Politics, Progress, and Prejudice: Examining the Role of the Political Coalition between Progressive Populists and Organized Labor in the Arizona Statehood Project, 1877 - 1912

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Examining the Role of the Political Coalition between Progressive Populists and Organized Labor in the Arizona Statehood Project, 1877 - 1912

By

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Introduction

On February 14, 2012, Arizona celebrated the centennial of its admission as the forty-eighth state. A state that is often portrayed as enigmatic and maverick. Arizona’s brief statehood has been punctuated by times of workers’ progress and corporate dominion, by liberal politics and conservative revolution. It has produced leaders as diametrically opposed on the political spectrum as Barry Goldwater and Morris Udall, as John McCain and Janet Napolitano. It is a state often accused of being overtly racist while at the same time lauded for its ethnic diversity. Understanding the roots of these contradictions is necessary to understand the history and progress of Arizona, specifically in terms of the progress of its politics and the ways in which Arizona’s governmental institutions serve its people. To discover the root of these realities, it is imperative to explore Arizona’s formative years, the decades leading up to statehood and the statehood process itself. These formative years for Arizona range from 1877 through 1912 and the first years of Arizona statehood. It was a time a massive industrialization and rapid social and economic changes that provided the context for the Arizona statehood project which ultimately paved the way for the forty-eighth state. The statehood process itself brought about seismic shifts in Arizona politics that greatly influenced the drafting of Arizona’s first state constitution, an event which presaged the character of the new state for the next hundred hears. The Arizona statehood project was directly a product of a political coalition formed in 1910, comprised of the
progressive elements of Arizona’s Democratic Party as well as backers of organized labor in the Territory. The process and outcome of Arizona’s statehood movement initiated, both in Arizona’s constitution as well as in the resulting political culture, a dichotomy of progressive populism and underlying systemic racism.

I. Context: The Arizona Territory, 1863 – 1910

Overview of Territorial History, pre-1877

In 1845, the United State of America, under the leadership of President James K. Polk declared war on Mexico, partly over a disputed claim to the Mexican Territory of Texas. In March 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was ratified by the US Senate, effectively ending the Mexican-American War waged by the Polk Administration. The terms of the treaty included a massive cession of land from the Mexican Empire to the United States. Roughly two-thirds of what today is Arizona, all the area of the state that lies north of the Gila River, was included in that cession. Finally, on December 30, 1853, both nations completed negotiations and ratified the Gadsden Purchase Treaty, which brought the southern portion of what is today Arizona, including the city of Tucson, into the United States. One of the principal reasons that the United States completed this purchase was to obtain an area through which a railroad could pass.

This land that was officially designated the Arizona Territory by Congress in 1863. The demographics of this new territory were anything but homogenous, with only a paltry non-indigenous population prior to annexation by the United States. As a former Mexican territory,

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there was a paltry Mexican population as evidenced by the fact that in 1860, in the most industrious mining settlements, most of the workers were Mexicans (approx. 70%).

Additionally, there was a large presence of indigenous peoples. The Apaches in particular were in a state of conflict with the Mexican residents of the territory by the time American surveyors arrived, who offered little assistance to the Mexican ‘frontiersmen’ who were fighting them. By 1871, General Cook had led a successful campaign to pacify the Apache resistance to Anglo settlement of the Territory, with the government of the territory treating its indigenous opponents as ‘nonentities’ when not on the battlefield. A third element of the existing demography of the territory comprised of white settlers from California mining towns as well as the influence of Mormon settlers from Utah.

**Railroads**

On September 30, 1877, the Southern Pacific Railroad reached the Arizona Territory when locomotive track was built in Yuma. Governor APK Safford, who served the Territory from 1869-1877, used his executive authority as governor to accelerate the development of railways in Arizona. Safford, Lamar notes, served as an incorporator with both the Pacific and Atlantic Railroads and that his appointment to the Governor’s office was likely the result of careful lobbying by powerful railway interests who sought Safford’s appointment as a buffer against competition, hoping that his policies towards the railroads would not be competitive with

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their own economic interests.\textsuperscript{11} If Lamar’s analysis of this is correct and this political development in the Arizona Territory was the result of this heavy handed lobbying, it is evidence of a kind of gilded age corruption that sought to leverage wealthy interests into a favorable economic situation at the expense of good governance in the territory. Such intermingling of corporate and political interests forms the socio-political context for Arizona statehood.

The Territory before and after the railway boom looked very different in terms of the relationships between Ango-Saxons and Mexicans who lived together in the Territory. First and foremost, the pre-railway Arizona territory enjoyed a “bicultural vitality” brought about by a intermarriage between Anglo-Saxons and Latin Americans. The result was also a pervasiveness of Mexican culture throughout the Territory. Sheridan goes so far as to argue that, “Mexicans assimilated Anglos rather than the other way around”.\textsuperscript{12} The reality of intermarriage makes sense given the relatively low populations of white settlers in this predominantly indigenous and Mexican area of land.

As tracks were laid across the Southwest Territory, this reality began to speedily evaporate. Sheridan explains that with the railroads came a major shift in Arizona’s economy, the Territory became much more connected to the rest of the country and less and less reliant upon trade with Mexico. As a result, Sheridan notes that racial tensions came roaring to the forefront, even in the City of Tucson, which had elected a Mexican American mayor and in which many middle-class families of Mexican American heritage were beginning to take root. By the advent of the twentieth century, Anglo-Saxons and Latin Americans became increasingly segregated in living conditions and employment. Sheridan notes that given the wildly shifting

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid. 117.
attitudes toward Latin Americans during this period in Arizona’s history, “‘Mexican’ was a volatile category in Arizona society, one that assumed different meanings in different places and different times”. All of these developments would quicken the pace of the developments of these racial tensions. If Sheridan’s analysis is to be bought in terms of the changing nature of these relationships and communities, it becomes quickly apparent how animosities could start to brew over time. This organic segregation fosters a reality in which racial prejudice becomes more and more pronounced, particularly among the working class. Additionally, given the malleable nature of this racial category, it becomes clear that as attitudes among the general public began to shift, and organized segregation took root even in places like Tucson, that racial tensions will begin to spill over into more tangible elements of organized Arizonan society.

A tangible example of the ways in which the Territory’s racial hierarchy was being shaped can be found in an anecdote from Clifton, Arizona. In 1904, New York City sent a number of Irish orphans to the Clifton to be adopted and raised by Catholic families. The one caveat, those families would have to be Mexican Catholics. Upon hearing this news, the citizens of Clifton kidnapped the orphans and eventually won a custody battle for these children before the United States Supreme Court. The fear and racial animus is clear. Benton-Cohen isn’t alone in citing this as evidence of the racial tensions in the Territory. Sheridan uses this anecdote to express how the social and economic landscape was being drawn:

What was happening was brutally clear: Arizona was creating a socioeconomic pecking order organized largely along racial lines and justified by a racial ideology that considered Mexicans inherently inferior to Anglo Americans or Northern Europeans. At the top were the owners and managers of the railroads [and] copper mines…all of whom were Anglo Americans or Northern Europeans. In the middle were businessmen.

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13 Ibid. 118.
ranchers, and farmers, mostly Anglos […] At the bottom were people who had only their labor to sell […] Mexicans laid track, ran cattle, picked cotton, and hauled ore. A pattern is clear to see. The manner in which Arizona society was systematically structuring itself was racially bent, with wealth whites clearly at the top and poor, unskilled Mexican laborers at the bottom. This power dynamic is critically important in understanding, not just the way Arizona society was structured but also how the labor movement would come to manifest these prejudices. If white workers could get ahead by stepping on their Mexican American coworkers, they would and did.

Labor and the Mining Companies

Writing in *Copper for America*, Charles Hyde notes that in the wake of the railroad construction in the territory, the copper industry of Arizona became the third largest in the United States. This had a significant effect on the social landscape of the territory. Sheridan explains that the reason that a place like Tucson, a multicultural center of culture and industry, could turn so rapidly into a messy segregated hub is that the economy of Arizona began changing so rapidly. Indeed, with the railroads came new and expanded industries to the Arizona Territory, none bigger and more influential than the extraction industries. Lamar explains that the completion of the railroads in the Territory directly coincided with a massive “boom” in the mining of silver and copper. This means that there would have been renewed economic interest in the territory by the extraction industries because there could be easier and cheaper means of getting these raw materials to the rest of the United States.

17 Ibid. 117.
However, it also means that these companies would try to exert more control over its poor Arizonan workforce. David R. Berman, an Arizona historian, explains that before 1880, there was an evident lack of explosive conflict between industry and labor in the Arizona Territory. That began to change when the mineral and extraction industries came to the Territory during that period. Berman notes that this new reality was evident when 400 miners went on strike in the city of Tombstone, protesting the reduction of their wages by the mining company. This power that was keenly possessed by the mining companies lead to dramatic inequalities in wage policy. Katherine Benton-Cohen explains that while white men were paid a “family way” – what would in today’s vernacular be called a “living wage” – Mexican laborers were paid something equivalent that what a woman might make in these mining towns like Bisbee, which were often referred to as a “white man’s camp”. This inequality in wages demonstrates how much society in the territory had turned against anyone who wasn’t white. Tucon’s experience demonstrates this reality quite profoundly. Sheridan notes, the percentage of white Arizonans in Tucson that found themselves in jobs that required skilled labor rose from 44.6 percent to 61.5 percent, the same category of jobs that went to Mexican workers rose only from 22 to 28 percent. At the same time, 68 percent Tucson’s unskilled workforce consisted of Mexican workers – at a time when the percentage of White Arizonans made up 68 percent of Tucson’s overall population. This represents a clear disparity in employment and earned income.

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21 Ibid.
By the 1880s, extraction companies came to essentially control the towns they operated in and there were significant frequent conflicts between these companies and their laborers\textsuperscript{22}. Yet, the impact of these labor struggles were not merely felt between workers and foremen, they made more manifest the already brewing racial tensions that the Territory was experiencing. There was, as has been noted here already, great racial and national diversity among the middle and working class in the Territory, White Anglo-Saxons, Irish Immigrants, Mexican and Latin American laborers. With the Clifton example, Arizona society was developing in an increasingly segregated fashion with Mexican laborers squarely on the bottom.

Instead of opposing industry together, there were frequent clashes among these groups. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, while Anglos and Mexicans both represented lower strata of this socio-economic ladder, they often found themselves jockeying for the same jobs. Rather than work together through the vehicle of organized labor, they were consistently in conflict with each other. One such instance took place in the Old Dominion mine in 1896. S.A. Parnell tried to force out white workers with Mexican laborers. The white miners organized and forced Parnell to resign. After this incident, the owners of the mine locked the workers out, and even sought military aid from the Territorial Governor\textsuperscript{23}. This situation highlights firsthand the growing tensions between white labor and Mexicans who sought jobs in the same markets. A reality that brought the two groups into frequent conflict

Those miners that went on strike at the Old Dominion mine voted to join the Western Federation of Miners (WFM), one of the largest labor organizations in the United States\textsuperscript{24}.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid. Pp. 178.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
Benton-Cohen notes that this union, like many of the period, did not shy away from exerting its power through violence. After union activity in 1903, the Territorial Governor called in the National Guard to disperse riots and actually arrested leaders of the strike itself. Shortly thereafter, the WFM experienced a series of intense internal conflicts over the direction of the union. Two factions emerged, the inclusionists and the exclusionists. Sheridan notes that, as the names rightly suggest, the inclusionists were in favor of union membership for Eastern European and Mexican workers, the exclusionists were hostile in their opposition to such inclusion. To make matters much worse, copper mining companies in cities like Globe, where in the habit of encouraging Mexican “scabs” – essentially workers who refused to strike – to break up white labor strikes and vice versa encouraged white scabs to break up Mexican labor strikes. This situation only served to escalate racial tension between the two groups. In this chaotic bubble of racial tension, there was a general division among the working classes that only fueled the success of the extraction companies in opposing organized labor. The relatively low level of success in these strikes, Sheridan notes, is reflective of these divisions. Had these workers stood together and opposed the mining companies in a manner that the inclusionist within the WFM sought, it would have been much more effective. This episode rather illustrates that the white labor establishment, though committed to opposing the companies’ abuses of the workers, where much more committed to rendering the Mexican and Latin American elements of the labor force in the Arizona Territory non competitive, in a manner so as to insulate and protect the white workers of the Territory.

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26 Ibid.
These two realities in the final decades of Arizona’s territorial history, the introduction of the railroads, and the expansion of the extraction industries, presaged the political fight over Arizona statehood which took place in 1910. The introduction of the railroads into the Territory, which brought the explosion in the white population, decimated the ties of intermarriage and cooperation of the Anglo and Mexican communities which lived together and exchanged cultural ties in the Territory, but especially in Tucson. And finally, it was the pressure applied to the Territory’s economy by the powerful extraction industries that took these two communities that had grown apart and indifferent towards each other, and placed them in direct conflict with one another. But something more happened. Not only were Anglo and Latin American workers in direct conflict with each other, the socioeconomic hierarchy which is delineated by Sheridan illustrates how the power dynamics put Mexicans at a unique disadvantage. The Mexican workers being squarely at the bottom of the ladder meant that they must have had little access to power and influence – a reality that is reflected by the manner in which the WFM decided against the inclusionists and continued to work against the interests of Mexican workers. So by the time the Arizona statehood project is in full swing, a nearly exclusively white labor movement – which sought to limit the success of Mexican workers – existed in the Territory. That movement and its agenda will come to have a direct influence on how the statehood project turned out.

II. Process

Sheridan in his analysis of the political process which brought about Arizona statehood specifically notes that, given the socio-political climate in the Arizona Territory, a partnership of labor leaders and progressives was formed in the context of the political fight for Arizona
statehood.\textsuperscript{27} However, this coalition did far more than “join” the fight. They led it and shaped the statehood project itself. Sheridan’s argument is a necessary one but only a starting point for the extent to which the Arizona statehood project was directly shaped by the political union between organized labor and the progressive elements of Arizona’s Democratic Party. While Sheridan does much to explain the power of the labor element of this coalition and the extent to which it was successful in achieving what it wanted\textsuperscript{28}, it is necessary to expand upon this and look more specifically upon the ways in which their combined influence with the progressive populists is reflected. Additionally, further analysis is required as additional expansion of Sheridan’s analysis. Specifically, it is necessary to reflect upon the ways in which the success of this coalition brought about the dichotomy of progress and racism.

It is therefore imperative to begin by looking at the process and politics by which Arizona achieved statehood status in the United States. It was in the first decade of the twentieth century that organized labor began to align itself directly with partisan progressives in the Arizona territory. The process for admitting Arizona into the Union during this decade reflects directly this evolving relationship as well as the ways in which the statehood project was expressly shaped by this coalition.

**Defeat of Proposed Union with New Mexico**

The United States Constitution holds that Congress may, through its own legislative means, admit new states. It doesn’t specify the process beyond that. Therefore, in 1906, Congress passed House Resolution 12707, allowing the Arizona and New Mexico Territories to merge into one large state, called Arizona, and allow both territories to send delegates to draft a

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid. 182-184.
Constitution for this new proposed state.\textsuperscript{29} The bill was passed by Congress on June 16th, 1906 and subsequently signed by President Theodore Roosevelt. Of the processes set forth by this Act of Congress was a provision which called for a question to be placed on the ballot in both territories in the General Election that fall. In order for the territories to merge and enter the Union as a single state, certified majorities in both territories would have to answer affirmatively to this proposition on the ballot.\textsuperscript{30} This was the first opportunity for Arizonans to vote on their own future – the territory would become a state only if it merged with New Mexico.

So began a debate in the Arizona Territory about the kind of future Arizonans would have – whether they would join the Union at present, joined with their neighbors in New Mexico or whether they wished to remain a territory until such a time in which they could join as their own state. Colloquially, during this campaign, the proposed plan for unity with New Mexico was referred to as ‘jointure’.\textsuperscript{31} Newspapers across the territory provide insight into this great debate and the arguments employed by jointure’s supporters and detractors. One item run in The Oasis, a conservative mining paper, published their readers’ opinions on the jointure question and they all are of distinctly the same flavor: enthusiastic support. What’s noticeable about many of these published views is how many of them argue that a victory for jointure would secure business interests in the Arizona Territory. “Arizona business interests would be greatly benefitted by jointure”, wrote in E. Titcomb, President of Arizona and Sonora Manufacturing Co.\textsuperscript{32} Other businesses wrote in to echo these sentiments, Roy and Titcomb, Inc., submitting that, “Safe and Conservative business interests in Arizona demand jointure with New Mexico”.\textsuperscript{33} Not to be

\textsuperscript{29} H.R. Res. 12707, 59th Congress, Sess. 1 of 1906.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} “Telegrams to Cannon” The Oasis, January 6, 1906.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid
outdone, the conservative elements of the Arizona Republican Party also submitted their approval, Ray Ferguson, Chairman of the Republican County Central Committee, argued, “Jointure with New Mexico needed by Arizona to conserve best business interests”. Among these pro-business overtures, there were also concerns raised by the Oasis’ readers that “strikers” could be incited by monopolist interests to oppose the jointure effort. The views here expressed set forth a clear agenda for those who wished to see Arizonans ratify the jointure question. The desire expressed by these overtures is clearly one that sympathizes much more with the Arizona Territory’s moneyed interests and care little for the effect of jointure on working Arizonans and the labor movement in the territory.

To contrast with the conservative nature of the Oasis and the published views of its readers, the more progressive Arizona Republican published a similar collection of opinions the week of the election in November 1906. One clear distinction between these two articles is apparent, while the Oasis published the opinions of prominent political and business leaders, the Republican published instead brief statements from a larger collection of average citizens of the territory, from doctors and lawyers to others simply identified as shop patrons. Many of the opinions expressed appear also very raw and passionate, with one respondent asking permission to employ “strong language” to voice his opposition to the jointure question. A common theme expressed by a notable few of the respondents reflected fears about being “dominated” by New Mexico, “I do not think it wise at this time to accept jointure with any state and as for jointure with New Mexico, I would rather see Arizona remain a territory forever than to be admitted as one state with New Mexico”, “we ought to have statehood of some kind but we don’t want to

34. Ibid
36 “Opinions of Phoenicians About Joint Statehood” Arizona Republican, November 4, 1906
37 Ibid
hooked up with New Mexico”. 38 This fierce opposition to joining the Union with New Mexico and this anxiety about New Mexico in general is a common theme among the campaigners who sought to persuade Arizonans to vote against jointure. Another article published by the Republican on the 3rd articulated this viewpoint in its eleventh hour appeal to Arizonans to reject jointure:

Anti-jointure people have urged the predominance of the Mexican element as an objection to jointure. In doing so they have cast no reflection on Mexican citizenship. The Mexicans of New Mexico have their ways and we have ours. Whichever may be the better, they are different, and could not be united successfully in generations. 39

The language is cloaked so as to not appear outwardly racist however the implication of the irreconcilable differences between Arizonans and the Mexican citizens of the New Mexican Territory. The racial implications are apparent, there is no distinction made between white Arizonans and those of Mexican descent, the language implies and inherent and unavoidable distinction between Arizonans, clearly projected by the author as white, and Mexicans. In addition to pieces like this one, white speakers from New Mexico descended upon the Arizona Territory to instill fear in Arizonans about sharing a state with so many Mexican Americans. One Bisbee paper discusses one such speaker who expressed extreme concern about the Mexican population of the New Mexico Territory, “This mining man believes that the American element is pursuing a short sighted policy in urging jointure…the Mexicans would in the beginning take control of [the joint state] and conditions would be worse than they are now.” 40 The intention of this rhetoric is unmistakable. Campaigners like the one mentioned in this article employ racist tactics in order to convince Arizonans that joining with New Mexico would be disastrous because of the inevitable risk of accidentally handing the keys of power over to the Mexican

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38 Ibid
39 “To Loyal Arizonans” Arizona Republican, November 3, 1906
Americans who more abundantly populated the New Mexico Territory. Both appeals typify Mexican Americans as unknown outsiders at best and imposing foreigners at worst, both clearly appeal to the racist sentiments felt by many Arizonans, particularly those involved in the labor movement which refused to integrate. And this is not pure conjecture, those who witnessed this political event offered similar analysis. An article published in Pacific Monthly in September of 1909 explains that Arizona’s ambivalence to jointure with New Mexico was, “the preponderance of the population of Spanish decent” in the Territory. This analysis from the contemporary lens of those who reported on the Southwest territories confirms this analysis about the jointure campaign: the anti-jointure argument aimed at dissuading Arizonans from approving jointure was very present in that campaign.

Now, as with any election, it is nearly impossible to say for certain which argument won the day and swayed popular opinion enough to shape the results. However, the intensity of the anti-jointure campaign in its racist rhetoric regarding Mexican Americans was clearly potent enough to be a plausible contributing factor. After the polls closed in the Arizona Territory on November 10th, 1906, the verdict of Arizonans was clear. Of the Arizonans who voted on the question of jointure, 3,141 voted ‘yes’, and 16,265 voted ‘no’. Jointure had failed miserably in Arizona. The people had spoken, Arizona would remain a territory. What’s significant in all this, in terms of the political forces, is two things. First, the racism with which Arizona’s white workers viewed their Mexican American counterparts clearly factored into this campaign as well as the fact that those who campaigned aggressively for jointure openly advocated for it as a means through which to preserve and protect Arizona’s businesses. This means that progressives

42 “Ainsworth Polled Just 508 Votes” The Arizona Journal Miner, November 28, 1906
and labor were both clearly voting together in the plebiscite, foretelling the coalition that would carry Arizona to statehood just six years later.

**Constitutional Convention Delegate Election**

While Arizona’s statehood aspirations were once again put on hold in 1906 with the electoral defeat of joint statehood, four years later under a new president and a new congress they would get another chance to join the ranks of the rest of the Union. On June 20, 1910, Congress passed a new Enabling Act which provided for the territories of Arizona and New Mexico to each hold elections to choose delegates to send to their respective constitutional conventions. The law also stipulated that neither territory could become a state until both Congress and the President approved of the proposed state constitution. On July 1, Richard Sloan, the new territorial governor appointed by President William H. Taft, officially set elections for county delegates to take place at the end of summer that year on September 12. This set the stage for another contentious electoral campaign that would ultimately decide Arizona’s future.

As this new election process was gearing up, the parties themselves began to recruit candidates for the convention. *The Border Vidette* reported on July 16 that Democratic voters were calling on party leaders to codify in a platform issues and points of advocacy moving into the election. George Wiley Paul Hunt emerged during this process as a leader for these Democrats. Hunt was a candidate for delegate in Gila County and was already performing a leading role in convention politics. Howard Lamar explains that Hunt was the unmistakable

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43 H.R. 18166
45 “Should Meet and Adopt Platform” *The Boarder Vidette*, July 17, 1910
leaders of the progressive and pro-labor elements in the Arizona Democratic Party. His analysis of the political character of Hunt is helpful in understanding the role he played in this political campaign:

The poker-faced Hunt was to prove to be one of the most capable and enduring public men in Arizona history...[His] political success was based on the muckraker principle: a full exposure of every issue to the public...he gave to the state the liberal activist spirit that Frederick Jackson Turner so often identified as a frontier trait.46

Hunt was a formidable political actor. Under his leadership, Democrats running for convention delegate in the summer of 1910 would be enthusiastically advocating for a radically progressive document. Hunt’s foremost modern biographer, historian David Berman, explains that Hunt spent the summer to unify Democrats around a progressive vision for Arizona’s constitution, actively pushing for the progressive ideals of initiative, referendum, and recall, and campaigning aggressively under the populist banner of “a people’s constitution”.47 However, the campaign was massively shaken up in early July with an unexpected political development, the emergence of a third party. On July 13th, The Arizona Republican reported that the day before a Labor Party convention attended by union representatives from around the territory had convened in Phoenix to write platform. In their platform, Arizona Labor candidates for convention delegate would publicly advocate for a number of the very same provisions that Hunt’s Democrats were already campaigning on, especially, but not limited to, the initiative, referendum, and recall.48 Berman explains that Hunt led negotiations with Labor leaders in order to blunt the electoral damage the presence of a third party on the ballot could do to the Democrats’ chances. By the early August, Berman explains, the Democrats had assuaged the concerns of the Labor Party by accepting most

48 “Birth of the Labor Party Yesterday” Arizona Republican, July 13, 1910
of the Labor platform and subsuming it into the Democratic platform. These talks and political maneuvers by Hunt and the Democrats officially christened a political alliance between populist progressives in the Democratic Party in Arizona and workers’ union elements in the Labor Party. This was the coalition that represented the Democratic Party in these elections.

Accordingly, this set the stage for an election between two very contrasted parties. An article in the *Arizona Journal Miner* perfectly articulates this contrast, expressing that the contest was now ultimately between Republican candidates who, “recognize and are bound by only one pledge – to frame a Constitution that shall prove worthy to be the groundwork and foundation of the free institutions of the coming state”, and Democratic candidates who would enshrine, “a medley of inconsistent economic vagaries” into the constitution. The same article goes on to offer a scathing criticism of the Democratic platform itself, “Behind the adoption of the Democratic platform is the thinly veiled, but every evident purpose to make the proposed Constitution a declaration of the principles of the Democratic party and its Socialistic allies.”

Were the Democrats to win this election, the document they would draft would be highly and activishly leftist, reflective of the both every provision dreamed up by progressives as well as the demands of organized labor, their “socialistic allies”.

The press took notice of this reality. *The Arizona Republican*, themselves called out the Democrats for advocating for a document that would inevitably not be approved by the Congress and therefore would sink Arizona’s statehood once again. *The Republican* instead endorsed the Republican Party’s platform which advocated for a constitution that would safely be accepted in

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Washington. The contrast between these two parties could not have been clearer. To vote Democrat would be to choose candidates what would attempt to draft a constitution firmly in the populist progressive mold and likely would be objectionable to the conservative elements in Congress and to the President. To vote Republican would be to elect delegates who would write a constitution that would satisfy Congress and the President and ultimately would lead to Arizona statehood. This was the choice, progressive populism or safe conservatism. In the end, Arizonans overwhelmingly chose to elect the former. Of the fifty-two delegates elected on September 12 to represent Arizonans at the constitutional convention in Phoenix, Arizonans elected forty-one Democrats and eleven Republicans. The political coalition of organized labor and progressive, populist leaning Democrats would shape the state’s constitution.

Convention Politics

What’s more striking than the extent to which the partnership between progressive Democrats and organized labor influenced the delegate election is the process by which these Democrats were able to assert themselves at the convention once it convened in Phoenix on October 12, 1910. The first order of business was to elect a president for the convention who would preside over the proceedings and assign committee chairmanships. The Arizona Sentinel of October 13 details the election process for president. The Democratic candidates for president of the convention were Hunt, his progressive allies, Mulford Winsor and Alfred Franklin, along with the moderate Democrat Morris Goldwater. After all the jockeying for votes, both Goldwater and Winsor dropped out and endorsed Hunt, who secured the Democratic

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51 “Statehood First!” Arizona Republican, September 4, 1910
52 “Delegates to Constitutional Convention” St. Johns Herald and Apache News, September 22, 1910
endorsement and easily won the convention presidency. Therefore, after this contest for convention president, the delegates chose to elect the foremost leader of the progressive Democrats, George W.P. Hunt. This is significant because Hunt was the undisputed leader of this wing of the party, the same wing that had aligned itself with labor during the election. This means that the convention was led the man who was, indisputably, at the head of this alliance.

Presiding over the convention did not in of itself mean that Hunt wielded tremendous power. As president, he could not participate in debate on the floor, merely preside over it. However, his position at the convention was none the less extremely influential if for no other reason than the fact that Hunt was responsible for assigning chairmanships and committee assignments. The Arizona Republican reported as the convention was just getting under way that Hunt was beginning to promise these chairmanships to his progressive allies, reporting that Winsor would get his pick of the chairmanships at the convention. Berman adds to this fact, explaining that the convention was being orchestrated in such a way as to empower the progressive Democrats to exert nearly total control over the convention. Winsor, he explains, lead the committee tasked with taking up the initiative, referendum, and recall – the mainstay of the progressive agenda at the convention. Hunt also stacked the labor committee with ardent supporters of labor unions. With these assignments, Hunt demonstrated his commitment to the labor allies he had to make during the election. By way of example, Hunt installed a progressive as the chair of the initiative, referendum, and recall committee. This reflected his commitment, as well as that of the convention itself, to a ‘people’s constitution’.

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54 “Constitutional Convention” Arizona Sentinel, October 13, 1910
55 “Throwing the Hooks into Maricopa” Arizona Republican, October 11, 1910
57 Ibid.
committee with union allies he did his best to ensure that labor voices will play a leading role in how the constitution was drafted. Through these assignments it becomes clear the great extent to which the labor-progressives will control everything that happens at this convention.

In addition to empowering his labor-progressive allies, Hunt also went out of his way to marginalize the Republican minority at the convention. *The Arizona Republican* reported on October 28 that, against the wishes of many Democrats, Hunt utterly refused to empower the Republicans in any way at the convention and relegated them to the status of “ciphers” having virtually no substantive role in drafting the constitution:

The republican members had no disposition to play petty politics, nor will they play any. It is President Hunt with, we presume – his chief adviser, Mr. Winsor that has fenced the republicans off from any participation in the making of the constitution and thereby denied, to the people who elected these republican delegates any place in making the constitution.*58*

Therefore, given the fact that the Republicans at the convention were essentially stripped of all relevant authority and that the labor-progressives were elevated to key committee positions and chairmanships, this coalition of progressives and labor backers took virtually all the relevant drafting authority at the convention. As *The Republican* reported on October 11, “The ‘radicals’ are in complete control of the convention”.59 This sentiment perfectly illustrates the premier role that the labor-backed progressive coalition played at the Arizona constitutional convention. They were the unchallenged power in Phoenix and they used that power to write a constitution which fundamentally reflected their ideology and values.

**Voter Qualification Debate**

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58 “Mr. Hunt and the Republican Members” *Arizona Republican*, October 28, 1910
59 “Throwing the Hooks into Maricopa” *Arizona Republican*, October 11, 1910
However, their ideology and values were also reflected in debate at the convention. Specifically, debate over a provision that was cut from the final draft. *The Arizona Republican* reported on November 24 that the convention had drafted a specific set of qualifications to vote in the State of Arizona. The qualification was three-fold: the voter must be a US citizen, he must have resided in Arizona for one year prior to the election, and he must be able to read the Arizona constitution in English. The final requirement, one that probed English language literacy for voters, was clearly meant to stop a very specific group of Arizonans from voting. As was made obvious during the debate over joint statehood, white Arizonans had a difficult time with the thought of sharing power with Mexican Americans, something evident also from the racial stratification present in the Territory for decades. *The Republican* reported on December 5 that the Democrats’ desire to shore up partisan support clearly influenced their decision to push for this qualification was obviously intended to, “disfranchise the large body of Mexican citizens, establish democratic control over such counties as Pima and Apache and perpetuate the control of the party over other counties”. Partisan politics aside, this ploy by the Democratic majority at the convention illustrates the extent to which Arizona’s racial stratification deeply ingrained itself in the racism of the progressive cause.

**Ratification**

However, these Democrats were unsuccessful as the qualification provision was ultimately dropped from the final document. *The Republican* provides a hypothesis as to why that action was taken, and that reporter’s analysis also helps to explain the generally partisan behavior of the leaders of the convention:

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60 “Right in Principle, But Wrong in Detail” *Arizona Republican*, November 24, 1910
61 “A Transparent Purpose” *Arizona Republican*, November 24, 1910
There is something the politicians in the convention fear more than the displeasure of the president and congress the defeat of the constitution by the people. Indeed it is suspected, that the leaders are prepared for a rejection of the constitution at Washington, in which case they believe that their position may be strengthened by an appeal to the disappointment of people of both parties who they think would naturally feel resentment against the republican party.\

This article goes on to make the case that the qualification provision in question was dropped out of fear that opposition from the Mexican American element of the electorate in Arizona would be significant enough to sink ratification in the Territory. However, the larger point that the convention delegates were thoroughly unconcerned about rejection from Congress or the President is significant. The 1910 Enabling Act specifically stipulates that both Congress and the President must approve of the New Mexico and Arizona constitutions before either are granted admittance to the Union on equal basis with the other states. The framers in Phoenix did not budge when it was explained to them that President Taft was likely going to reject the state constitution. Their own delegate in the House of Representatives, Ralph Cameron, who had been campaigning tirelessly for its approval, explained to his constituents that their constitution would likely be rejected, “After more than a month of careful and ceaseless investigation and inquiry, I can unhesitatingly say that if the constitution is ratified at the coming election, statehood for Arizona will be defeated for the present time.” When the ratification vote took place on February 14th, these concerns did little to sway Arizonans, who voted to ratify the overtly populist document by a margin of 3 to 1.

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62 Ibid
63 Ibid
64 “Ratification of the Constitution Means Certain Death of Statehood”, Arizona Republican February 8, 1911
65 “Ratified by Large Majority” Holbrook Argus, February 14, 1911
However, true to the warnings of Cameron, President Taft refused to approve of the Arizona constitution. In his signing statement, the president made clear why he objected to the document:

If I sign this joint resolution, I do not see how I can escape responsibility for the judicial recall of the Arizona constitution. The joint resolution admits Arizona with the judicial recall […] under the Arizona constitution all elective officers, and this includes county and state judges, six months after their election are subject to recall […] This provision of the Arizona constitution, in its application to county and state judges, seems to me so pernicious in its effect, so destructive to the independence in the judiciary, so likely to subject the rights of the individual to the possible tyranny of a popular majority, and, therefore, so injurious to the cause of free government that I must disapprove a constitution containing it66.

The draft of the constitution that the people of Arizona had ratified, as Taft explains, included a provision which allowed for the popular recall of judges. Taft, a former member of the judiciary (and future Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court) refused to allow such a provision to stand. This rationale for Taft’s veto would not have been surprising to the constitution’s framers, as many in the press had been reporting how opposed to this measure the president would be.67 The fact that the framers, and ratifies, insisted on this provision none-the-less is evidence of the power and influence of the labor movement of that process. Of all the radically progressive provisions in the Arizona constitution, it seems strange that given that Taft wouldn’t make a fuss about all the rest of them, they wouldn’t just exempt judges from recall. It seems like a strange hill for these progressives to die on, so to speak. The conclusion to this reality is that the convention was so dominated by allies of labor. In the platform drafted by the Labor Party in the summer of 1910, the delegates sought an aggressively populist constitution that would make the people, not the courts, the final arbiter of the constitutionality of state laws.68 This provision was

67 “Ratification of the Constitution Means Certain Death of Statehood”, Arizona Republican February 8, 1911
68 “Birth of the Labor Party Yesterday” Arizona Republican, July 13, 1910
too important to labor to be left out of the document and therefore it is plausible that Hunt and the progressives felt that labor would not the constitution without it, thus binding them to it as a provision. Therefore, their absolute insistence on the judicial recall is reflective of the influence labor had on this process.

Even after Taft’s veto, the Democratic Party in the Arizona Territory remained committed to the judicial recall. They publicly, reluctantly supported removing it temporarily so the Territory could achieve statehood.69 Mulford Winsor, himself a delegate to the convention and the chair of the committee which debated the recall, explains that Arizona placated President Taft into accepting the Arizona constitution by a joint resolution passed in September 1911, which provided for another plebiscite in which Arizonans would vote to exempt judges from the recall. Winsor explains, “And thereby hangs a tale. When the people of Arizona by the votes eliminated the recall of the judiciary, to satisfy the president’s demand, they did so with a mental reservation.”70 Giving further evidence to the influence exerted by organized labor, in the general election the next year, Arizonans voted, by a five to one margin, when the president no longer could dictate to them, to reinstate the recall in its totality applying too all of Arizona’s elected and appointed officials, including county and state judges.71 In the final analysis, the partisan progressive elements of the Democratic Party and their labor allies greatly influenced the process by which Arizona became admitted into the union. From the defeat of statehood to the delegate election through to ratification, the story of this process was one victory for this coalition after another.

III. Outcomes

69 *Holbrook Argus*, November 28, 1911
71 Ibid.
In 1892, when the People’s Party (alternatively, the Populist Party) gathered for their nominating convention in Omaha, Nebraska, the delegates composed a platform and declaration of sentiments known as the Omaha Platform which can be looked to as a codification and delineation of the primary concerns and proposals of progressive populists. In its preamble, the Omaha Platform declared:

Corruption dominates the ballot-box, the Legislatures, the Congress, and touches even the ermine of the bench. The people are demoralized; most of the States have been compelled to isolate the voters at the polling places to prevent universal intimidation and bribery…[t]he urban workmen are denied the right to organize for self-protection, imported pauperized labor beats down their wages…[t]he fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of those, in turn, despise the republic and endanger liberty.72

These principles guided the ideology and politics of America’s progressives. As such, these were the concerns that drove the populists who gathered in Omaha in the summer of 1892 united them with those that gathered in Phoenix in the fall of 1910. In discovering whether or not the Arizona constitution reflected the values of the progressive movement in the United States, the Omaha Platform can be used as a starting point. As a summary of populist values, this document informed much of the reforms sought by the framers of Arizona’s constitution.

Specifically, these progressive innovations which the Omaha Platform called for were very important to the framers of Arizona’s constitution. ‘Initiative, referendum, and recall’ was, in many ways, the battle cry of populists leading up the 1910 convention in Phoenix. In an effort to reform the electoral processes of the several states, the populists who met in Omaha suggested a legislative innovation be adopted, which they felt could remedy some of the harms of the status quo in regards to corruption and distant elected officials, “RESOLVED, That we commend to the

favorable consideration of the people and the reform press the legislative system known as the initiative and referendum”73. Initiative, the process by which citizens can propose laws and campaign for their ratification by a majority vote of the electorate, and referendum, the right of the people to approve or disprove of laws passed by the legislature by a majority vote of the electorate, were new innovations in American history. These were vehicles by which the people of a state or territory could make policy, circumventing the legislature and the governor – laws approved of through such processes were not subject to the veto. When the constitutional convention met in Phoenix in the fall of 1910, these principles would dominate the debate.

**Initiative, Referendum, and Political Culture**

The first several articles of the constitution don’t establish government power but rather sets out a series of practical definitions for the new state. The document begins to lay out the specific powers of government in Article IV. This article begins, not with the enumerated powers of the legislature – as our federal constitution does – but rather by delineating the right of the people to use these legislative innovations for their own policymaking. The first section under this article deals specifically with the initiative and referendum74. The fact that this is how the framers of the constitution designed this article is significant because the first mention of state authority to make law in the Arizona constitution is not the powers of the legislature, but that of the people to decide for themselves which laws to enact or reject on their own, absent legislative activity from the democratically elected legislature. For Arizonans to specifically codify the initiative and referendum before listing the powers of the Legislature itself demonstrates how

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73 Ibid. Pp. 93.
74 A.Z. Const, art IV, sec 1.
clearly populist the document was, giving the people law making power equal to that of the elected assembly.

George Wiley Paul Hunt, now the State’s first governor, was himself a disciple of populism and popular government. In remarks sent by his office to the Popular Government League in Washington, DC, in 1914, the first Arizona governor boasted of the progressive populism with which his state had set itself up to govern with the cooperation of the people of Arizona. He reflected how the constitutional convention in Phoenix had been a manifestation of progressive populism:

The new order came with statehood [...] the movement swept the Territory, soon to become a State. The people, charged with the making of a constitution, first became alive to their responsibility, and then awakened to that possibility. There was opportunity to become their own masters, and they felt qualified to assume the sovereignty.75

Hunt raved about the “people’s rule” constitution that he had a significant hand in creating at the convention in Phoenix. For Hunt, champion of the progressive Democratic machine, the constitution that the convention produced was enviable and worthy of imitation by the other states. His words are a reminder of just how far progressive populist values had been carried into the practice of government in Arizona. These words are not merely a reflection of Hunt’s own pride in the constitution, but they are also a declaration that Arizona must be governed in such a way as to remain consistent with its constitutional principles of populism. This political culture which arose from the constitution proceeded to demonstrate the influence of the labor progressive coalition.

In addition to observing the progressive populism at play in Arizona’s new constitutional system, it is also imperative to examine the ways in which organized labor had their voice represented in the initiative and referendum question. Indeed, Hunt was viewed as nothing less than a conquering hero by the labor movement, evidence of which is demonstrated through a major publication of a major miners’ union. *Miner’s Magazine*, a publication of the Western Federation of Miners state praised Hunt in its February 1912, issue. The magazine featured a glowing description of Hunt and his leadership but also that of the miners’ general approval of the constitutional provisions under which the new state of Arizona was to be governed, hailing Hunt’s leadership as well as his state’s constitution which codifies in law the initiative, referendum, and recall.\(^76\) Such fawning over a politician might appear innocuous yet it is precisely this that signifies this union’s support for Arizona and its new governor. The writers of *Miners Magazine* appear to swing wildly from the left flank of progressivism sharply into socialism. This was not a publication that was known for its moderation and support for the powers that be. There are countless articles in *Miners Magazine* that indicate heavily otherwise.

Passages like the one listed above are illustrative of the extent to which the powerful WFM was supportive of Hunt and Arizona’s progressives. This is especially so when contrasted with what the writers of the magazine have to say about President Woodrow Wilson, who was himself often counted as a friend to labor and to whom Arizona’s three electoral votes went during the 1912 general. *Miners Magazine* consistently disparages Wilson, and his supporters, as being of a mind to panderm labor and abandon these promises once in office:

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\text{PRESIDENT WILSON—the man of books—tells the workers to give more work for their wages. But up to this date he has not advised the employers to give more wages for the work that the workers do.}—\text{Toilers’ Defense}\(^77\)\[
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campaign, glowing promises were made as to the avalanche of prosperity that would swamp us, providing that Wilson and men of his political faith were clothed with official power and authority...[t]he question arises: Will they make good? Men who have a comprehensive grasp of our industrial and commercial life will not hesitate to answer in the negative...[President Wilson] has deceived no one. The deception, if there has been any, has been worked by Mr. Wilson's "labor supporters." If any workingman has been deceived, he has been deceived by his own leaders. Mr. Wilson has practiced no duplicity...

Juxtapose the panning of Wilson with the fawning over Hunt in Miners Magazine and one will come away with the impression that Hunt is regarded as friend to organized labor to an extent which President Wilson couldn’t possibly be. The fact that such an antiestablishment publication such as this one is so outwardly supportive of Arizona’s governor and the constitutional provisions that he helped create, such and initiative and referendum speaks to how the labor movement supported, not only Arizona’s constitution, but also the political culture that that constitution helped to bring about. Additionally, there are a few times during the publication of Miners Magazine in 1912 and 1913 where the writers specifically showcase the Arizona legislature conducting business that the labor movement highly approves of. In the May 15 issue, there was an item calling to attention the influence and support that organized labor enjoyed in the State of Arizona:

THE EDITOR of The Miners Magazine has frequently called the attention of the members of the Western Federation of Miners to the progressive work of organized labor in the state of Arizona. The constitution of Arizona is considered one of the most democratic documents of any state of the union, and the most advanced and aggressive features of the organic law of Arizona are due to the tireless and energetic work of the representatives of the labor movement.

The glowing treatment of Arizona’s constitution and legislation by the writers of Miners Magazine is truly evidence of deeply felt it was in the labor movement that Arizona stood

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80 Western Federation of Miners. Miners Magazine 13, no. 516, (1913). 6
squarely behind its workers – the white workers at least. Arizona’s constitution was a product of the campaigning of organized labor unions and that was a fact very well understood by the working men and women who wrote for this magazine. As a written publication by one of the largest labor unions in the state, *Miners Magazine* offers a view from the ground by the establishment within organized labor. This view, when aimed at the constitution and business of the State of Arizona paints a very rosy picture of the work that the state was engaged in. In the final analysis, taking into account Arizona’s adoption of the initiative and referendum in its constitution and how that is an action item favored by the Omaha Platform as well as the extent to which organized labor was outwardly supportive of Governor Hunt who presided over the convention that gave the constitution these provisions and the fact that the political cultural arising from that constitution was a reflection of the needs, interests, and ideologies of organized labor in the southwest, it becomes clear that the outcome of the Arizona statehood project saw victories for both progressive populism and organized labor.

**The Recall of Judicial Officers**

However significant the inclusion of the initiative and referendum in Arizona’s constitution was, it pales in comparison to the most controversial provision of that document: the recall. Recall is an electoral process by which voters can, through a signature collecting process similar to that of nominating a candidate, force an incumbent public official to face election before their term has expired or simply be removed from office by a majority votes. Article VIII of the Arizona constitution which provided for means of removal from office begins, not with the impeachment process, but with a delineation of the recall procedures, “Every public officer in the State of Arizona, holding an elective office… is subject to recall from such office by the qualified electors of the electoral district from which candidates are elected to such office. Such
electoral district may include the whole State”. This article does not distinguish between elected and appointed officers and therefore encompassed all public officials in Arizona, including those elected or appointed to the judiciary. After the delegates in Phoenix had drafted their constitution with this provision as listed, and after Congress had passed House Joint Resolution 14 which provided for admitting New Mexico and Arizona as the forty-seventh and forty-eighth states, Arizona’s statehood ambitions were once again put on hold as President William H. Taft vetoed the resolution. Recall how, after Taft’s veto, Congress passed yet another joint resolution included language through which Congress compelled Arizona to put the judicial recall to a plebiscite and urged the voters to reject it. This indicates that the federal government was so distressed by this provision that there must have been a number of attempts in Congress to resolve this dispute. Indeed, as Ralph Cameron, the non-voting Territorial delegate from Arizona, himself a conservative Republican, explained in a statement before the House when Arizona finally achieved statehood:

I believe my Democratic friends [who sat on the House Committee on Territories] were misguided by various citizens of Arizona who journeyed to Washington and…were insistent upon the retention of the recall clause, even though it was obvious to most everyone that the retention of this clause would result in the President’s vetoing the act admitting Arizona to statehood.

Observers are now left with the puzzling question of why the recall was so important to Arizonans. In discussing the process that led to statehood, it was imperative to isolate how important it was to labor that the clause be retained, given the Labor platform. Turning once more to Miners Magazine, one may find additional evidence that furthers this point. There is

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81 A.Z. Const, art VIII, sec 1.
82 Ibid.
83 Speech of Hon. Ralph H. Cameron of Arizona in the House of Representatives. 19 August 1911. 3.
among the musings and reports of the writers of that publication offered nothing but contempt for the judiciary, first on April 10th, 1913:

Labor is asserting itself in Arizona, and labor in Arizona realizes that the power of courts must be checked if labor is to enjoy legal rights and constitutional liberty. It may be that the courts of Arizona may declare such a law unconstitutional, but should the courts use the judicial dagger to murder this law, then the courts will be met with an amendment to the constitution prohibiting the vassals on the bench from using the usurped authority of nullifying acts of a Legislative body. The time is about here when the people will no longer submit to a government by the judiciary.  

The writers of this piece clearly do not see the judiciary as an impartial arbiter of justice and a neutral interpreter of the laws of Arizona. For labor, the Courts were a menace – something to be overcome, subdued. On April 24th, the Magazine included a piece applauding a ruling by the Arizona Supreme Court yet its contempt for that institution was plainly obvious by the inclusion of a not-so-veiled threat, “Arizona has the Recall, and this weapon of democracy will be used by the people whenever it becomes evident that a man on the bench has become blind to justice.”

In a situation where the Court actually rules on the side of labor, labor itself still sees the court as something different that an impartial interpreter. This item makes clear that labor saw the judiciary as an extension of the legislature and that it must be a target of its political might. For labor, the courts were just another arm of the political machine to oppose through organizing and campaigning.

This was precisely the concern of President Taft just two years earlier when this debate was being held on the floor of the Congress. Judges ought to be independent and impartial actors – not subject to the whims of the people. And sometimes the Courts behave in a manner that in counter majoritarian. But, as Taft explains, this is a feature, not a bug, of our constitutional

system.\textsuperscript{86} It is the ability of judges to strike down laws drafted by popularly elected legislators that serves as the final line of defense against oppressive majority rule. It is an indispensable element of our checks and balances. Organized labor didn’t see it this way, they saw it, as evident from the articles cited above. Labor wanted the Courts to serve as extensions of legislative power of the majority which, at the time, represented clearly the will of organized labor. The lengths to which the framers of Arizona’s constitution and their allies in Congress were willing to go to protect the recall provision perfectly illustrates the hold that unions and labor elements had over these progressives. The recall of judicial officers was a uniquely populist provision, one that enjoyed support from labor. Therefore, this provision of the Arizona constitution clearly shows that the Arizona statehood project benefited organized labor because that project itself was almost crippled by the insistence that recall provision be retained in the new state’s constitution. Additionally, given the clear racial animus found in the labor movement, as evidenced by the Western Federation of Miners’ flat out refusal to integrate. Therefore, Taft’s own assertion of the counter majoritarian nature of courts is also a reason that Labor sought the recall. They did not want another mechanism by which the Mexican American population of Arizona could be protected by the Courts. As such, Labor desperately wanted the recall of judicial officers to remain an element of the Arizona constitution and its retention in the document after statehood illustrates the sway that labor still had after the process had concluded.

**Women’s Suffrage and the Politics of Race**

One final flashpoint regarding the political culture which arose from statehood illustrates the potency of the influence of the labor-progressive alliance. Within the first year of Arizona’s

\textsuperscript{86} William H. Taft. Special Message of the President, Returning Without Approval Jnt Res 14. 15 August 1911. 2 – 3.
statehood, the people of Arizona used the referendum four times to amend their constitution. Among these successful plebiscites was the successful campaign for women’s suffrage in Arizona. A full seven years before women got the vote for federal office, Arizona women were granted that right by referendum in Arizona. This is no doubt a progressive victory for Arizonans, enabled by their constitution and the political culture from which that constitution sprang. However, the campaign for women’s suffrage included very clear attempts to persuade working people in Arizona – working white men – to support women’s suffrage on claims that it would help insulate the white population from immigrants and Native Americans. Writing in the Journal of Arizona History, Northern Arizona University historian Amy De Haan explains that a significant part of Arizona suffragists’ message in the referendum was that white women as a voting block would act as a critical electoral buffer against advancements made by people of color in the State of Arizona. Citing articles run by the Arizona Republican, de Haan explains that white women were portrayed as having a “civilizing influence” on Arizona politics, inherent in that observation is the notion that non-whites were uncivilized and should be opposed by the new voting block of white men and women. De Haan also notes that other suffragists made claims such as one found in the Arizona Republican in which it was argued that white women were much more qualified to vote that “foreigners”. This historian’s analysis of these political tactics very much aligns with the reality that the establishment of organized labor sought to exclude Arizonans of color from much of public life. The fact that the political culture arising from Arizona statehood was one which women’s suffrage could be achieved by those appealing to the racist instincts of white working Arizonans proves the contention that organized labor had

its values reflected in this political culture that was manifestly the product of the Arizona statehood project.

**Conclusion**

The Arizona statehood project, through context, process, and outcomes, clearly reflects the values of this labor progressive coalition. This dichotomy, therefore, is critically important in understanding Arizona history and the character of the forty eighth state. Arizona emerged as a state reflecting two highly conflicting and contradicting values: progressive, populist constitution and laws, tinged with racism and animus against Mexican Americans. This dichotomy continues to characterize the state today. Arizona’s vast diversity is often met by hostility by the powers that be, especially those that continually try to suppress Arizona’s Mexican residents. However, the progressive tools of government granted to Arizonans by the framers of the state constitution can in fact be used to correct the racial injustices that still plague the state today. Moving forward, perhaps the people of Arizona can live up to the best aspirations of their forbearers and truly become an enlightened, progressive society that strikes out against the abuses of the powerful with the power granted to them by one of the great populist movements of American history.
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