



# Politics, Labor, and the War on Big Business: The Path of Reform in Arizona, 1890-1920

*David R. Berman*

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*Politics, Labor, and the War on Big Business* details the rise, fall, and impact of the anticorporate reform effort in Arizona during the Progressive reform era, roughly 1890-1920. Drawing on previously unexamined archival files and building on research presented in his previous books, author David R. Berman offers a fresh look at Progressive heritage and the history of industrial relations during Arizona's formative period.

In the 1890s, once-heavily courted corporations had become, in the eyes of many, outside "money interests" or "beasts" that exploited the wealth of the sparsely settled area. Arizona's anticorporate reformers condemned the giant corporations for mistreating workers, farmers, ranchers, and small-business people and for corrupting the political system. During a thirty-year struggle, Arizona reformers called for changes to ward off corporate control of the political system, increase corporate taxation and regulation, and protect and promote the interests of working people.

Led by George W.P. Hunt and progressive Democrats, Arizona's brand of Progressivism was heavily influenced by organized labor, third parties, and Socialist activists. As highly powerful railroad and mining corporations retaliated, conflict took place on both political levels and industrial backgrounds, sometimes in violent form.

*Politics, Labor and the War on Big Business* places Arizona's experience in the larger historical discussion of reform activity of the period, considering issues involving the role of government in the economy and the possibility of reform, topics highly relevant to current debates.

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