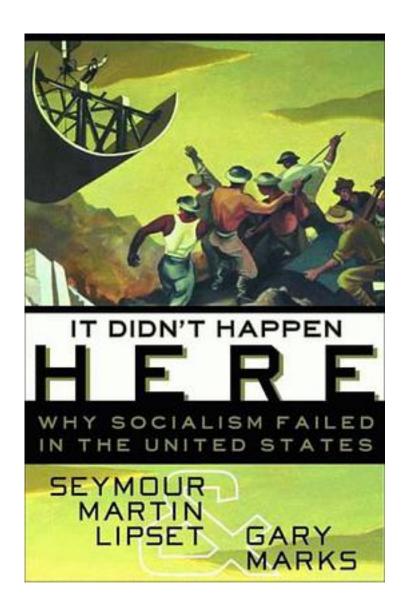
It Didn't Happen Here



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Two of America's leading political sociologists explore a phenomenon of American political exceptionalism: the failure of the socialist movement in the United States. Parties calling themselves Socialist, Social-Democratic, Labor, or Communist have been major forces in every democratic country in the world, yet they have played a surprisingly insignificant role in American politics. Why the United States, the most developed capitalist industrial society and hence, ostensibly, fertile ground for socialism, should constitute an exception has been a critical question of American history and political development. In this probing work the authors draw on rich contrasts with other English-speaking countries and extensive comparisons within the United States at the state and city levels, eschewing conventional explanations of socialism's demise to present a fuller understanding of how multiple factors--political structure, American values, and the split between the Socialist party and mainstream unions--combined to seal socialism's fate. Further chapters examine the distinctive character of American trade unions, immigration and the fragmentation of the American working class, socialist strategies, and repression, concluding with a penetrating analysis of American political exceptionalism up to the present day.

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