

## **Building the Green Party into a Mass-Membership Party**

### **Sources and Further Reading**

#### **History of Political Parties and their Structures**

The classic analysis of the evolution of political parties is Maurice Duverger's *Political Parties* (1951). Duverger distinguished between elitist parties based on legislative caucuses and wealthy benefactors and mass parties based on dues-paying members organized into local branches. The mass parties were developed in the late nineteenth century by working class movements to enable ordinary people to compete for power against wealthy elites. Duverger's *Political Parties* is hard to obtain, but the first part of his *Encyclopedia Britannica* article on the "Political Party" covers the same ground under the headings of "Cadre Parties" and "Mass-based Parties." See <https://www.britannica.com/topic/political-party>.

Two good historical analyses for why a working-class-based mass-membership party has not developed in the U.S. like it has in every other industrialized country are John McDermott, *The Crisis of the Working Class and Some Arguments for a New Labor Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1980) and Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class* (London: Verso, 1986).

The first chapter of Art Lipow's *Political Parties and Democracy* (Pluto Press, 1996) covers the turning point in the American left when the Socialist Party tried to sustain a mass-membership party in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as Progressive Era leaders of the two-party system were imposing the state-run primary system. The anti-primary, pro-membership convention quote in the outline from the *Socialist Call* in 1914 is from the first chapter of Lipow's book. Art Lipow died in January 2016, but had been active in the Green Party in California.

The quote from the New York State Assembly's 4,428 page "Revolutionary and Subversive Movements Abroad and at Home" regarding the distinction between American political parties and the Socialist Party of America's "organization" can be found on page 510. The document is online at <https://books.google.com/books?id=CujYAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA3&lpg=PA3&dq=nys+assembly+judiciary+committee>

The quote about the failure of the People's Party to develop a mass-membership structure when it followed the organizational model of the Democrats and Republicans is from Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment* (Oxford University Press, 1978)

Howie Hawkins' take on why the Green Party movement in the U.S. switched from a mass-membership structure to the top-down structure of Democratic and Republican parties in the late 1990s is on pages 23-26 of his introduction to *Independent Politics: The Green Party Strategy Debate* (Haymarket, 2006).

#### **The Evolution of US Party Systems**

The wikipedia entry on "Political Parties in the United States" is a good place to start. It provides succinct summaries of the six party systems so far in U.S. history and the sources cited include much of the basic political science literature on this subject.

See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political\\_parties\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_parties_in_the_United_States).

Two books by Mark Lause, an historian and Green Party supporter in Cincinnati, give vivid accounts of abolitionist and populist era reform movements and third parties.

*Young America: Land, Labor, and the Republican Community* (Illinois University Press, 2005) covers the pre-Civil War abolition, suffragette, utopian socialist, free labor, and free soil movements and parties.

*The Civil War's Last Campaign: James B. Weaver, the Greenback-Labor Party & the Politics and Race & Section* (University Press of America, 2001) covers the 1880 Greenback-Labor presidential candidacy of James B. Weaver, who would again carry the farmer-labor populist movement's presidential banner in the better-known 1892 People's Party campaign. The now largely forgotten campaign was a rearguard attempt to restore Radical Reconstruction and defend black political rights and the vanguard of the populists' monetary, labor, and agrarian reform program.

*Omar Ali's In the Lion's Mouth: Black Populism in the New South, 1886-1900* (University of Mississippi Press, 2010) recounts the largely forgotten story of the pivotal role played by the Colored Farmers Alliance and Cooperative Union in forcing the southern white National Farmers Alliance and Industrial Union to break with the Democrats and join the northern National Farmers Alliance in calling for independent political action and the formation of the People's Party in 1890.

### **The Non-Profit/Industrial Complex**

*The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (South End Press, 2009) is collection of essays by radical activists from around the globe analyzing how movement nonprofits have to blunt political goals in order to satisfy government and foundation funders' mandates and exploring how to fund movements from below.

For contemporary accounts on how progressive movements are steered by Democratic Party-linked funders, see these articles by "The Insider," "the pseudonym of an activist who works inside the Liberal Foundation-Funded Democratic Party-Allied Belly of the Beast:"

"99 Percent Spring: the Latest MoveOn Front for the Democratic Party,"

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/03/16/99-percent-spring-the-latest-moveon-front-for-the-democratic-party/>

"MoveOn's 99 Percent Spring, Obama and the Dems March in Lock-Step,"

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/04/12/moveons-99-percent-spring-obama-and-the-dems-march-in-lock-step/>

"Inconvenient Truths About Tar Sands Action,"

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/04/24/inconvenient-truths-about-tar-sands-action/>

"One Big Progressive Cluster-F-k,"

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/11/14/one-big-progressive-cluster-f/>

On the same subject, see these articles by and interview with John Stauber:

"The Progressive Movement is a PR Front for Rich Democrats,"

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/03/15/the-progressive-movement-is-a-pr-front-for-rich-democrats/>

“An Interview With John Stauber on the Impotence of the Progressive Movement,”  
<http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/04/26/an-interview-with-john-stauber-on-the-impotence-of-the-progressive-movement/>

An early and extremely prescient analysis of the co-optation of progressive movements by nonprofit funders is Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* (Anchor Doubleday, 1969; Africa World Press, 1990 reprint). It details how the Ford Foundation and Johnson and Nixon operatives got militant black freedom organizations defunded and “black capitalist” groups funded. It was a model for the pacification of movements by foundation and government funders in the decades that followed.

The preface to the second edition of SNCC leader James Foreman's memoir, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (Open Hand, 1985), corroborates Allen's analysis with testimony about how Kennedy and Johnson National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, an architect of the escalation in Vietnam, turned to domestic counter-insurgency by convening in 1967, now as head of the Ford Foundation, a meeting of about 20 “moderate” black leaders to lay out plans to destroy SNCC and promote CORE's newfound “black capitalism.” SNCC was aware of this at the time. See James Foreman, “1967: High Tide of Black Resistance,” SNCC International Affairs Office, 1968,  
[http://www.crmvet.org/docs/67\\_sncc\\_forman\\_tide.pdf](http://www.crmvet.org/docs/67_sncc_forman_tide.pdf).

Before the rise of the nonprofit industrial complex, movements were organized by dues-paying people's organizations.

In the late nineteenth century, organizations of dues-paying members like the Grange, the Knights of Labor, and the Farmers Alliances had paid organizers and traveling lecturers who organized the farmer and labor reform movements and created a series of populist parties: Greenback-Labor, Anti-Monopoly, Union Labor, and Peoples. Lause's *The Civil War's Last Campaign* and Goodwyn's *The Populist Moment*, both cited above, describe these people's organizations and the parties they created.

In the early twentieth century, it was political parties of dues-paying members that sponsored, organized, and supported social movements in the fields of labor, consumer rights, civil rights, and peace.

Donald Grubbs' *Cry from the Cotton: The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the New Deal* (University of Arkansas Press, 2000), recounts how this influential multi-racial sharecroppers' union in the 1930s operated under open sponsorship of the Socialist Party, while drawing on native southern evangelical and populist traditions.

Small left parties played pivotal roles in the key strikes in 1934 that led to the rise of industrial unionism under the CIO. The American Workers Party led by A.J. Muste (later a renowned anti-nuclear weapons and anti-Vietnam war activist) played a central role in the Auto-Lite strike in Toledo. Another small left party, the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, was central to the coordination the Minneapolis general strike that led to the organization of over-the-road drivers in the trucking industry and the rapid growth of the Teamsters union. A couple of labor history books that recount these events include Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morais, *Labor's Untold Story* (United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America, 1979 3<sup>rd</sup> edition) and Art Preis, *Labor's Giant Step* (Pathfinder, 1972).

### **Working Class People Give More Than the Professional-Managerial and Ownership Classes**

The fact that lower income people give more of their income to charitable and civic organizations than higher income people has been documented by many studies, which also show that the rich give less as income inequality grows. These studies show that working class people want and expect to give to help

people like them or support organizations that advocate for people like them.

A 2014 study by the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* using IRS data found that since the Great Recession of 2008, high income people are giving less, middle income people are giving more, and low income people are giving still more. Stacy Palmer, editor of the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, noting that middle- and low-income people tend to give to social service organizations while the rich focus on universities, hospitals, and cultural institutions, explained to *Forbes*:

Lower and middle-income people know people who lost their jobs or are homeless, and they worry that they themselves are a day away from losing their jobs. They're very sensitive to the needs of other people and recognize that these years have been hard.

See

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/katiasavchuk/2014/10/06/wealthy-americans-are-giving-less-of-their-incomes-to-charity-while-poor-are-donating-more/#310374dd5b6d>.

See also:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/04/why-the-rich-dont-give/309254/>

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/politics-government/article24538864.html>

<http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-income-inequality-rich-stingier-20151123-story.html>