



The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and the Question of Capitalism in Progressive Era Portland, Oregon (Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America)

Robert D. Johnston

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America has a long tradition of middle-class radicalism, albeit one that intellectual orthodoxy has tended to obscure. *The Radical Middle Class* seeks to uncover the democratic, populist, and even anticapitalist legacy of the middle class. By examining in particular the independent small business sector or petite bourgeoisie, using Progressive Era Portland, Oregon, as a case study, Robert Johnston shows that class still matters in America. But it matters only if the politics and culture of the leading player in affairs of class, the middle class, is dramatically reconceived.

This book is a powerful combination of intellectual, business, labor, medical, and, above all, political history. Its author also humanizes the middle class by describing the lives of four small business owners: Harry Lane, Will Daly, William U'Ren, and Lora Little. Lane was Portland's reform mayor before becoming one of only six senators to vote against U.S. entry into World War I. Daly was Oregon's most prominent labor leader and a onetime Socialist. U'Ren was the national architect of the direct democracy movement. Little was a leading antivaccinationist.

The Radical Middle Class further explores the Portland Ku Klux Klan and concludes with a national overview of the American middle class from the Progressive Era to the present. With its engaging narrative, conceptual richness, and daring argumentation, it will be welcomed by all who understand that reexamining the middle class can yield not only better scholarship but firmer grounds for democratic hope.



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