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## The Gibraltar: Socialism and Labor in Butte, Montana, 1895-1920

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*The Gibraltar: Socialism and Labor in Butte, Montana, 1895-1920*, by Jerry W. Calvert. Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1988; distributed by University of Washington Press. viii, 189 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$21.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY MARY MURPHY, BUTTE-SILVER BOW PUBLIC ARCHIVES

*The Gibraltar* is a case study of electoral socialism in Butte, Montana, a mining city that earned the nickname "the Gibraltar of Unionism" in the early twentieth century, when nearly every working man and woman in Butte was a union member. Jerry Calvert, a professor of political science at Montana State University, has written a swiftly moving narrative filled with new information and thoughtful analysis of one of the stormiest periods in Butte's history.

Butte was one of those American cities—of which Milwaukee is best known—that enjoyed a period of socialist-administered good government in the 1910s. *The Gibraltar* charts the rise and fall of the Butte socialists in the wider context of Montana politics, with some attention to the agenda of the national Socialist party. One of the strongest points of this work is the mapping of the alliances, rivalries, and factionalism that plagued working-class solidarity. The period from 1910 to 1920 witnessed the destruction of the Butte Miners' Union and the subsequent formation and dissolution of several successors whose ideologies ranged across the political spectrum.

All but the most devout of electoral enthusiasts will be tempted to skim some of the detailed analysis of each aldermanic election, but it is through this minute examination of ward and precinct voting patterns that Calvert reveals the cracks and fissures in "the Gibraltar." Ethnicity, religion, and allegiance to old party lines often prevented workers from voting in their class interest. These factors, combined with the raw power of the Anaconda Company, stymied the socialists' attempts to build and maintain a working-class majority. Calvert uses the rich files of the Bureau of Investigation to document the infiltration of the unions and the IWW by spies and *agents provocateurs*, and the collusion between the military, the Bureau of Investigation, and the Anaconda Company. His research provides a frightening reminder of the fragility of our democratic institutions when confronted by a corporation that did not hesitate to use bribery, fraud, and violence to get its way. But Calvert continually returns to what the socialists managed to accomplish against enormous odds: they extended public works services to working-class neighborhoods, improved public health in the city, and had some statewide successes, such as the preservation of the direct primary system.

In a story as dramatic as *The Gibraltar*, where radicals, company gunmen, politicians, and a cast of thousands of strikers and their foes take the stage, it is unfortunate that many of the protagonists remain shadowy figures. With the exception of radical newspaper editor William Dunne, who appears as playful as he is revolutionary, Calvert offers little insight into the personal histories that shaped these men—and it is men who are on stage here. Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin makes a cameo appearance, but few women grace these pages. The other problem with this work is its equation of miners with the Butte work force. Occasionally Calvert mentions the other craft unions that existed in Butte, most often in connection with their support or lack of it for the miners' strikes. Miners were the major labor force of the city, but thousands of other men and women worked in jobs that were part of the mining economy, and their role in this story gets short shrift.

In a thoughtful afterword Calvert addresses the perennial question: why is there no viable socialist movement in the United States? Extrapolating from the case of Butte, he offers some insightful conclusions. This work deserves a far larger audience than Montana historians. Those interested in the history of American labor and socialism, in the role of government surveillance, and in the factors that come into play when an individual casts a vote will find this a valuable book.

*Talkin' Socialism: J. A. Wayland and the Role of the Press in American Radicalism, 1890-1912*, by Elliott Shore. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988. xi, 280 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$25.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM H. CUMBERLAND, BUENA VISTA COLLEGE

Elliott Shore has written a definitive volume on the role of the radical press during the golden age of American socialism, with a special reminder of the importance to that movement of the country editor J. A. Wayland and his *Coming Nation* and *The Appeal to Reason*. Shore focuses on Wayland's middle-class Republican background and the cauldron of forces that overwhelmed him during the formative 1890s. Wayland, a typical middle-class, native-born reformer, influenced by John Ruskin and Laurence Gronlund, moved from Republicanism through populism to socialism while expounding the democratic faith passed from Jefferson to Jackson to Lincoln. A master at reducing the complex to the simple, Wayland translated Ruskin and Gronlund into

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