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in the earth. . . . Cut down a pear tree,
and before you know it, a fresh shoot
comes out of the ground and drives upward
toward the sun. . . . Mitya is gone and
many others, but the earth is here and so
are the people."

DOROTHY BREWSTER.

Chapter From America

THE POPULIST MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED
STATES, by Anna Rochester. International Pub-
lishers. Cloth \$1. Paper 35c.

THIS reviewer went through the lead-
ing high school of America's third
largest city and a class A university
without ever hearing about Populism, the
Populists or the People's Party. In fact,
his acquaintance with that stormy chapter
of American history was limited to the ex-
pression "Coxey's Army," vaguely recol-
lected as a term of derision in his childhood.
This experience is probably not unique.
Too many Americans have had their con-
ceptions of our national history warped by
a once-dominant school of writing and
teaching that regarded all popular strug-
gles after the Civil War, whether on the
part of labor, the farmers, or the Negro
people, as the work of outlaws and there-
fore not fit subjects for study by the future
citizens of our country.

Today, though the influence of Popu-
lism is manifest in the statute books, in
political platforms and in the utterances of
both statesmen and demagogues, it still re-
mains true that the Populist crusade of the
eighties and nineties is one of the least
known episodes in our history. That is why
Anna Rochester's little book, *The Popu-
list Movement in the United States*, does
such an important service. The classic
work in this field is John D. Hicks' *The
Populist Revolt*, a book that is indispensa-
ble for students of that period. But Pro-
fessor Hicks' book, because of its length and
price, is likely to lie beyond the interest
and/or the pocketbook of the average lay-
man. Miss Rochester's is in fact the first
book that tells the story of the Populists
in a form and at a price that should make
it attractive to the general public. Previous-
ly known for her penetrating economic
studies, *Labor and Coal*, *Rulers of Amer-
ica*, and *Why Farmers Are Poor*, which
have become standard reference works,
Miss Rochester has brought to the task of
popular historical writing the same factual
clarity and Marxist understanding that
distinguish her earlier books.

Miss Rochester traces the history of
Populism from its genesis in the post-Civil
War struggles of the farmers against ad-
vancing monopoly to its final engulfment
in larger and more durable political move-
ments in the early years of this century.
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Granger movement, the money reform
crusade, the anti-bourbon movement in the

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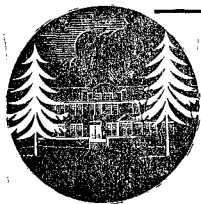
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South, the farmers' alliances, the confused political efforts of the trade unions—there gathered the tidal flood that burst into the political arena in 1892 with the formation of the national People's Party. It is too often forgotten that the Populists did more than urge each other to raise less corn and more hell: that they brought to the fore some of the most vital personalities of that generation; that they fought for much of the progressive legislation (such as the anti-trust laws, the federal income tax, federal regulation of food and drugs) that was adopted in later years; that their presidential candidate in 1892 carried four states and polled what would be the equivalent of over 4,000,000 votes today; that they elected four governors, a sizable number of US Senators and Congressmen and were a powerful influence in a number of state legislatures. Moreover, the heritage of Populism has become rooted in the American tradition, its very phrases part of the living speech of the country.

POPULISM was, in the words of Miss Rochester, "primarily a defensive movement of farmers and other small business interests against the relentless advance of finance capital." Though in theory and in its agitational slogans it expressed the little man's nostalgia for the vanished small-enterprise economy that existed before the Civil War, in practice the Populists as a rule eschewed the utopian and played a constructive role. Yet by the very nature of the class interests that they represented they were an unstable, uncohesive force moving on the periphery of the central social conflict, that between big capital and labor. Though the Populists attempted to appeal to the workers and evoked some response from the labor movement, no firm bonds were fashioned. (For a further discussion of the relations between the trade unions and the Populists see an article in the April 1944, issue of *Science and Society* by the late Lieut. James Peterson.) Miss Rochester brings into focus both the strengths and weaknesses of the Populist movement to compose an integrated picture.

In her last pages the author discusses the continuity of Populist insurgence and tradition in various political forms after the People's Party itself had passed off the scene. This, it seems to me, is the weakest part of the book, for she has had to telescope into a few pages material that requires more extensive treatment. It would also have been useful to have contrasted the two divergent lines of development of the Populist tradition, expressing the duality of the middle classes: toward anti-fascism (the New Deal, the pre-war movement for a Farmer-Labor Party, and today various phenomena of the war against the Axis), and toward fascism (Huey

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Long, Charles E. Coughlin, Gerald L. K. Smith).

These opposing tendencies were already evident at an earlier stage in the degeneration of certain old-line Populists themselves: for example, the late Tom Watson of Georgia, once a militant Populist leader who stood up for Negro rights, became in later years an ardent Negro-baiter, anti-Semite and anti-Catholic propagandist. What the history of Populism makes plain is that without labor as its keystone, no movement can under modern conditions keep its progressivism consistent and whole. Today all that is best in the Populist tradition helps illuminate our democratic goals in the battle to destroy the Nazi and Japanese world-monopolists. Miss Rochester's book adds to the intellectual arsenal of that struggle.

A. B. MAGIL.

Brief Review

VOICES FROM UNOCCUPIED CHINA, edited by Harley F. MacNair, University of Chicago Press. \$1.50.

THE title of this volume is somewhat misleading, for it is not a first-hand description of the long and valiant struggle of the Chinese people against Japanese aggression. It is a series of addresses delivered by a group of prominent Chinese educators and scientists for the 1943 Harris Foundation of the University of Chicago. The Chinese represented here came to the United States at the invitation of the State Department in connection with the latter's program of cultural relations with China. They are competent men, and specialists in their various fields. But all of them are uncritical spokesmen of the official policy of the Kuomintang Party bureaucracy; and their treatment of serious Chinese problems is generally academic and rather remote from reality. Thus Professor Liu Nai-chen dodges the central issue of Chinese national unity in his brief analysis of China's present governmental framework. Dr. Wu Ching-chao correctly envisages the need for large-scale industrialization in postwar China but he fails to link this problem with the important domestic and international issues involved. The speeches dealing with medicine, public health, education, and agrarian problems are somewhat more factual, but subject to the same general reservations.

Perhaps the most interesting section is the preface contributed by Professor MacNair, himself an authority on the Far East. His introductory remarks are suggestive and pertinent; and, as he says, the addresses are often "as notable for what they omit, or imply, as for what they boldly, or subtly, state." A freer inquiry into the state of unoccupied China would have better served that country's cause.

D. D.

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Watch this space for date and place