



# Radical L.A.: From Coxeys Army to the Watts Riots, 1894-1965

*Errol Wayne Stevens*

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When the depression of the 1890s prompted unemployed workers from Los Angeles to join a nationwide march on Washington, “Coxey’s Army” marked the birth of radicalism in that city. In this first book to trace the subsequent struggle between the radical left and L.A.’s power structure, Errol Wayne Stevens tells how both sides shaped the city’s character from the turn of the twentieth century through the civil rights era.

On the radical right, Los Angeles’s business elite, supported by the Los Angeles Times, sought the destruction of the trade-union movement—defended on the left by socialists, Wobblies, communists, and other groups. In portraying the conflict between leftist and capitalist visions for the future, Stevens brings to life colorful personalities such as Times publisher Harrison Gray Otis and Socialist mayoral candidate Job Harriman. He also re-creates events such as the 1910 bombing of the Times building, the savage suppression of the 1923 longshoremen’s strike, and the 1965 Watts riots, which signaled that L.A. politics had become divided less along class lines than by complex racial and ethnic differences.

The book takes stock of the rivalry between right and left over the several decades in which it repeatedly flared. *Radical L.A.* is a balanced work of meticulous scholarship that pieces together a rich chronicle usually seen only in smaller snippets or from a single vantage point. It will change the way we see the history of the City of Angels.

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