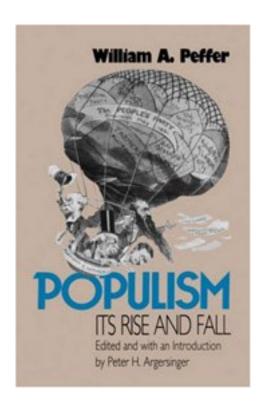
Populism, Its Rise and Fall



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Before it was "Populism," the great reform movement of the 1890s was often called "Pefferism" after its most prominent leader, Kansas editor William Peffer. Peffer's Populism, Its Rise and Fall is the only significant memoir by a major Populist figure.

The Populist movement arose as a revolt against the special privileges of industrialism and the American banking system. It spread quickly throughout the Midwest and South and reached its zenith with the founding of the People's party in the early 1890s. William Peffer chaired the national conference that organized the People's party and was the party's first U.S. senator and president of its National Reform Press Association.

Peffer's memoir, written in 1899 but discovered decades later, offers a unique insider's view of the Populist movement. Peffer describes the development of Populism, the political maneuverings and campaign practices of the People's party, the effect of the famous silver movement on the critical election of 1896, and the behind-the-scenes conflicts and disagreements that ultimately led to the dissolution of America's last great third party.

Populism, Its Rise and Fall includes the complete text of this singular memoir, transcribed, edited, and annotated by Peter H. Argersinger, a leading scholar of the Populist movement. Argersinger's introductory essay and extensive annotation evoke America at the turn of the century and place Peffer's memoir in the context of the times, at the vortex of the forces that shaped and ultimately destroyed Populism.

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作者介绍:					
目录:					
Populism, Its Rise and Fall_下载链接1_	-				
标签					
评论					
 Populism, Its Rise and Fall_下载链接1_	_				
书 评					
 Populism, Its Rise and Fall_下载链接1_	_				