

## Section Summary

### THE STRUGGLE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

The Progressive Era was not so progressive for nonwhite and immigrant Americans. Most Progressives were white Anglo-Saxon Protestant reformers who were indifferent or hostile to minorities.

Settlement houses and other civic groups played a big role in the **Americanization** efforts of many Progressives. Americanization occurred when Progressives encouraged everyone to follow white, middle-class ways of life.

Many Progressives shared the same prejudices against non-whites as other Americans. They agreed with so-called scientific theories that said that dark-skinned peoples had less intelligence than whites. They also supported segregation, or separation of the races, and laws to limit minority voting.

African American reformers responded in different ways to formal segregation and discrimination. For example, **Booker T. Washington** told blacks that the best way to win their rights was to be patient and to earn the respect of white Americans. **W.E.B. Du Bois**, on the other hand, said that blacks should demand immediately all the rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

W.E.B. Du Bois was a member of the **Niagara Movement**, a group that called for rapid progress and more education for blacks. After a race riot broke out in Illinois, its members joined with white reformers to form the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. The NAACP planned to use the court system to fight for the civil rights of African Americans, including the right to vote. The efforts of the NAACP mostly helped middle-class blacks, but the **Urban League** focused on poorer urban workers. It helped families buy clothes and books and helped factory workers and maids find jobs.

African Americans were not alone in seeking their rights. Individuals and organizations of diverse ethnic groups spoke out against injustice and created self-help agencies. Jews in New York City formed the **Anti-Defamation League** to defend themselves against verbal attacks and false statements. Mexican Americans in several states formed **mutualistas**, groups that gave loans and provided legal assistance to the poor.

### Review Questions

1. Why did Progressives not fight for the civil rights of minorities?

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2. How did the Urban League differ from the NAACP?

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### READING CHECK

Who organized the Anti-Defamation League?

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### VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *so-called* mean in the underlined sentence? Two synonyms for *so-called* are *supposed* and *presumed*. Use the meanings of the synonyms to help you determine the meaning of *so-called*.

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### READING SKILL

**Main Idea and Details** How did Booker T. Washington differ from W.E.B. Du Bois in his approach to civil rights?

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