is wrong to remove the farmer's protection on what he sells and retain protection to the monopolies that sell to him."<sup>7</sup> Bristow also stated that the western farmers, whom he represented, were angry at Taft for pushing the reciprocity agreement opening up farm goods to free trade while continuing to protect manufacturers. The attitude expressed by these five insurgents exemplified their concern for the agrarian interests of their states. In 1909-10 they had opposed the Payne-Aldrich Tariff on the basis that it raised rather than lowered tariff duties. In the debate over the reciprocity bill, which eliminated the tariff duties on numerous goods, the insurgents

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<sup>6</sup>Belle C. La Follette, Robert M. La Follette, I, 322-25; "The Republican Split," The Nation, (May 4, 1911), p. 438; Nowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, p. 165.

<sup>7</sup>Little Falls Herald, February 3, 1911 cited in Hechler, Insurgency, p. 180.

were forced to be more specific. They narrowed their support from a general reduction of tariff duties to downward revision only when it would benefit the farmer. Although the majority of insurgents chose to discriminate on the matter of tariff reduction, progressive Republicans such as Murdock, Kent, and Poindexter took a broader view of the tariff policy. Poindexter reasoned that if Congress passed the reciprocity agreement and the President signed it, Taft would if he were consistent support additional bills providing for tariff reduction on other goods.<sup>8</sup> Kent and Murdock remained relatively silent during the debate, but their vote in support of the bill squared with their liberal attitudes toward the federal government's economic policies. They saw the federal government as an agent of the modern industrialized state, rather than an instrument of the agrarian myth. The opposing positions on the Canadian reciprocity bill served notice that underneath their apparent solidarity lay seeds of dissension.

Meanwhile, the insurgents labored to unite in opposition to Taft's renomination. Roosevelt, who represented the progressive's most feasible candidate for 1912, repeatedly discouraged a movement to nominate him. Accepting the ex-president's consistent refusal, the progressive Republicans announced their support for La Follette as the next Republican presidential

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<sup>8</sup>Oscar King Davis, "Senator Bristow's Views on Present Political Conditions," The Outlook, C (March 30, 1912), 728; Congressional Record, 62nd Congress, 1st session, Vol. XLVII (Washington, 1911), pp. 2676-2710, 2545.

candidate. Lenroot and Kent participated in drafting the call and, with the possible exception of Poindexter, the other insurgents of this study pledged their support for La Follette. Poindexter's activities at that point are unclear. However, it is apparent that he strongly favored Roosevelt's candidacy, but since this had not been forthcoming, he made no public opposition to La Follette. In May, 1911, Kent along with other wealthy progressives, encouraged La Follette's announcement by donating \$10,000 to his campaign fund. With the necessary financial support La Follette announced in mid-June that he would actively seek the presidential nomination.<sup>9</sup>

In the fall, the National Progressive Republican League's headquarters called the progressives together at Washington to officially select their Republican presidential candidate. La Follette received the unanimous endorsement of the three hundred progressives attending the convention. In addition, the conference urged the formation of state organizations to promote his nomination. The Minnesota Progressive Republican League, with Lindbergh's support, had already set an example to be followed by the other states. There was no longer any room for doubt. The insurgents planned to fight for the

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<sup>9</sup>Robert M. La Follette, La Follette's Autobiography, A Personal Narrative of Political Experiences 5th ed., (Madison, Wisconsin, 1913), pp. 516, 531; Belle C. La Follette, Robert M. La Follette, I, 331-34.

nomination at the Republican National Convention in 1912.<sup>10</sup>

By December the situation became more complicated for the insurgents. It was rumored that Roosevelt had changed his mind and planned to announce his candidacy. Lenroot and Kent, who served as La Follette's emissaries in a meeting with Roosevelt, reported that the ex-president's attitude revealed a willingness to enter the race. Although La Follette refused to withdraw in favor of Roosevelt under any circumstances, Lenroot candidly expressed his belief that Roosevelt was a faithful progressive. By the end of the month Roosevelt severed his political relationship with Taft and undoubtedly stood as a contender for the Republican presidential nomination. In answer to a petition from seven state governors requesting his candidacy, Roosevelt declared on February 24, "My hat is in the ring." That hat placed the insurgents, who pledged their support to La Follette, in an uncomfortable position.<sup>11</sup>

Although many of La Follette's supporters unhesitatingly abandoned him after reliable reports circulated that Roosevelt would be in the race, most of the insurgents at least publicly revealed some loyalty to "Battling Bob." Even the more loyal supporters, however, recognized that politically Roosevelt was unquestionably the stronger candidate of the two. Their

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<sup>10</sup>Robert M. La Follette, La Follette's Autobiography, pp. 531-532; La Follette's Weekly Magazine, October 28, 1911; Belle C. La Follette, Robert M. La Follette, I, 421; La Follette's Weekly Magazine, September 16, 1911.

<sup>11</sup>Belle C. La Follette, Robert M. La Follette, I, 367-69; Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 551-56.

search for an excuse to desert La Follette and to join Roosevelt's bandwagon ended in February when La Follette, fatigued and under stress, delivered an abortive speech before a group of publishers in Philadelphia.<sup>12</sup>

After La Follette's performance a number of his supporters met to discuss his withdrawal from the presidential race. Bourne, Bristow, and Lenroot were among those who drafted the statement of withdrawal that La Follette was to sign.<sup>13</sup> La Follette's wife, Belle, wrote a vivid account of the impression made by Lenroot and others who attempted to convince La Follette that he should withdraw.

The impression he made must have been pretty bad [in his Philadelphia speech] I should judge it was pitiful and yet the way Hannan & Lenroot and Houser have been willing to make a funeral of it, rouses my ire. They are telling how slowly he works, how he has not done anything new for a long time. Lenroot is particularly aggravating along this line.<sup>14</sup>

Despite their urging La Follette refused to exit from the race and therefore kept two progressive hats in the ring. Nevertheless, most of the insurgents considered La Follette safely tucked away.

Congressman Nelson's earlier statement that "When Lindbergh stood with you he was with you until Hell froze over" appeared

<sup>12</sup>Belle C. La Follette, Robert M. La Follette, I, 394-98; New York Times, February 4, 1912.

<sup>13</sup>Belle C. La Follette, Robert M. La Follette, I, 410-11.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 411-12.

incorrect in view of Lindbergh's maneuvering in 1912. Although he initially pledged his support to La Follette, Lindbergh wrote to Roosevelt in mid-February that this support could be easily transferred to the Rough-Rider. During the following months, Lindbergh used his influence to assist Roosevelt's campaign.<sup>15</sup> Lindbergh's failure to stand by La Follette revealed that even the most principled of progressives recognized the exigencies of practical politics. Despite his move into Roosevelt's camp, which had all the signs of strict adherence to the rules of political expediency, Lindbergh was too much a man of principle to permanently abide by such standards. On an issue involving principle he would freeze over before Lindbergh would budge, but the type of dependability that political parties demand remained a foreign quality to him.

Kent, whose brand of progressivism was more closely related to Roosevelt's "New Nationalism" than La Follette's egalitarian principles, found the changing of horses in the middle of the stream distasteful. Nevertheless, when the California progressives moved out of La Follette's camp and onto the Roosevelt bandwagon in mid-February, Kent went with them.<sup>16</sup> Despite his personal admiration for La Follette, Kent concluded that the

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<sup>15</sup>Hechler, Insurgency, pp. 40-41; Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, p. 206; Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, VII, 524-25.

<sup>16</sup>Mowry, California Progressives, pp. 178.

progressive cause would best be served by Roosevelt. On February 12, 1912, Kent in a letter to La Follette candidly expressed his view of the dilemma that existed in California.

I have done much hard thinking since seeing you on Sunday. I believe it would be absolute suicide for you to fight Roosevelt. The men who have been backing you would feel that you were not fighting the cause of progress, whatever your own judgement might be as to your cause.

The situation in California is very acute. I sincerely hope that you will feel like requesting that your name be kept off the California ballot, in the event of the Progressives taking up the Roosevelt candidacy, as they are sure to do. Governor Johnson asked me to be one of the Delegates, which I naturally refused to do with you in the field. I do not wish to go as a Delegate in any event. I am utterly sick of the whole game and am going to "chuck" it until the situation clears.

Kent concluded his letter to La Follette by suggesting that

At the present juncture, it seems to me that the best thing is to permit the union of the Progressive forces to stick together around Roosevelt, if they so elect. I have resented this action all the way through and feel resentful now. My interest has been with you and your personal well being and in the well being of the country, through your candidacy. Both these considerations now move me to make the suggestions I have made.<sup>17</sup>

La Follette disregarded Kent's advice and went ahead to campaign in California for delegates to the Republican National Convention. Before La Follette reached California, Kent, along with the other state progressives, had published statements of their support for Roosevelt. As a result, the indefatigable La Follette was soundly defeated in the state primary election

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<sup>17</sup>Amos R. Pinchot, History of the Progressive Party, 1912-1916, edited by Helene Maxwell Hooker (New York, 1958), pp. 154-155.

by the Roosevelt supporters. And despite his earlier avowal that he would not serve as a delegate, Kent was elected in the state primaries as a delegate to the Republican National Convention.<sup>19</sup>

La Follette encountered dissension even in his home state. Congressman Lenroot, a close personal friend and his political protégé since the turn of the century, decided in 1912 to support Roosevelt. Belle La Follette wrote to a friend that Senator La Follette ". . . realized that Lenroot disapproved of his course and was in full sympathy with Pinchot, Kent and the rest in leaving him." On the personal effect of Lenroot's independence the Wisconsin senator's wife wrote, "Nothing that has happened has been so hard for me. We have managed to keep the personal relation but I realize that Bob and Irvine can never be the same to each other as before."<sup>19</sup> Lenroot's decision was based upon the fact that Roosevelt, whom he considered a true progressive, had a much better chance of being elected than did La Follette.

Murdock, Bristow, and Poindexter also agreed that Roosevelt was the only progressive who had any chance of defeating Taft. Bristow, La Follette's political leader in Kansas, wrote William Allen White after La Follette's grotesque speech at Philadelphia that he would no longer support the Wisconsin senator. Poindexter and Murdock revealed their allegiance to

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<sup>18</sup>Wovry, California Progressives, pp. 180.

<sup>19</sup>Belle C. La Follette, Robert M. La Follette, I, 424.



Roosevelt in the Ohio primaries, where Taft and the Rough-Rider battled for delegates.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the concerted move into Roosevelt's camp, Taft received the Republican nomination. The Colonel acquired a solid majority of the delegates in those states that held preferential primaries, but most states continued to select their delegates at state conventions, which the regular Republicans generally controlled. The conservatives' domination of the national convention insured Taft's nomination. As a result, Roosevelt and his followers bolted the convention to form the Progressive party.<sup>21</sup>

Roosevelt's move immediately jeopardized the unity of progressive Republicans and the political future of each progressive. He made their positions even more uncomfortable by demanding that they run on a third party ticket in the approaching state and national elections unless he received unanimous endorsement by the Republicans within their states. There were only six states in which the Progressives controlled the Republican party machinery. Outside these six states their chances of election, without the support of a well-founded political organization, were drastically reduced.<sup>22</sup> Those who sought reelection in November faced an immediate

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<sup>20</sup>William Allen White, The Autobiography of William Allen White (New York, 1945), p. 234.

<sup>21</sup>Howry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, pp. 237-255.

<sup>22</sup>Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, VII, 572-73.

threat. They had to make their decisions without equivocation or the insurance of an uncompleted term during which time they could mend fences. However, to some degree all of the progressive Republicans stood on the political firing line in 1912. They encountered the alternatives of remaining within the Republican party or joining Roosevelt's crusade. Their decisions demanded an appraisal of the principles and the political realities that existed in their particular political environment. For a few fortunate progressives these two variables continued to coexist, but for the majority the decision required a compromise.

The same pitfalls which taxed the political dexterity of the insurgents yawned before Kent who was standing for reelection in California. Kent had already revealed his political maneuverability when Roosevelt challenged La Follette as the progressive Republican candidate. He maintained this throughout the political turmoil of 1912. In November Kent faced a delicate situation. California, under the leadership of Hiram Johnson, the Progressive party's vice-presidential candidate, was one of the few states not required to run a third party ticket. In essence, the California Republican party candidates were members of the national Progressive party and were committed to Roosevelt. Instead of joining the National Progressive party and accepting a place on the state Republican ticket, Kent sought reelection as an independent. His decision came as

a result of a political rift with Johnson and the belief that the Democratic nomination of Governor Woodrow Wilson, an active progressive, eliminated the need for the Progressive party. To Kent, who was not averse to changing his position, it seemed politically unwise to encourage a movement from the Republican party, to a third party based primarily upon the potential of one man. Without Johnson's active support Kent's constituency returned him to Congress as an independent.<sup>23</sup>

The situation in Kansas, another of the states in which a third party ticket was unnecessary, was not as critical for Murdock and Bristow. Murdock ran for reelection in 1912, but unlike Kent, he found that the circumstances fitted his own designs. As an avid Roosevelt supporter, he remained loyal to principle and retained his place in the party leadership. His analysis of the political developments lacked Kent's insight, but the immediate result was the same--he was reelected. Although Bristow's enthusiasm for Roosevelt did not match Murdock's he also supported the Progressive party. Bristow and Roosevelt worked closely together during the years the Rough-Rider spent in the White House and afterward they had maintained amicable political relations. Early in 1912 when Roosevelt advocated the recall of court decisions on the state level, Bristow had been particularly pleased. In a subsequent interview he commended the ex-president, but suggested that Roosevelt

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<sup>23</sup>Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, VII, 573; Mowry, California Progressives, pp. 189-198.

had not gone far enough. Bristow also questioned the more fundamental tenets of Roosevelt's "New Nationalism." "In this scheme of regulation is there not a grave danger that 'big business' will more likely control the government than the government controlling big business?" asked Bristow. Despite his questions, Roosevelt considered Bristow, by the end of the year, a feasible replacement for Senator Dixon as the "titular head" of the Progressive party.<sup>24</sup>

Senator Poindexter joined Murdock and Bristow in supporting Roosevelt. His enthusiasm for the Progressive party matched Murdock's. For some time he had publicly advocated Roosevelt's candidacy. Thus it was not surprising that he stood alongside Roosevelt when the Colonel made his stand at Armageddon. Since the Washington senator did not face reelection in 1912, he made his decision without an immediate threat to his political survival. During the presidential campaign he toured the country denouncing both of the established parties as agents of the privileged interests and announcing the coming of a "New Nationalism."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>To Joseph Little Bristow, December 21, 1912, Letter of Theodore Roosevelt, VII, 573, 685-86; Davis, "Senator Bristow's Views," p. 727; Joseph L. Bristow to Roosevelt, July 15, 1912, Roosevelt manuscript cited in Mowry, to Gifford Pinchot, December 21, 1912, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, VII, 678.

<sup>25</sup>Miles Poindexter, "Why I Am For Roosevelt," North American Review, CXCVI (October, 1912), 468-79; La Follette's Weekly Magazine, July 13, 1912.

Lindbergh and Lenroot found it politically expedient in 1912 to seek reelection as members of the Republican party, rather than follow Roosevelt's requirements. Their reasons, however, for changing positions a second time within a year differed. Lindbergh's alliance with Roosevelt could be maintained only at the expense of breaking with the Republicans, which spelled political defeat in Minnesota. Therefore, he retained his place on the Republican party ticket and temporarily suppressed his loyalty to Roosevelt. Roosevelt, however, expressed Lindbergh's true position when he wrote to Gifford Pinchot in late August that Lindbergh ". . . is one of the few Congressmen on whom we can absolutely count. . . ." <sup>26</sup> Lenroot's decision, on the other hand, reflected the deeper qualities of an acknowledged party politician. Like Lindbergh, he used the party machine as a tool to accomplish progressive ends, but with the discretion of a mature politician. Lenroot supported Roosevelt because he considered the Rough-Rider the most likely progressive Republican to reach the White House, but, like Kent, he recognized that outside the party Roosevelt had the potential of crippling the progressive movement which the insurgents had labored to create. Lenroot remained in the Republican party, but he supported Wilson rather than Taft or Roosevelt in the presidential election. He accepted the defeat of the Republican party in 1912 with the realization

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<sup>26</sup>To Gifford Pinchot, August 21, 1912, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, VII, 601.

that the party's foundation would continue to stand. In November, both Lindbergh and Lenroot were reelected as Republicans.

The dilemma of choosing between Roosevelt's crusade and the political insurance of remaining in the Republican party had been more than a personal experience. When taken collectively, the individual actions of the figures under study indicate the extensive damage that this dilemma caused the progressive movement in the Republican party. The Republican vote was divided to the point that it insured Democratic success. The 1912 election returns moved the minority party into control of the White House and both houses of Congress.<sup>27</sup>

The figures under study here weathered the storm with the exception of Bourne. During the crisis created by the Rough-Rider, Bourne, although he preferred Roosevelt to Taft, opposed the formation of a third party. Conservative control of the party machinery in Oregon meant that if Bourne decided to follow Roosevelt out of the Republican party he would be required to run on a separate ticket. This decision meant certain defeat. Instead, he chose to stand for renomination in the Republican primaries. At that point Bourne foolishly decided not to campaign beyond publishing his senate record. As a result, he was defeated. "I have no regrets," Bourne remarked. "My plan is right in principle." Bourne tried to

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<sup>27</sup>Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917, (New York, 1954), pp. 22-24.

regain his position by running in the November elections as a candidate of the "popular government," but it was of no use. He had committed the irreparable error for a progressive in this period of crisis. He had miscalculated public sentiment.<sup>28</sup>

The others revealed more political acumen than Bourne but their positions became increasingly vulnerable because of the division in the ranks. The ultra-liberal Murdock, the individualistic Lindbergh, the new nationalist Poindexter, and the political pragmatist Bristow responded to Roosevelt's call, while Kent and Lenroot, foreseeing the isolation of the Progressive party, remained in place. The political hazards of being progressive continued for these reformers, but without the safeguard of unity.

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<sup>28</sup> Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, VII, 573; La Follette's Weekly Magazine, April 27, 1913, May 4, 1912, September 14, 1912, October 26, 1912.

## CHAPTER IV

### UNDER DEMOCRATIC RULE

By the end of 1912 the future of progressivism appeared dismal to Republican-oriented politicians. The formation of the Progressive party had destroyed the unity and direction of the insurgents. Although Roosevelt made the election of 1912 an interesting race, it remained essentially a one-man show. Otherwise, only an insignificant number of Progressives acquired state or national office. Those who remained in the Republican party were saddened by the recession of the progressive advances that had been made in the national organization over the last decade, and many enrolled under Wilson's progressive banner. For the next four years the progressives of the Republican tradition had to seek leadership outside the Republican party.

President Wilson's program of a "New Freedom" and Roosevelt's "New Nationalism" provided the two main alternatives for progressives. Wilson promised "the man on the make," during the 1912 campaign, a "New Freedom" in economic endeavor. He excited the country with a dream of returning to the mythical "good old days" when the giant corporation had not hampered the economic growth of the individual. In this capitalistic utopia the government would insure the fair play of all com-



petitors through more stringent anti-trust legislation. Wilson's "boot-strap" philosophy revitalized Thomas Jefferson's concept of laissez faire in government. In 1912 it remained to be seen whether or not Wilson's revolutionary ideas would suffer similar problems of application. Roosevelt, on the other hand, championed what Herbert Croly termed in his Promise of American Life the "New Nationalism." He argued that only the abuses of big business were objectionable. Thus, the government's function, according to the Colonel, was not to destroy big business in order to accommodate the small entrepreneur, but to regulate the practices of the so-called robber barons. Roosevelt demanded that the public accept the twentieth century. He recognized the existence of corruption and vice in consolidated America, but he also recognized the tremendous benefits of a highly industrialized nation. Herein lay the basic differences between the Wilsonian and Rooseveltian philosophies. One looked back to the nineteenth century for inspiration while the other accepted the realities of the new era. The President sought to regulate competition while the reputed "trust-buster" advocated the regulation of monopolies.<sup>1</sup>

The task of selecting one of these two programs, both of which were considered progressive, was no easy matter since they were not always sharply differentiated. Both of the protagonists publicly diluted their statements to prevent the alienation of almost any group. Wilson refused to antagonize

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<sup>1</sup>Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, pp. 224-254; Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 18-22; Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, pp. 277-281.

the big business element and Roosevelt rejected any inclination to repulse the small capitalist. On one occasion, in a classic example of nebulous pronouncements, Wilson stated, "I am for big business and I am against the trust." The ambiguity of such statements many times caused confusion rather than enlightenment. As a result, the significance of the positions represented by Wilson and Roosevelt taxed the interpretive capacity and demanded ingenuity of the most adept politician.

William Allen White concluded that the difference between Wilson and Roosevelt in 1912 resembled the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee.<sup>2</sup> This misinterpretation exemplified the difficulty politicians faced in relating their own philosophies to those advocated by the recognized leaders of progressivism.

Nevertheless, without possibly being able to define these programs in so many words, politicians undoubtedly sensed the significant differences in them. These differences were inherent in the progressive movement, and although they had not been listed categorically before the second decade of the century, most progressives already accepted one of the two schools of thought. The terms "New Freedom" and "New Nationalism" were not new concepts at all, but expressions of well-established ideas. For example, two years before Wilson reached the presidency, Lenroot stated that ". . . monopoly should be prevented and competition maintained." In accordance with this philosophy Lenroot worked with La Follette and Louis Brandeis

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<sup>2</sup>Hofstadter, Age of Reform, p. 248; Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era p. 18; Eric F. Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny, (New York, 1952), p. 216.

in an effort to strengthen the Sherman Act long before Wilson moved into the White House. Accordingly, Kent worked out his own view of the federal government's role in the modern society without benefit of Roosevelt's "New Nationalism." Throughout his congressional campaign in 1910 Kent expounded on the inevitability of combination and the inefficiency of competition. He concluded that "Control [was] the only remedy." In the end, Wilson and Roosevelt helped to define, not create, the ideological differences that existed among the progressives.<sup>3</sup>

The application of either concept hurried the demise of progressivism in the Republican party and threatened the political existence of individual progressives. The more idealistic progressives stood on principle to the point where they lost contact with political realities. For example, Lindbergh, whose independence defied labels, flaunted his independence so indiscriminately during Wilson's first administration that by 1916 he was without an official position from which to espouse his particular brand of progressivism. On the other hand, the more adept progressive politicians adjusted their principles to the new political conditions. Not once during these years when Lindbergh stood on his principles at the expense of party loyalty did Lenroot leave the Republican party. By making the necessary adjustments Lenroot retained the endorsement of the Wisconsin Republican machinery and still supported most of the progressive measures passed

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<sup>3</sup>Belle C. La Follette, Robert M. La Follette, I, 336-346; La Follette's Weekly Magazine, October 22, 1910.

during Wilson's first administration. The decisions made by Lindbergh, Lenroot, and the other figures of this study between 1912 and 1916 revealed that progressives continually faced dilemmas.

Under the President's direction the progressive movement reached its summit with the passage of a series of reform measures. Within his first two years in office the tariff was significantly lowered, the financial system was reformed, and the Sherman Act was amended.<sup>4</sup> These acts placed the Progressives as well as progressive Republicans in difficult positions. If they supported the reforms of the Wilson administration they appeared to serve no political purpose, since the Democratic party maintained an adequate majority in both houses. On the other hand, if they rebuked the reforms, they denied their own progressive principles.

The Progressives were especially caught in this dilemma. Between 1912 and 1916 they faced the task of maintaining a united front despite their lack of an effective organization. The Progressive congressmen met at Washington on April 4, 1913, to organize themselves as a separate party within Congress. According to Murdock, who was the Progressive candidate for Speaker of the House, the Progressive congressional program called for support of the initiative and referendum, direct primaries, woman suffrage, the recall of public officials, recognition of the rights of labor, protection of child labor, minimum wages for women, establishment of a Federal industrial

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<sup>4</sup>Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 25-53.

commission, tariff revision based on scientific data, and the elimination of the "money trust." In order to maintain a separate identity the nineteen Progressive congressmen needed to achieve strict party unity. Roosevelt encouraged them to follow a party line. Lindbergh's actions at the conference indicated the improbability of their remaining united. Despite the fact that he had been elected to represent the Republican party in 1912, Lindbergh attended the Progressive conference and announced that he would no longer attend the Republican party caucuses. He characteristically stated that he would support those Progressive measures which he found agreeable, but that he would oppose those with which he disagreed. By accepting his terms the conference encouraged the inherently independent tendencies of the ordinary Progressive. Any hope for unity was destroyed when the conference resolved that any member of the Progressive party could vote for any progressive measure regardless of its source. Poindexter, the only Progressive in the Senate, was allowed the same degree of freedom. Despite their general support of Wilson's reform program, the uncoordinated actions of the Progressives destroyed their only chance for political identity. Most of them displayed their independence and their progressivism, but certainly surrendered all rights to be called politicians. Only Poindexter, of the insurgents who joined the Progressive party in 1912, remained in Congress after 1917, and his unique achieve-

ment resulted from his timely return to the Republican party in 1916.<sup>5</sup>

Whereas the Progressives acted independently with but little regard for party affiliations, the insurgents who remained in the Republican party revealed more restraint. Lenroot, for example, stated that "In justice to my political affiliations as well as from reasons of the public interest I could not join this movement at this time, having been elected upon the Republican ticket and having made use of the Republican organization to secure my nomination and election." In essence, Lenroot recognized the impotency of the Progressive party and the necessity of party machinery. Similarly, Bristow decided after the defeat of the Progressive party in 1912 that Republican loyalty was politically preferable to joining the third party. Although he campaigned for Roosevelt in the election, he refused the Progressive appeal to participate in establishing a permanent national organization.<sup>6</sup> Despite the tremendous odds against gaining control of the Republican party from the restored conservatives, Bristow, Lenroot, and the other insurgents experienced more political security as Republicans.

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<sup>5</sup>New York Times, April 5, 1913; April 18, 1915. Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, p. 287.

<sup>6</sup>New York Times, March 27, 1913; Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, pp. 287-288.

The Republican insurgents demonstrated discipline, but not intimidation. Many of them recognized Wilson's potential as a progressive and immediately pledged their support to him. Kent, who in spite of his independence maintained an alliance with the Republican insurgents, stated that "Not until President Wilson shall have shown a willingness to abandon the road in which he is traveling shall I consider it my duty to do other than help him to the utmost of my strength and ability." Lenroot, who also supported the President, commented that he saw little difference between Wilson and Progressive Republicans.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, the progressives of this study, whether disciplined or undisciplined, proponents of the "New Freedom" or of the "New Nationalism," supported most of the administration's legislative program. Among the reform measures passed during the first two years of Wilson's administration only the Underwood-Simmons Tariff met their consistent opposition. Those who voted against the Canadian Reciprocity Treaty in 1911 also opposed the new tariff, which substantially lowered the existing duties. The views expressed by Lindbergh simply confirmed his earlier stand on tariff revision. He declared that "The farmers have not had their interests equally protected, and the tariff bill as a whole, in my judgement, is unfavorable to them and to the towns and villages supported directly by the farming industry." Lenroot, on the other hand, expressed

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<sup>7</sup>New York Times, March 27, 1913; La Follette's Weekly Magazine, May 31, 1913.

the fear of progressive protectionists that the tariff would allow unreasonable competition from abroad. Finally, Murdock, representing the Progressive demands, sought to amend the bill with a provision that would provide for a disinterested commission to revise the tariff. The President opposed the commission and the rejection of the amendment earned Murdock's negative vote on the bill. Otherwise, the President's legislative program received the progressives consistent support between 1912 and 1914.<sup>8</sup>

With the exceptions of Bristow and Murdock, the progressives under study were reelected in 1914. In Kansas one of the ironies of the division within the insurgent ranks appeared during the 1914 congressional elections where Bristow, who had recently reaffirmed his loyalty to the Republican party, sought renomination. He belatedly advised progressive Republicans that "If we all work together we will succeed. If we divide, we invite failure." Unfortunately, two years before Bristow, Murdock, and other Kansas insurgents had mailed the invitation to failure. Their failure in Kansas was the significant feature of the 1914 elections. As soon as Bristow announced his intention of seeking Republican renomination, Murdock stated that he would run for the same senatorial post on the Progressive ticket. At that same time, Murdock, who refused to rejoin the Republican party, denied rumors that the

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<sup>8</sup>Congressional Record, 63rd Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 1. (Washington, 1913), p. 753, 1368; To George W. Perkins, April 1, 1913 Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, VII, 717-18.



Progressives considered merging with the Republicans. Unrealistically, he stated that "The Progressive party will fight it out alone, gathering its strength as it goes along from among the ranks of the people who are now awakened and who are doing their own thinking." His inflexible stand doomed Murdock to defeat. The Republican party in Kansas, controlled by the conservatives since the 1912 election, rejected Bristow in the primary election in favor of Charles Curtis, an ex-senator overpowered earlier by the tide of progressivism. The returns of the general election clearly showed that that tide had ebbed in Kansas, for Curtis defeated both his Democratic and Progressive opponents. The insurgent schism had resulted in the defeat of both Bristow and Murdock and insured the conservative domination of the Republican party.<sup>9</sup>

Wilson's actions during the next two years speeded the demise of the Progressive party. Through the passage of the Federal Farm Loan Act, the Seaman's Act, the Keating-Owen Act, and the creation of a Federal Trade Commission, the President stripped the Roosevelt progressives of their distinctiveness. Wilson's acceptance of regulation rather than destruction of big business and federal assistance to particular classes, which was supported by the progressives of this study without a dissenting vote, forced the Progressives to find other areas of opposition.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>New York Times, January 26, 1914, May 30, 1914, November 1, 1914, November 6, 1914; La Follette's Weekly Magazine, January 10, 1914.

<sup>10</sup>Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 59-80.

They turned their attention to foreign affairs. William E. Leuchtenburg has pointed out that the Progressive attack upon Wilson's foreign policy was consistent with their earlier attitude. With a few exceptions they favored or at least acquiesced in imperialism and militarism. They supported Roosevelt's "Big Stick" diplomacy and never challenged Taft's "Dollar Diplomacy" in spite of their vicious attack on his domestic policies. Thus the Progressives showed no inconsistency in abusing Wilson for his so-called "mushy amiability" in foreign affairs.<sup>11</sup>

Poindexter typified the Progressives' assault on the President's foreign policy. In mid-January, 1916, he disturbed the traditional but uneasy bi-partisan silence on foreign affairs in the Senate chambers by assailing Wilson's policies in regard to Latin America and the European war. He labeled the administration's policy in Mexico the "do-nothing" policy and charged Wilson with continually surrendering the rights of Americans abroad. If the Mexican government could not maintain order, Poindexter demanded that the United States intervene and if necessary declare war against Mexico. He also criticized the President's continued effort to gain the Senate's approval for a payment of indemnity to Colombia which he asserted ". . . is not based upon the proposition that they have

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<sup>11</sup>William E. Leuchtenburg, "Progressivism and Imperialism: The Progressive Movement and American Foreign Policy, 1898-1916," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXIX (December, 1952), 483-492.

a legitimate claim against the United States for this money so much as it is based upon the plea that they will be dissatisfied and offended unless we pay it to them. . . ."

Finally, Poindexter indirectly indicted Wilson's "do-nothing" policy by inserting in the Congressional Record Roosevelt's remarks on the need for preparedness.<sup>12</sup>

As the war cloud in Europe increasingly darkened the American horizon, and Wilson wrote their program into law Progressive opposition narrowed to a single theme--preparedness. Murdock, who served as the chairman of the National Committee of the Progressive party after his defeat in 1914, approvingly noted that the Progressives at a dinner given him in September, 1915, advocated preparedness. He wrote:

The strong notes sounded were for military and economic preparedness. The men present favored insuring peace for the nation by placing us in a position to command respect and for an adjustment of the tariff under the Progressive plan of a tariff commission to meet the abnormal selling campaign by Europe which will follow inevitably the cessation of hostilities abroad.<sup>13</sup>

Subsequently, Murdock announced that he supported preparedness ". . . as the only sensible policy in an era when militarism is rampant. . . . I am for a fleet of twenty dreadnoughts, a fleet of fast cruisers and a large standing army with an efficient reserve army." These remarks epitomized Progressive sentiment. Leuchtenburg notes that within the Progressive

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<sup>12</sup>Congressional Record, 64th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. LII (Washington, 1916), pp. 955-962; New York Times, January 13, 1916.

<sup>13</sup>Leuchtenburg, "Progressivism and Imperialism," p. 494.

party by 1916 ". . . imperialism and militarism had replaced the old liberal formulas of protest, and within a year the party was dead."<sup>14</sup>

Leuchtenburg's implication that the insurgents joined the Progressives in their imperialistic and militaristic movements has been made explicit by Richard Hofstadter. In The Age of Reform Hofstadter asserts that ". . . the main stream of feeling in the ranks of insurgency was neither anti-war nor anti-imperialist." Instead it followed Roosevelt ". . . with his militarist preachments and his hearty appeals to unselfish patriotism and manliness against self-seeking and materialistic motives."<sup>15</sup> Neither Leuchtenburg's implication nor Hofstadter's assertion is applicable to the figures of this study. Lenroot, Kent, and Lindbergh, who returned to the Republican party in 1915, either unwillingly accepted imperialism and military preparedness or completely refused to be a part of "the main stream of feeling." Leuchtenburg and Hofstadter, however, have both made allowances for these three progressives and others like them as being exceptions to the rule. Perhaps Kent and Lindbergh can easily be set aside as unique even among independents, and it can be said that Lenroot, who came closer to the progressive stereotype, was less trenchant than the other two in opposing military preparedness. Moreover, with the

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<sup>14</sup>New York Times, September 21, 1915; Leuchtenburg, "Progressivism and Imperialism," p. 496.

<sup>15</sup>Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, p. 272.

exception of Lindbergh, they ultimately "acquiesced" in military preparedness.

An alternative to this extensive equivocation has been offered by Arthur S. Link. In connection with the preparedness controversy Link wrote:

The humanitarian spirit that had given momentum to the progressive movement stemmed from definite beliefs about America and her place in the family of nations. To begin with, progressivism concentrated largely on economic and social justice at home. This emphasis grew into such an obsession that progressivism became tantamount to provincialism. To be sure, a small Eastern minority, led by Roosevelt, were internationally minded; but to the large majority of progressives, particularly in the South and Middle West, America's unique mission was to purify and offer herself to decadent Europe, an example of democracy triumphant over social and economic injustice. This self-purification involved also an end to America's experiment in imperialism and a weakening of American naval power. The second major progressive assumption concerned the place of war in modern society. Wars were mainly economic in causation and necessarily evil because bankers with money to lend, munition-makers with sordid profits to earn, and industrialists with markets to win were the chief promoters and beneficiaries of war.<sup>16</sup>

This interpretation explains the attitudes of Kent, Lenroot, and Lindbergh on foreign policy with far less rationalization. According to Link's analysis their stand was the rule, not the exception. Kent sought to put "an end to America's experiment in imperialism" in 1911 when he wrote to President Taft concerning the President's policy in Mexico: "As one interested in Mexican investments, I wish to commend in the highest terms your policy of noninterference. Every American

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<sup>16</sup>Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, p. 180.

life in Mexico is there subject to the risk of the possessor." Again, during the Wilson administration he advised the President against sending American troops into Mexico. Although Kent gradually accepted the need for military preparedness, he maintained a position very close to the isolationists. "We shall be a greater nation and a better example of self-contained self-respect if we forget the 'world power' language," he advised. In 1916, he continued to discuss plans that would prevent American involvement in the war. Moreover, Lindbergh, an isolationist, pure and simple, epitomized Link's description of the progressives' attitude toward war as a means of profit for bankers, munition-makers, and industrialists. With these profiteers in mind, Lindbergh demanded that ". . . the toilers who are now employed in munitions of war for Europe and foreign lands be employed to make the things needed to protect ourselves and to build an honest domestic commerce."<sup>17</sup>

Instead of agreeing with the Progressives' imperialistic and militaristic tendencies, the insurgents of this study who remained in Congress stood nearer the traditional position of isolationism. When Wilson began to push for a moderate program of military preparedness in late 1915, these insurgents, with the exception of Lindbergh, reluctantly "acquiesced." But as Link points out ". . . rank and file were thinking in terms,

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<sup>17</sup>Le Follette's Weekly Magazine, April 12, 1913; New York Times, April 26, 1916; Congressional Record, Appendix, 64th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. LIII (Washington, 1916), p. 739.

not of preparedness for war, but of preparedness for peace."<sup>18</sup>

In the presidential election of 1916 Wilson was not reelected on the basis of his preparedness program but rather on the issues of peace and progressivism. The support he received from the Progressives of this study indicate that Wilson's slogan, "He kept us out of war," appealed to the most avid proponents of preparedness as well as to the less rabid. At least twenty per cent of the Progressives cast their ballot for Wilson in 1916. Murdock, for example, who violently opposed the Republican-Progressive merger in the summer of 1916, supported Wilson in preference to Charles Evans Hughes, the Republican compromise candidate. Ten of the other eighteen members of the platform committee of the former Progressive party joined him in support of Wilson.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, Poindexter, who returned to the Republican party in 1915 in preparation for his own senatorial contest, retained his admiration for "Big Stick" diplomacy. He announced on returning to the Republican caucus in December that the Republican platform in 1916 would call for a more vigorous foreign policy. His return in no way reflected a disenchantment with either Roosevelt or the Colonel's militaristic sentiment. Instead, he helped to prepare the way for Roosevelt's official return to the Republican party.

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<sup>18</sup>Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, p. 196.

<sup>19</sup>Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 223-251; New York Times October 22, 1916.

In the process he illustrated his political adeptness by being reelected to the Senate.<sup>20</sup>

After the elections of 1916 only Lenroot of the progressives under study retained his seat in the House. Lindbergh, after returning to the Republican party in 1915, unsuccessfully sought the Republican senatorial nomination with the endorsement of the farmers Non-Partisan League. His defeat was, in part, due to his criticism of preparedness which was in opposition to the National Republican platform. Kent also failed to reappear in Congress in 1917. He announced in the summer of 1916 that he would not seek reelection because of the ". . . pressure of private affairs and urgent need of a vacation." The validity of these reasons was not substantiated by his subsequent actions. In July he helped organize the Woodrow Wilson Independent League which worked without party consideration for Wilson's reelection. The following April he accepted a position on the Tariff Commission. Kent hardly appeared to be vacationing or attending to private affairs. The cordial relationship which had existed between Kent and the President since Wilson's inauguration in 1913 suggests that he looked forward to an appointive position such as the one he accepted in 1917.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>To Dwight B. Heard, July 3, 1916, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, VIII, 1084; New York Times, December 23, 1915; Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, p.326.

<sup>21</sup>New York Times, February 20, 1915, June 15, 1916; Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, VII 524; "The New Tariff Commission," The Independent, XC (April 2, 1917), 14-15.



The division in the insurgent ranks, Wilson's reform measures, and the increasing threat of involvement in the European war demanded flexibility from the Republican-oriented progressives of this study between 1912 and 1916. Many were inundated by the repercussions of the insurgent schism along with Bourne, Murdock, and Bristow. Others, such as Lindbergh, who refused any responsibility outside American boundaries, were also swept aside. The more politically adept exemplified by Feindexter, Kent, and Lenroot weathered the storm.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The hazards and frustrations inherent in politics had been particularly acute for the insurgents between 1910 and 1916. On the one hand, they had correctly interpreted the increasingly pragmatic thoughts of society which refused to accept human beings as simply pawns of an inhuman evolutionary process. They agreed that men could shape their own environment and ultimately eliminate the gross inequities of society. On the other hand, they were members of a political organization that failed to adjust to the changes in the nation's frame of mind. The Republican party's reactionary character repulsed all progressives, but none denied its indispensable function. The conflict between personal conviction and political expediency served as the basic dilemma for insurgent Republicans during this phase of the progressive era.

Excluding political expediency there was a fundamental difference in the principles motivating the progressives. Wilson's plan for revitalizing the competitive system and Roosevelt's regulatory program had revealed this division during the 1912 presidential campaign. The progressive Republicans of this study who represented the agrarian interests

responded more favorably to Wilson's call for rugged individualism. They sought to build a more equitable society by simply removing the privileges granted to big business. The resulting equality of economic opportunity would limit federal action to maintaining these ideal conditions. Those who were closer to urban living supported Roosevelt's proposals for enlarging the activities of the federal government. They accepted regulating big business and assisting particular classes as necessary government functions.

John Braeman suggests that his fundamental difference can be extended to explain differences in the progressives' attitude on foreign policy. He divides the progressives into two groups. First, the "modernists" combined the concept of regulating big business with an internationalistic approach in foreign policy. Secondly, the "traditionalists" coupled with the "New Freedom" ideas an isolationist attitude.<sup>1</sup> The application of these clearly defined terms to the figures under study is possible with some exceptions. Of the five progressives who remained active in national politics in 1916 three fitted Braeman's formula. The "traditionalists" were Lenroot and Lindbergh. They were both basically Jeffersonian and to different degrees opposed American involvement in world affairs. Poindexter, on the other hand, was a "Modernist" advocating increased government action at home and abroad.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John Braeman, "Seven Profiles: Modernists and Traditionalists," Business History Review, XXXV (Winter, 1961), 581-592.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, April 19, 1914.

Kent and Murdock defy Braeman's classification. Kent's acceptance of extending the federal government's responsibility in domestic affairs, yet opposing its role as a world power was seemingly contradictory according to Braeman's thesis, but not surprising since Kent was an exception to most progressive generalizations. Murdock's position cannot be so easily dismissed. His allegiance to the Progressive party obscured the fact that a contradiction even existed. In 1916 when Roosevelt engineered a merger between the two parties Murdock refused to rejoin the Republicans, and in 1917 he attempted to revive the Progressive party.<sup>3</sup> Despite his dedication to the Progressive party, Murdock's agrarian background instilled in him a Jeffersonian outlook. He was a Bull Mooser initially because Kansas was Progressive, and later because he was a fighter in the middle of a fight and the dynamic Roosevelt stood alongside him at Armageddon. In essence, the presence of the energetic and colorful Murdock in the Progressive party and his militaristic attitude in foreign policy seemed to be due more to his tendency to gravitate toward the center of action than to any profound agreement with Roosevelt's sophisticated ideology.

The basic convictions of these progressives in both domestic and foreign affairs were influenced by political realities. Their acceptance of political expediency was one

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<sup>3</sup>New York Times, June, 1916; Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, p. 367.

of degree. William Allen White described the exception rather than the rule among insurgents when he said that they preferred ". . . defeat to compromise and martyrdom to victory if the victory is qualified. . . ." <sup>4</sup> The exception in this study was Lindbergh. He was an idealist who acted in accordance with party politics as long as they did not interfere with his personal convictions. In 1916 when almost the entire country at least accepted the need for preparedness, he continued to espouse the traditional tenets of isolationism. As a result, he was swept into the "dust-bin of history." Most progressives refuted White's description by refusing to apply their principles without considering the political effect. For example, in 1912 when Roosevelt demanded a sacrifice from the insurgents, not one of those in this study placed his political post in any immediate jeopardy because of principle. Instead their decisions were made in view of political exigencies. Bourne, the only progressive under consideration here to lose his office in 1912, was not a "martyr" in the name of progressive principles. His subsequent activities destroyed any such illusion. In 1914 the conservative New York Times commended him in an editorial for his statement that the railroads were being underpaid for carrying the mails. In 1915 and 1916, as president of the Republican Publicity Association, he viciously attacked the Wilson administration and espoused Republican, rather than progressive, principles. <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>La Follette's Weekly Magazine, January 7, 1911.

<sup>5</sup>New York Times, August 14, 1914, January 19, 1916.

Despite the fact that these progressives generally revealed political maturity, many of their contemporaries continually referred to them as radicals. The accusation appears too severe in view of the fact that progressives neither sought to overthrow the capitalist system nor did they encourage revolution to remedy the prevailing social inequities. Kent typified the reformer's attitude toward the progressive movement when he said: "I don't believe in the class struggle, because while the impulse must come from the underdog, every great reform has been taken up and worked out by those who are not selfishly interested. I believe altruism is a bigger force in the world than selfishness."<sup>6</sup>

In the final analysis their attitudes ranged from the nineteenth century Mugwump type to complete open-mindedness in social experimentation. Bourne, one of the many wealthy progressives, represented those who sought limited reforms. He fought for political reforms such as those expounded by the National Progressive Republican League, but he opposed economic innovations. Roosevelt correctly described him as ". . . below the average rather than above the average of their fellows [insurgents]."<sup>7</sup> At the other end of liberalism stood Kent. Despite his own fortune he worked to establish a more equitable

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<sup>6</sup>San Francisco Bulletin, September 8, 1911, cited in Mowry, "California Progressives", p. 104.

<sup>7</sup>To William Allen White, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, November 7, 1914, VIII, 835.

distribution of income. He warned that unless something was done ". . . property rights were going to tumble about the heads of the men who had built themselves pyramids of money in a desert of want and suffering."<sup>8</sup> He placed few restrictions on the methods of remedying these inequities. "I should say that it is safe to assume that a little laissez faire, a little socialism, a little anarchy, and a little Henry George are all good in their place," Kent suggested. "At any rate, go at them open-mindedly work with the good in each."<sup>9</sup>

Their actions between 1910 and 1916 had been shaped by the numerous pressures of a politically revolutionary environment. In addition to their own convictions they weighed the changing sentiment of their constituencies and the tumultuous conditions within the party organization. Although motivated by the reform sentiment they had continually searched for the practical limits of progressivism.

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<sup>8</sup>San Francisco Bulletin, September 8, 1911, cited in Mowry, "California Progressive and His Rationale," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXVI, p. 248.

<sup>9</sup>Baker, "Seeing America," p. 89.

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