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In “The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements”, Jane Addams finds that although America aspires to democracy and political equality, it has had little involvement in social affairs. The ‘educated young people’, Addams asserts, aspire to put into action the theories of equality and democracy, yet are often separated from the lower classes, with which they can do so. Addams argues that settlement houses, by bringing these two groups together, will aid in solving the great social problems.

Following Tennessee’s enactment of the Federal suffrage amendment, Crystal Eastman asserts in “Now We Can Begin” that it was only the beginning of work towards women’s freedoms. Eastman argues an organized feminist movement should advocate for bettering these outward conditions like economic independence to free the mind and soul. She points to four directions of change towards economic freedom: breaking down remaining workforce barriers, feminist education of children, voluntary motherhood, and motherhood endowment.

In *Reinventing the People*, Shelton Stromquist illustrates the progressive movement as emerging in an attempt to address escalating social tensions. It promised to institute social harmony through collective responsibility and democratic renewal, generally ignoring the role of class in social problems. It was hence repeatedly was battered by class conflict and turbulent internal ideological division; regardless, Stromquist asserts the dismissal of class continued throughout liberalism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Shelton Stromquist repeatedly asserts in *Reinventing the People* that Progressive reformers were unable or unwilling to “accept a world indelibly demarcated by classes”, underestimating the influence of class in a democratic polity¹. Such thinkers possessed an inability to push “beyond equality” and to recognize setbacks to lower classes not enshrined in law². He also argues that the Progressivists worked towards a vision of “classless social harmony”³. However, I argue that Stromquist’s claims of the relationship between Progressivism and class are too broad. Even the “meliorist” Progressive wing he points to demonstrated a certain acknowledgement of class. Jane Addams establishes in “The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements” a divide between two groups: the “very poor” and people “of ability and refinement, of social power and university cultivation”⁴. In fact, Addams *does* demonstrate an ability to push ‘beyond equality’ – criticizing 18th-century leaders that believed in the fairness of political equality alone, she outlines her vision for remedying class inequities: the settlement house, an overtly cultural and social, rather than legislative, solution⁵. The rationale behind settlement houses was very conscious of class divisions and inequities; as the rationale went, by bringing classes together, each accommodating the other, lower classes would ideally be on fairer footing. On the legislative front, Progressive thinkers pushed for laws that accommodated multiple class interests, attacking poor living conditions while protecting institutions of wages and profits⁶. Was the goal *classless* social harmony? – probably not. Even if the rhetoric used did not include the literal word “class”, nevertheless there was recognition of a marker of class. Progressives generally supported (a limited form of) industrial capitalism, which naturally

¹ Shelton Stromquist, *Reinventing the People: The Progressive Movement, the Class Problem, and the Origins of Modern Liberalism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 6.

² Stromquist, *Reinventing the People*, 7.

³ Stromquist, *Reinventing the People*, 7.

⁴ Jane Addams, “The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements” (New York: Macmillan, 1911).

⁵ Addams, “The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements”.

⁶ Stromquist, *Reinventing the People*, 6.

creates classes. Chicago reformer Graham Taylor write that some signs pointed to an “awakening of the wage earners of our country to the consciousness of their class interest”⁷. The usage of ‘class’ is tied to ‘class interest’, which connects to conflict; given that the Progressive ideology rose out of a desire to remedy class conflict, his concerns reflect a concern for class conflict. On the other hand, perhaps more implicitly, the ‘wage earner’ is a recognition of a class itself, next to the ‘wage giver’. It seems that Progressives (and, acknowledging the broadness of the movement itself) recognized the existence of class in the solutions they pushed for, but did not believe in the inevitability of class *conflict*. Hence, what characterized more mainstream Progressive thought was a more accommodationist approach towards solutions – both cultural and legislative – rather than only favoring one class, as both socialists and hyper-conservatives of the period did.

⁷ Stromquist, *Reinventing the People*, 6.