



Agrarian Socialism in America: Marx, Jefferson, and Jesus in the Oklahoma Countryside, 1904–1920

Dr. Jim Bissett

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Why was Oklahoma, of all places, more hospitable to socialism than any other state in America? In this provocative book, Jim Bissett chronicles the rise and fall of the Socialist Party of Oklahoma during the first two decades of the twentieth century, when socialism in the United States enjoyed its golden age.

To explain socialism's popularity in Oklahoma, Bissett looks back to the state's strong tradition of agrarian reform. Drawing most of its support from working farmers, the Socialist Party of Oklahoma was rooted in such well-established organizations as the Farmers Alliance and the Indian Farmers' Union. And to broaden its appeal, the Party borrowed from the ideology both of the American Revolution and of Christianity. By making Marxism speak in American terms, the author argues, Party activists counteracted the prevailing notion that socialism was illegitimate or un-American.

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