

the peace coalition. ... Militarism, they argued, isolated peoples behind walls of mutual fear and loathing” (xiv).

Kazin’s well-researched book is an accessible and clearly-argued piece of scholarship on one of the more understudied social movements of American history. Containing insights both into how the movement came together, and why it ultimately failed to stop the United States from entering the war, it is of interest both to scholars of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era and activists of our own time.

America First?

Jessen, Nathan. *Populism and Imperialism: Politics, Culture, and Foreign Policy in the American West, 1890–1900*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2017. x + 331 pp. \$39.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7006-2464-5.

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Do we really need another book about Populism in the 1890s? Is there anything left to say? This book correctly argues that there is still much to examine. Furthermore, the recent uptick in American popular politics—and its accompanying vision of U.S. foreign policy—makes this particular history especially relevant.

Populism and Imperialism examines the intersection of anti-monopoly politics and American foreign policy. It lays out the complicated Populist contribution to anti-imperial politics at the dawn of a new century. The work also successfully posits the significance of 1896 through 1900 in the broader story of Populism.

The book opens with a deft negotiation of a tricky historiography. Works by scholars as diverse as Richard Hofstadter, William Appleman Williams, Walter LeFeber, Kristin Hoganson, and Charles Postel all receive credit as well as criticism. Rather than choosing a camp—an easy trap for historians of populism—the book displays an adroit evenhandedness. The reader finishes the introduction convinced that we don’t know nearly as much about Populist stances on empire as we thought we did.

Chapters One and Two provide context. The first ably summarizes Populist ideologies (including attention to the liberal, as well as republican, strains of anti-monopoly politics). It also explores the reach of conspiracy thinking in the People’s Party and its allies. Notions of “the money power” animated (but did not define) the movement, and sophisticated thinkers and politicians largely agreed with the theory due to innumerable examples of rampant corruption. The resultant concerns about concentrations of power—political or economic—made this especially important to emergent Populist understandings of foreign policy. Chapter Two elucidates the specifics of western Populism, with a particular focus on Colorado, Washington, and Nebraska. The cases are well chosen and well defended.

The chapters that follow explore a range of issues. Populists did not have “a cohesive analysis of colonialism or imperialism” until 1898 (72). The republican streak in the movement made them more sympathetic to Cuban revolutionaries and self-determination than other Americans. They also held strong suspicions about McKinley’s relationship to “the money power” on a global, as well as domestic, level. Skepticism on both counts led them to oppose the president at every turn. Once war came, Populist opposition to the war made them prone to patriotic backlash, and they paid for it at the polls in 1898.

Ensuing debates over the annexation of Hawaii created deep fissures among western reformers already bruised by electoral reverses. Producer politics presupposed access to property. Most reformers generally approved of territorial expansion in the abstract. This ensured that some elected Populists saw Hawaii as ripe for the taking. Others held fast to republican ideals and called for Hawaiian independence. In 1897, U.S. Senator Richard Pettigrew (South Dakota) even hosted Native Hawaiian anti-annexation organizers in Washington, DC, as they made their case. Populist politicians who opposed annexation argued that citizen-centered democracy at home could not stand economic colonies—or racialized colonial subjects—abroad.

Meanwhile, through 1899, Populist politicians groped their way toward an anti-imperial stance even as the Filipino rebellion led by Emilio Aguinaldo made clear the costs of empire. For Populists, “conquest ... served only to extend the reach of the industrial and financial elite” (159). Like so many white Americans (and many of their Populist counterparts in the South), however, a basic tension between deep commitments to self-government and strict racial hierarchies remained.

Renewed dedication to Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Filipino capacities for self-government—steeled, of all things, by Western Federation of Miners’ critiques of the U.S. Army’s violent actions in Idaho—marked Populist visions into 1900. Ultimately, just weeks before yet another presidential contest, debates over U.S. interventions in China again put foreign policy at the center of electoral politics. Opponents cast Populists’ disapproval of U.S. involvement in the Boxer Rebellion as anti-American.

All this had tremendous consequences. Unable to deny the growing power of corporations and monopolies in American life, the Republican Party instead consistently deployed nationalism and patriotism in political discourse. It proved a successful tactic. Populist congressional defeats in 1898 made it possible for Republicans to secure a gold standard early in 1900. Soon thereafter, William McKinley defeated William Jennings Bryan in the 1900 presidential election by successfully “shunting aside talk of economic reform and equal rights and replacing it with a discussion of power, profit, and patriotism” (211). Again, strident nationalism trumped Populist concerns about empire. The Republican triumph in 1900 also signaled the decline of Populist movements in the West.

Thoughtfully constructed, *Populism and Imperialism* sports solid prose and clear claims. The book’s arguments reflect a deep grounding in careful research, especially in newspapers and legislative records. The narrative adroitly moves between state and federal politics. Telling details generally convince the reader.

To be sure, the work’s western focus means its many thoughtful conclusions must be understood with those geographic limits in mind. The long-standing regional divide in most analyses of Populism in the 1890s, mimicked here, simultaneously helps and hinders the argument. Chapter Seven’s creative and effective inclusion of both cultural history and grassroots influences inadvertently highlights their absence in other chapters.

Nonetheless, this book largely succeeds. Scholars of foreign policy, empire, Populism, the Progressive Era, and the West will all find something new and useful in *Populism and Imperialism*. Nationalism, foreign policy, and popular politics often mix together. This work reminds us that the subtleties of exactly how they mix together matters greatly. In a moment when xenophobic nationalism defines popular understandings of foreign policy, this work reminds us that—despite the many flaws in their vision—the Populists offered a different way to critique the American empire.

Booze Cruise

Dorr, Lisa Lindquist. *A Thousand Thirsty Beaches: Smuggling Alcohol from Cuba to the South during Prohibition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018. xi + 299 pp. \$39.95 (cloth), ISBN 9781469643274.

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In *A Thousand Thirsty Beaches: Smuggling Alcohol from Cuba to the South during Prohibition*, Lisa Lindquist Dorr constructs an astonishingly well-documented and thorough account of the water-borne traffic in illegal liquor from Havana, Cuba, to numerous sites on the southern Gulf and Atlantic coasts during national prohibition in the 1920s. Cuba joined Halifax, Nova Scotia, and the Bahamas as the chief departure points for smugglers to transport legally-manufactured liquors from overseas to the underground American market. Smuggled liquor, Dorr asserts, was the largest source of illegal alcohol consumed by Americans during national prohibition. Despite a 1926 treaty with Cuba, expanded powers allowing the Coast Guard to track and seize vessels outside the usual territorial limits of the United States, and the undercover efforts of a colorful group of civilian agents working for the Intelligence Division of the Coast Guard, the flow of illegal liquor to the southern states was never closed off. Indeed, enterprising smugglers began to include narcotics and illegal immigrants (barred by 1921 and 1924 immigration quotas) along with liquor in their cargoes bound for southern shores. Prohibition, smuggling, and the failed effort to deter it, Dorr argues, helped modernize the South and connect it culturally with the rest of the nation, formed a bond between Cuba and pleasure-seeking Americans, and extended American police power more aggressively into the Caribbean.

Dorr draws on a remarkable array of underused records to document the business of smuggling, the failures of federal enforcement, and the more cosmopolitan culture that grew up in the South around illicit liquor and its international supply network. She is most original in her use of United States Coast Guard and Coast Guard Intelligence correspondence and reports, but she also consults a wide array of sources ranging from the