

Voices of Protest

The sympathy that reformers felt for the plight of the poor did not often extend to minorities. In 1912, Progressive journalist Samuel Bryan wrote an investigative article about Mexican immigrants. Displaying a common bias, Bryan concluded that the immigrants did not work hard enough. Yet, he was forced to admit that Mexican Americans faced discrimination. He wrote:

“[Mexican Americans] are now employed to a considerable extent in the coal mines of Colorado and New Mexico, in the ore mines of Colorado and Arizona, in the smelters of Arizona, in the cement factories of Colorado and California, . . . and in fruit growing and canning in California. . . . Where they are employed in other industries, the same wage discrimination against them as was noted in the case of railroad employees is generally apparent.”

—Samuel Bryan, *The Survey*, September 1912



▲ Cuero family, Warner Springs, California, 1904

The Struggle Against Discrimination

Objectives

- Analyze Progressives' attitudes toward minority rights.
- Explain why African Americans organized.
- Examine the strategies used by members of other minority groups to defend their rights.

Terms and People

Americanization	NAACP
Booker T. Washington	Urban League
W.E.B. Du Bois	Anti-Defamation League
Niagara Movement	mutualistas

NoteTaking**Reading Skill: Main Idea and Details**

Outline the section's main ideas and details.

I. The Struggle Against Discrimination
A.

Why It Matters Prejudice and discrimination against minorities continued even as the Progressive Movement got underway. But in the spirit of Progressivism, African Americans, Latinos, Catholics, Jews, and new immigrant groups worked to help themselves. Their efforts paved the way for the era of civil rights that would follow decades later. **Section Focus Question:** What steps did minorities take to combat social problems and discrimination?

Progressivism Presents Contradictions

The Progressive Era was not so progressive for nonwhite and immigrant Americans. Most Progressives were white Anglo-Saxon Protestant reformers who were indifferent or actively hostile to minorities. They tried to make the United States a model society by encouraging everyone to follow white, middle-class ways of life.

Social Reform or Social Control? Settlement houses and other civic groups played a prominent role in the **Americanization** efforts of many Progressives. While they taught immigrants English, their programs also tried to change how immigrants lived. They advised immigrants how to dress like white middle-class Americans and pushed them to replace the foods and customs of their homelands with

Protestant practices and values. These reformers believed that assimilating immigrants into American society would make them more loyal and moral citizens.

Many Progressives found the immigrants' use of alcohol especially alarming. In many European countries, it was customary for families to serve wine or beer with meals. Many reformers, however, believed that these practices showed moral faults. As a result, prejudice against immigrants was one of the forces behind the temperance movement.

Racism Limits the Goals of Progressivism Many Progressives shared the same prejudice against nonwhites held by other white Americans of the time. They believed that some people were more fit than others to play a leading role in society. They agreed with so-called scientific theories that said that dark-skinned peoples had less intelligence than whites. In the late 1800s, southern Progressives used these misguided theories to justify the passage of laws that kept African Americans from voting. Some southern Progressives urged an end to the violence and terrorism waged against African Americans. Edgar Gardner Murphy, an Episcopal minister and a leading Alabama Progressive, advised that African Americans "will accept in the white man's country the place assigned him by the white man, . . . not by stress of rivalry, but by genial cooperation with the white man's interests."

After the Supreme Court issued its *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, states across the North and the South had passed segregation laws. By 1910, segregation was the norm across the nation. After 1914, even the offices of the federal

Vocabulary Builder
so-called—(SOH kawld) *adj.*
commonly named; falsely or
improperly named

Comparing Viewpoints

How should we respond to discrimination?

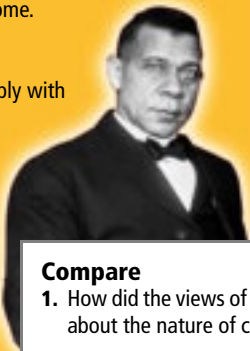
African Americans were freed from slavery, but discriminatory laws and racist attitudes kept them oppressed and threatened. African Americans debated how they should respond to this discrimination.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Washington (1856–1915) believed that African Americans had to achieve economic independence before civil rights. Black people must tolerate discrimination while they proved themselves equal to white people. Slowly, civil rights would come.

Primary Source

"[The Negro must] live peaceably with his white neighbors . . . the Negro [must] deport himself modestly . . . depending upon the slow but sure influences that proceed from the possessions of property, intelligence, and high character for the full recognition of his political rights."



W.E.B. Du Bois

Du Bois (1868–1963) believed that black Americans had to demand their social and civil rights or else become permanent victims of racism. African Americans must fight every day for the rights given to them in the Constitution.

Primary Source

"We claim for ourselves every single right that belongs to a freeborn American . . . and until we get these rights we will never cease to protest. . . . How shall we get them? By voting where we may vote, by persistent, unceasing agitation, by hammering at the truth, by sacrifice and work."



Compare

1. How did the views of Washington and Du Bois about the nature of civil rights differ?
2. How do these leaders' opinions reflect the era in which they lived? Would leaders today make similar arguments? Explain.

government in Washington, D.C., were segregated as a result of policies approved by President Woodrow Wilson, a Progressive.

✓ **Checkpoint** What attitudes did most Progressives hold about minorities and immigrant groups?

African Americans Demand Reform

In the face of these injustices, the nation's most visible African American leader urged patience. **Booker T. Washington** told blacks to move slowly toward racial progress. By working hard and waiting patiently, he believed, African Americans would gradually win white Americans' respect and eventually would be able to exercise their full voting and citizenship rights.

Other African Americans rejected this view. The most outspoken among them were **W.E.B. Du Bois** and William Monroe Trotter. Both men had been raised in New England and educated at Harvard University. Both urged African Americans to demand immediately all the rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

African Americans Form the Niagara Movement Du Bois and Trotter were especially concerned that all across the South, black men were being denied the right to vote. In the summer of 1905, they and other leading African American thinkers met at Niagara Falls. They had to meet in Canada because no hotel on the New York side of the border would give them rooms.

The **Niagara Movement**, as the group called itself, denounced the idea of gradual progress. Washington, they said, was too willing to compromise African Americans' basic rights. They also condemned his notion of teaching only trade skills. This kind of education, Du Bois said, "can create workers, but it cannot make *men*." Talented blacks should be taught history, literature, and philosophy, so they could think for themselves.

Despite its bold ideas, the Niagara Movement never grew to more than a few hundred strong. To make a difference, African Americans needed a more powerful voice.

Riots Lead to Formation of NAACP In the summer of 1908, a white mob in Springfield, Illinois, attempted to lynch two African American prisoners in the city jail. Upon learning that the prisoners had been removed to safety, the rioters turned their anger against the city's black residents, killing two people and burning 40 homes. The Niagara Movement members were outraged that such an attack could happen in Abraham Lincoln's hometown.

Niagara Movement

The original leaders of the Niagara Movement met in response to W.E.B. Du Bois's call to "organize thoroughly the intelligent honest Negroes throughout the United States."



This lynching occurred during the 1908 Springfield, Illinois, riot.



The Springfield riot also got the attention of a number of white reformers. They now acknowledged the need to help African Americans protect their lives, win the right to vote, and secure their civil rights. In 1909, they joined with leaders of the Niagara Movement to form the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. The NAACP aimed to help African Americans be “physically free from peonage [forced, low-paid labor], mentally free from ignorance, politically free from disfranchisement, and socially free from insult.”

NAACP leaders included white and black Progressives who had worked in other areas of social reform. Among them were Jane Addams, Ray Stannard Baker, and Florence Kelley. Ida B. Wells, owner of a Tennessee newspaper, used her publication to make clear the horror of lynching. She and the others planned the group’s strategy—to use the courts to challenge unfair laws. In the early 1900s, the NAACP focused on the battle for equal access to decent housing and professional careers like teaching.

African Americans Form the Urban League Across the country, African Americans were migrating from rural to urban areas during this period. Local black clubs and churches set up employment agencies and relief efforts to help African Americans get settled and find work. In 1911, more than 100 of these groups in many cities joined into a network called the **Urban League**. While the NAACP helped middle-class blacks struggle for political and social justice, the Urban League focused on poorer workers. It helped families buy clothes and books and send children to school. It helped factory workers and maids find jobs. Both the NAACP and the Urban League still aid African Americans today.



Checkpoint Why did African Americans and others decide it was time to organize against discrimination?

Reducing Prejudice and Protecting Rights

African Americans were not alone in seeking their rights. Individuals and organizations of diverse ethnic groups spoke out against unfair treatment and took action by creating self-help agencies. For example, in northern cities, Catholic parishes offered a variety of social services to immigrants. In Chicago, a network of Polish Catholic groups grew so strong that it earned the nickname American Warsaw.

The Anti-Defamation League Aids Jews Jews in New York had formed the B’nai B’rith in 1843 to provide religious education and to help Jewish families. In response to growing anti-Semitism, the group founded the **Anti-Defamation League** in 1913. Its goal was—and still is—to defend Jews and others against physical and verbal attacks, false statements, and “to secure justice and fair treatment to all citizens alike. . . .”

Mexican Americans Organize Mexican Americans also organized to help themselves. Those living in Arizona formed the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), which offered Mexican Americans many of the same services that the Urban League gave to African Americans. In several states, Mexican Americans formed **mutualistas**, groups that made loans and provided legal assistance. The mutualistas also had insurance programs to help members if they were too sick to work.

Vocabulary Builder

acknowledge—(ak NAHL ihj) *v.* to admit to be true

HISTORY MAKERS

Octaviano Larrazolo (1859–1930)

Larrazolo was a Progressive governor in New Mexico who worked for many reforms. He helped make sure that New Mexico’s first state constitution protected Latinos from discrimination. Elected governor in 1918, he pushed for laws aimed at helping children and improving public health. He also favored bilingual education and voting rights for women. That last stand cost him the support of his Republican Party, and he served only one term as governor.

