Young America: Land, Labor, and the Republican Community

Mark A. Lause

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The National Reform Association (NRA) was an antebellum land reform movement inspired by the shared dream of a future shaped by egalitarian homesteads. Mark A. Lause's Young America argues that it was these working people's interest in equitable access to the country's most obvious asset--land--that led them to advocate a federal homestead act granting land to the landless, state legislation to prohibit the foreclosure of family farms, and antimonopolistic limitations on land ownership._x000B_Rooting the movement in contemporary economic structures and social ideology, Young America examines this urban and working-class "agrarianism," demonstrating how the political preoccupations of this movement transformed socialism by drawing its adherents from communitarian preoccupations into political action. The alliance of the NRA's land reformers and radical abolitionists led unprecedented numbers to petition Congress and established the foundations of what became the new Republican Party, promising "Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men." _x000B_x000B_



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