

Agrarian Radicalism after the Populists

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Traditionally, radical political movements have not been favored by American historians. Hardly more than half a page has been allocated to them in the text books, since their impact on development as a whole has been difficult to trace. However, during the past 10-15 years, various labor movements have attracted attention, and several investigations concerning the socialist parties, anarchist groups and militant labor organizations have been reported. In the case of the agrarian radical movements, matters proved to be quite different. Attention was paid much earlier, at least to the Populist Party, which has been described from several viewpoints. The purpose of this essay is to suggest that Populism was not just a phenomenon limited to the time of its bloom, but was part of a radical tradition in the American agrarian population, and that the nature and strength of this radicalism may have been misinterpreted and underestimated.

A repetition of the circumstances providing the background for Populism as a movement and for its organized political counterpart, the People's Party, may be of use.

In the eighteen seventies and 'eighties, the farmers were under pressure on account of falling prices for their products and the high interest on their loans. Furthermore, they considered themselves to be exploited by the middlemen and railroad companies on whom they had become dependent for transportation of their products. There was also the paramount issue of money; gold or silver footing? a question of high priority for the Populists, but somewhat off the track as regards this discussion. The rising consciousness of their own situation as a result of these circumstances manifested itself in different ways.

In the first place, it originated in the organization of farmers' associations which offered cultural and educational opportunities, and in cooperatives to eliminate the middlemen. Later the farmers entered state politics. Headed by the leaders of the farmers' alliances and supported by the country population, they captured several legislatures in the Western and Southern states, generally via the Democratic Party. But measures carried into effect in the state legislatures with the aim of controlling the railroad companies soon lost their impetus. This was due to the extraordinary ingenuity of the railroad companies in circumventing the restrictions, combined with a Supreme Court decision which laid down that only Congress could give directives regarding railroad rates and services between states.

The idea that the National Government should control the railroad companies had been circulating among the farmers for some time, and in 1887 the National Congress responded by passing the Interstate Commerce Act and by appointing the Interstate Commerce Commission. However, this law did not solve the problem either,¹ due to its open formulation, but the whole operation revealed a new attitude towards the economic system and represented the first assault on orthodox laissez-faire politics.

The widespread discontent had also reached the small-town business and banking people and became intensified by the economic depression. At the presidential election in 1892, a third party – the People's Party – was formed and a candidate for the presidency was presented. Some of the planks forming the party's platform were: free coinage of silver, a federal commodity loan system enabling the farmers to borrow against their crops, gradual federal income tax, public ownership of the railroads, telegraph systems and telephones, immigration restriction, an eight-hour day for industrial workers, prohibition of the use of private armies against strikers, direct elections of senators, the initiative and the referendum.

The Populist Party received 8.6% of the votes. At the next presidential election in 1896, the Democratic Party felt compelled to present the Populist demands as its platform, at the expense of the interests usually represented by the party, namely the Eastern industrial and banking concerns. These actions showed a popular demand for restriction of industrial capitalism and its increasing control of society. Idolization of the active entrepreneur had been passively encouraged by the Government under the motto: what is good for business is good for society. The Populists claimed it as the

duty of the Federal Government to take measures against abuse of the free enterprise system at the cost of other groups in society.

Historians have seen this pattern repeated 10–15 years later in the more urban-based progressive movement, and some saw it continued later in the New Deal.² Populism was thus established as the source of all the important reform movements in the first part of this century. At least for that reason it has attracted the attention of the historians, which proved to be both good and bad for the ultimate epitaph of the movement.

The traditional view of the Populists has rested on John Hicks' *The Populist Revolt* (1931), which still in many ways remains unchallenged as the basic source of information concerning Populism. The attitude of this book was reverence for those groups of country people who served as carriers of the frontier tradition and courageously tried to save some of the values they saw endangered by the rapid growth of industrialization.

A vehement debate on Populism was triggered by Richard Hofstadter's *The Age of Reform* (1955), which tried to revise the image of the previously-mentioned reform movements. Instead of justified grievances, he talked about frustration caused by loss of status as a motive for reform zeal. As regards Populism, a furore was created by the fact that Hofstadter did not recognize genuine elements of idealism in the movement, and claimed that the key-words were provincialism, self-sufficiency, self-interest, nostalgia, etc. Some of his readers were further outraged by the allegation that the Populist mentality also showed traces of racism and anti-semitism.³ Hofstadter suggests that these traces did not disappear by the diluting of Populist ideas when the Progressives took over the reform initiative. They continued into the twenties when the drive for reform had turned into reaction, and the united crusade had become a demand for rectification. The remnants appeared to be caricatures of Populism, such as prohibition, the Ku Klux Klan and the anti-evolution crusade.⁴

The reaction did not fail to appear. Most of it had the character of disagreement on the basis of attitude, but few of Hofstadter's critics could refer to any thorough studies of the Populist Party and its voters or the Populist candidates and their background, development and ideas, their constituency, etc.⁵

The wake of Hofstadter's book has not disappeared completely, but in more recent works it is referred to merely in footnotes. Hofstadter has also been criticized from a methodical point of view

and historians with a more sociological approach have challenged the basis for his conclusions.⁶ Stephan Thernstrom writes of *Age of Reform* in another context:

Suppose we take Hofstadter's *Age of Reform* as a fine specimen of imaginative historical writing. Is there any inherent reason why the status revolution theory could not have been given a clearer operational specification, and why it could not have been more carefully checked against quantified evidence? I don't mean simply that some tables, some numbers, would have been useful. What concerns me more is that the author failed to take elementary precautions which a scholar, trained in quantitative social research should have taken.

Thernstrom then continues to suggest different methods which might have been tried on the theories of loss of status. He also questions some of the generalizations made by Hofstadter regarding the lawyers of the Progressive period. Do they "apply with particular force to these individuals of the profession who participated in the Progressive movement?"⁷

There will never be much point in comparing two equally good aspects, and the writing of ideographic history has a strong and well-developed tradition in the United States. Furthermore, it is difficult, with the source material available on this side of the Atlantic, to carry out any thorough investigations of the type suggested above to confirm or confute some of Hofstadter's theories.

The analysis which follows is intended as an attempt to question further Hofstadter's image of agrarian attitudes from 1900–1924.

The angle of approach will be as follows: The question raised by Thernstrom concerning the legal profession in the Progressive period may also be applied to the Populist successors. Did the generalizations put forward by Hofstadter apply with particular force to the most active and radical of the farmers? Here I am thinking especially of their economic background and of the characteristics of the mentality attributed to them.⁸ Hofstadter's view of the Populists appears to be too narrow and this narrowness seems to be all the more conspicuous considering what happened to Populism after 1896. Hofstadter writes:

The American farmer thus had a dual character, and one way of understanding our agrarian movement is to observe which aspect of the farmer's double personality is uppermost at a given time. It is my contention that both the populist rhetoric and the modern liberal indulgent view of the farmer's revolt have been derived from the "soft" side of the farmer's existence – that is, from agrarian "radicalism" and agrarian ideology – while most farm organizations since the decline of the Populists have been based primarily on the hard side, upon agricultural improvement, business methods and pressure politics.⁹

There is no doubt that the "hard" side came to represent to the general public the development in the rural districts, but the "soft" side did not disappear. Some of the manifestations of the "soft" sides and their origins will be considered here, since they are important for illustration of agrarian radicalism after the Populists.

Populism was not exclusively supported by the farmers and at a certain point the directing was taken over by small-town citizens, but quantitatively Populism was borne by the agrarians. The small-town inhabitants are considered to have been part of the Progressive movement at the time when Populism had allegedly fossilized. Furthermore, it was mainly the non-agrarians who led the Populists away from third-party politics and this "seething mass of discontent had nowhere to go."¹⁰ Therefore, to equate Populism after 1896 with farmers is a permissible generalization. Before turning to the development from about nineteen hundred up through the 'twenties, it may be appropriate to take a brief look at the economic fluctuations in agriculture.

The economic conditions for agriculture as a whole improved when the depression of the eighteen nineties was left behind, Farming areas were extended and the number of farmers decreased – a sign of a beginning urbanization of the country – and prices reached the level where farmers received approximately the same prices for their products as they had to pay for other goods. The outbreak of World War I caused increased demands for agricultural products and prices rose steadily, especially for wheat and livestock, and reached previously unknown heights towards the end of the war. The prices, combined with encouragement from the Government which had taken the responsibility of supplying its allies in Europe with food, stimulated the farmers to increase their production. After the war, the prices of wheat, corn and livestock fell dramatically and were at their lowest in 1921. Although they increased somewhat during the rest of the decade, agricultural prices remained well below the purchasing prices of other goods.¹¹

The relatively stable period between 1900 and 1920, when incomes were good, also proved to have some disadvantages which have seldom been taken into account. The prices of farm property rose by 400% between 1910 and 1920, thus making it difficult for farmers to establish themselves on their own farms. This caused the already well-known tenancy and share-cropping system to spread, and during that decade tenancy constituted an average of 40% of farm property, mainly in the Middle Western states.¹² Tenancy is

not necessarily tantamount to bad economic conditions, although on poorer soil it often was. In the more fertile districts, tenancy was a question of age, the tenants more frequently being younger farmers hoping to possess their own farm at a later stage. In the less fertile districts, the age of the tenants was higher, which indicates that the chance of becoming an owner was less.

A certain geographical coincidence exists between some of the strongest Populist states, notably the Dakotas, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and several other Southern states, and the areas where tenancy was most common. This indicates that the typical example of a descendant of the Populists was not necessarily the middle-aged farmer who enjoyed the rising prices on his crops, while remembering the idealism of his youth in the Weaver or Bryan election campaigns. He might just as well have been a younger tenant on sandy soil, paying high rents, and with very little left to put aside for the purchase of property. His father may have voted for the Populist Party, while he himself might vote for the Socialist Party.

The American Socialist Party did not consist merely of industrial workers and intellectuals, but also found support in the agricultural states. The Socialist Party had the largest membership in proportion to number of inhabitants in states like Nevada, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Arizona, Oregon, Oklahoma, North Dakota, Minnesota, California, Colorado (mentioned here according to size). Of these states, only California and Minnesota have cities of such a size that urban workers would constitute the majority of the party members.

Farmers are generally accused of being revolutionary when prices are low and supporters of the existing society when prices are high, and this accusation has also been aimed at the American farmer. But in the North Western wheat districts where incomes were particularly fluctuating, there was good support for a movement such as the Non-Partisan League.¹³ The Non-Partisan League emerged about 1915 during a period with good economic conditions and was an expression of the discontent of the wheat growers over the conditions under which their products were manufactured. In the first place, their grievances were directed against the owners of the mills and grain elevators who charged high profits, and the suggestion was to have them run by the state. To achieve this, the farmers organized themselves with the purpose of capturing one of the big parties, and in most places they chose the Republican Party

as a vehicle for nomination of their candidates and the carrying out of their program.

One year after its establishment, the League succeeded in filling both the office of governor and some of the seats in the State Congress of North Dakota. Four years later, the League had the majority in both houses of the legislature. A state-owned bank was established and legislation was passed covering publicly-owned mills and grain elevators, gradual income tax, tax deduction for improvement of farm buildings, an eight-hour working day for female workers, and a working men's compensation act.¹⁴ The Non-Partisan League spread to other states such as South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Minnesota during the prewar and war periods. This expansion took place in spite of the opposition against both individuals and organizations once labelled "un-American"^m because of their resistance to the war. This was also the stand taken by the Non-Partisan League. When the organization dissolved, it was largely a result of the agricultural depression in 1921, because of which the members were unable to pay the fairly high membership dues. After that, the third-party political initiative was taken over by the Farmer-Labor parties in the North-Western and Mid-Western states. We shall return to that subject later.

In the Southern states, where Populism was very strong, another example can be taken from Oklahoma. Much of the farm property in Oklahoma (about 50% of all the farms in the state) was run on a basis of tenancy and share-cropping. The main crops were cotton and corn. Drought and vermin had to be included in calculating the costs of production. Great poverty prevailed among the tenants, who could adequately be designated the proletariat. The state of Oklahoma had a long and strong tradition of radicalism. When the state entered the Union in 1907, its constitution was considered to be one of the most radical.¹⁵ In 1916, 16% of the votes at the presidential election and many of the local offices went to the Socialist Party.

The Socialism of Oklahoma was of a special brand which had adopted many of the ingredients of Populism. Week-long meetings in tent camps were popular, with camp-fires and inflammatory speeches and songs. These were almost in the same category as religious revival campaigns, but were based on a distinctive class consciousness.

The Socialist Party was vanquished by the so-called "Green Corn Rebellion."¹⁶ The spirit in this uprising came from the same

sources as Populism. A group of the most radical members of the party had collected ammunition in preparation for the revolution. When the United States entered the First World War, they wished to prevent Oklahoma from participating, and wanted to secede from the Union. They therefore decided to use the accumulated weapons to occupy banks and county offices. In this they were successful, and also in controlling the state press. Some railway bridges were burned and pipelines and telephone cables were disconnected. About two thousand farmers participated in the rebellion, among them Indians and Negroes. The uprising was effectively overcome some months later, and although the Socialist organization and their leaders had taken no part in the rebellion, the party was subject to heavy persecution from then onwards. The army of rebels lived on green corn, and thus the name of the affair. The Green Corn Rebellion illustrates the agrarian radical potential, though the motives were generally more realistic.

In the 'twenties, the remaining Socialists and other radical groups formed a Farmer-Labor League in Oklahoma. The League's candidate for governor in 1922, a trade union leader and former mayor of Oklahoma City, obtained sufficient votes to defeat his more conservative competitors for the nomination, as well as the Republican gubernatorial candidate.

To sum up the essence of the comments of one historian, Garin Burbank,¹⁷ the local elite, having access to the means of power, constituting the main force of the KKK, were opposed by the farmers who had the choice between the radical left and the radical right, the latter considered to be the more respectable. By their political actions they effectively demonstrated their opposition to the politics of moral and ethnic bigotry and their preference for parties which demanded fundamental attacks on the existing system.

if we look at the 'twenties as a whole, the decade has the image of being the period of resurrection of economic conservatism, the flowering of laissez-faire politics after the attacks of the Progressives and certain curbing during the war, the break-through of prohibition, the Ku Klux Klan, the anti-Darwin hearings, the Xed Scare, etc. All these phenomena are manifestations of the Populist mind, but the "soft" side of Populism also survived. A number of Farmer-Labor parties were organized in most Western and Midwestern states. The hard core of these parties was for the most composed of people from the more left-orientated labor unions, of people who

had left the Socialist Party because, of its turn to the left,¹⁸ from the farmers' alliances, and from the Non-Partisan League. The platforms of the Non-Partisan League constituted a substantial part of the Farmer-Labor platforms. Here the farmers joined the workers in a common cause.¹⁹

An expression of solidarity with the workers was also present in the People's Party platform in the 'nineties. To what extent this proclamation of solidarity was part of the elaborate Populist rhetoric, or was an expression of a genuine feeling of sharing the same conditions in society, has been one of the subjects in the debate around the Populists.²⁰ The obvious differences between the interests of the workers and the farmers which have been an issue in this discussion may be due to the lack of attention paid to the differences among the farmers themselves. The differences between the share-cropper and the worker who lives in his own house may not be so big. The farmers saw the organization and the workers' strikes as an attempt to control the centralization and capitalization of society. This demonstrates the feelings of the farmers as being up against the same enemy as the industrial workers, namely Big Business.²¹ On the other hand, many workers were attracted to the People's Party.

Both the Populists and the farmers in the 'twenties demonstrated a strong sense of class consciousness, a feeling which was not very strong in all the workers. This class consciousness and protest against exploitation led some of the Farmer-Labor organizations, for instance the Minnesota party, to become associated with the Communist Party for a time. That affiliation caused them to become involved in the ideological controversies and divisions which contributed to the downfall of the third-parties in the United States.²²

The culmination of this commotion was the appearance of a third-party candidate in the presidential election in 1924. Supported by the Farmer-Labor Parties, the Socialist Party, and several of the surviving Progressive groups, Robert LaFollette, the old Progressive Republican leader, was the third contestant for the office of president. He received 17% of the votes, most of them from the Middle West and the Western states, but also states with an urban majority voted with considerable strength for LaFollette.²³

The large number of votes for LaFollette has been interpreted in many ways, and the election of 1924 contains a number of irregular components which make analysis of the campaign complicated.²⁴

LaFollette's candidature was the only manifestation of separation from the political climate of the 'twenties which showed some force at the national level. Instead of interpreting LaFollette's achievement as mainly an outcome of the inability of the Democratic Party to absorb the surviving progressivism of the 'twenties (which, of course, was part of it),²⁵ it can also be seen as an indication of forces that emerged because of the temporary weakness of the Democratic Party and the conservative rigidity of the national leadership of the Republican Party. Such forces were likely to be stronger at the local level, since the traditional two-party system prevented such protest from breaking out in national elections.

The question is, can an atmosphere of political and social protest survive for a generation or two, from the Populists in the 'eighties and 'nineties to the Farmer-Labor movements in the 'twenties? Or was the strong support both for Bryan and LaFollette merely unrelated expressions of economic depression periods? When discussing the agrarian population in the United States, the strong tradition of agrarian radicalism must be taken into account. Generally speaking, this was not a Marxist radicalism, but a radicalism within the American context. It may have had its origin in the extraordinarily strong sense of independence and self-reliance which is as much a condition for, as the result of, an isolated life. An explicit distrust of the authorities and the courage to withstand them is also part of the picture. Several more or less militant outbreaks of agrarian resistance have taken place during the history of the United States. Some led to the formation of political groups because of locally-based problems, others reached the national level for varying periods within or outside the two big parties. This radicalism was not solely a protest against something or was aimed at the protection of special interests, but it revealed some more far-sighted and far-reaching ideas. In the present century too, the Populist platform, the Non-Partisan League legislation, and the ideas of the Farmer-Labor parties all suggest a concern that goes further than the securing of immediate group interests. This was also the case with the Socialist Party, which was the channel for much of the farmers' discontent for a time.²⁶

A latent radicalism seems to have existed in the rural community, smouldering somewhere or other, ready to break out and sometimes exploding in circumstances which are difficult to determine. Some sociologists have put forward the hypothesis that in prosperous periods the appearance of irregular political groups was caused by

concern for status and role, whereas in the lean years the reason was economic and due to class problems.²⁷ However valid this theory may be in certain contexts, it is not quite watertight. The People's Party, allegedly a product of status concern, emerged in a period of economic depression. The Socialist Party, with focus on economic and class problems, was flourishing during the prosperous period before 1920 in the rural areas also. The Non-Partisan League, with its demands for more economic self-determination, spread rapidly in the wheat districts during a time of affluence. The case of the Farmer-Labor parties in the 'twenties is more complex. The farmers were suffering from economic depression, whereas the industrial workers as a whole were experiencing rising wages. This indicates that although economic grievance is an important factor in the creation of protest parties, more superior goals may also exist or may become a vital part of such movements.

With starting point in Hofstadter's interpretation of the Populist aftermath, the question has been posed: is it likely that the Populist stream of insurgence after the turn of the century was channelled into the established Democratic Party and interest-orientated pressure groups, and that the Populist ideas reappeared in a degenerated form in the 'twenties?

The answer is: yes, it is a likely but also a wrong assumption. The most active and radical of the farmers joined the Socialist Party, and when the socialists were heavily discredited in many places during the First World War and after the Russian Revolution, the organizational frame became the Non-Partisan League and the Farmer-Labor parties. The geographical setting of this development seems to be mainly the Middle Western states from the border in the north to Oklahoma and Texas in the south. The regular South, although a strong Populist region, did not experience the same development and is not considered here, since its social and economic history show an altogether different picture. The general material conditions in the region in question are difficult to assess. The economic background is not homogeneous. The relationship between the number of tenant farmers and radical political behaviour still remains to be investigated. But though the differences in these radical movements are not mentioned here, they all share some common ideals on which they base their political protest, such as the common good and the role of the state, improved conditions for all underprivileged in society, and a redistribution of profits.

Furthermore, comprehensive studies in this field are necessary

before a better understanding of agrarian radicalism and its propagation can be gained. Such investigations may expose a different pattern of grass-root politics than that accepted hitherto.

NOTES

- 1 The problems concerning regulation of the railroads and the ICC are rather complicated, as shown by Albro Martin in "The Troubled Subject of Railroad Regulation," *Journal of American History*, 61 (1974-75), 339. Irrespective of who is responsible for the fate of the ICC measures, it was the farmers who raised the issue.
- 2 Arthur S. Link, "What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920's?" *American Historical Review*, 64 (1959), 833. Richard S. Kirkendal, "The Great Depression: Another Watershed in American History," in John Braeman et al. eds., *Change and Continuity in Twentieth Century America* (N.Y., 1964), 145.
- 3 Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (N.Y., 1955), 5 and 77-82.
- 4 Hofstadter, 288.
- 5 Representative of the debate is the collection of essays in *Agricultural History*, 39, No. 2 (1965) by Norman Pollack, Oscar Handlin, Irwin Unger and J. Rogers Hollingsworth. Almost any book dealing with that period of American history takes a stand for or against Hofstadter's point of view.
- 6 Although the contrast in the writing of American history between progressive, counter-progressive and other lines of interpretation, is very inspiring, the difference between the idea-orientated and the more quantitatively-based historians may be more fruitful.
- 7 Stephan Thernstrom, "Quantitative Methods in History: Some Notes," in S. M. Lipset & R. Hofstadter, eds., *Sociology and History: Methods* (N.Y., 1968), 66. What Thernstrom has in mind may have been something like Walter T. K. Nugent's article, which looks into the economic and social background of Populist, Republican, and Democratic state legislators and candidates for county offices in a number of counties in Kansas. The article suggests that the Populists did have some reason for their economic grievances if their situation is compared with that of the Republicans and Democrats. In other respects their resemblance to the Republicans was the prevailing trait. W. T. K. Nugent "Some Parameters of Populism," *Agricultural History*, 40, No. 4 (1966).
- 8 Hofstadter, 115.
- 9 Hofstadter, 47.
- 10 Oscar Ameringer, *If You Don't Weaken* (N.Y., 1940), 260.
- 11 Arthur Link, *American Epoch* (N.Y., 1967), 1, 23-24 and 2, 326-327.
- 12 Link, 1, 24.
- 13 Especially S. M. Lipset in his introductory chapter, "The Background of Radicalism" states that the economy of wheat growing was an important condition for radicalism. S. M. Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan* (Berkeley, 1959).
- 14 William Hesselstine, *The Rise and Fall of Third Parties* (Gloucester 1957), 51.
- 15 C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Louisiana 1967), 388.
- 16 Daniel Bell, *Marxian Socialism in The United States* (Princeton, 1967), 94-95. Garin Burbank, "Disruption and Decline of the Oklahoma Socialist Party," *Journal of American Studies*, 7, No. 2 (1973) 133.
- 17 Garin Burbank, "Agrarian Radicals and their Opponents: Political Conflict in Southern Oklahoma, 1910-24," *Journal of American History*, 58 (1971-72), 5-23.

- 18 Although the Socialist Party is frequently accused of being pragmatic and middle-class in its outlook, the Russian Revolution also caused it to express itself in more revolutionary terms.
- 19 Arthur Link places the bipartisan "Farm bloc" in Congress among the carriers of progressivism during the 'twenties because of its enactment of agricultural legislation in 1920-24, which required the encroachment of Federal Government in favour of agriculture. Arthur Link, *AHR*, 845. Some of this legislation can be labelled as business-like interest-group demands. Some of it contains demands which try to correct unreasonable conditions in the system, and which are within the reach of the Federal Government to adjust. The Congress members of the "Farm bloc" had their constituencies in the same parts of the country where strongholds of the radical parties were situated. The radicalism of the agrarian voter, speaking in local affairs through the Farmer-Labor Party, the Non-Partisan League and the Socialist Party, undoubtedly had an impact on the "Farm bloc" in the National Congress. For supporting views, see Murray Stedmann and Susan Stedmann, *Discontent at the Polls: A Study of Farmer and Labor Parties, 1827-1948* (N.Y., 1950) 29, 60, 73.
- 20 The articles mentioned in note 5 also discuss this problem. In addition Theodore Saloutos, "The Professors and the Populists," *Agricultural History*, 40, No. 4 (1966), and Saloutos's discussion with Michael Rogin in John Laslett & S. M. Lipset, eds., *Failure of a Dream?* (N.Y., 1974), 134-164. Rogin underlines the long tradition of worker-farmer tradition. John Laslett, *Labor and the Left, a Study of Social and Radical Influence in American Labor Movement 1881-1924* (N.Y., 1970) refers to the close relations between the Populist Party and the International Association of Machinists, later a Socialist trade union.
- 21 The Populist platform of 1896 declares: "The interests of rural and civic labor are identical". Donald Bruce Johnson and Kirk H. Porter, eds., *National Party Platforms, 1840-1972* (Urbana, 1976).
- 22 A detailed account of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and the 1924 election can be found in James Weinstein, *The Decline of Socialism in America, 1912-25* (N.Y., 1967).
- 23 The Socialist strongholds seem to have contributed with some of the largest numbers of votes for LaFollette. Mette Skakkebak, *The American Socialist Party, with Special Reference to the Elections of 1924 and 1928* (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Copenhagen, 1976).
- 24 K. C. McKay, *The Progressive Movement of 1924* (N.Y., 1947), describes all the aspects of the LaFollette coalition and the election in general.
- 25 Arthur Link, *AHR*, 839.
- 26 The leadership of the Socialist Party never really made up its mind where to place the farmer in the ideological context, as a worker or as a property owner, and therefore never formulated any policy on agricultural questions. Sally Miller, *Victor Berger and the Promise of Constructive Socialism, 1910-1920* (Westport, Con., 1973). By neglecting the radical farmers, the Socialist Party missed a potential source of support.
- 27 S. M. Lipset, "The Sources of the 'Radical Right'," in Daniel Bell, ed., *The Radical Right* (N.Y. 1964), 310. Lipset calls the Populist Party an exception from this theory. The essay is written in 1955, i.e. before his book on agrarian radicalism in Canada, which does not support this theory.

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