

# American Populism: Past and Present

**Charles Postel**

**San Francisco State University**

**24 de març, 14h.**

**Aula 20.137 - Universitat Pompeu Fabra**



Judge magazine, "Platform of Lunacy",  
1891

The specter of Populism looms over the political landscape on both sides of the Atlantic. Since the financial crisis of 2008, movements that have been characterized as Populist have preoccupied political commentators and scholars alike. In this talk, Prof. Postel will discuss the original American Populism of the 1890s. Populism was the country's most successful political movement against corporate power and financial tyranny. Its legacy has also been sharply debated: Were the Populists nostalgic reactionaries and proto-fascists, as influential scholars have argued? Or were the Populists a farmer-labor variant of democratic socialism as more recent historical studies have confirmed? Prof. Postel will also discuss the present meanings of Populism in this age of austerity and extreme economic inequality.

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