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Wallace M. Short: Iowa Rebel By William H. Cumberland

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Wallace M. Short: Iowa Rebel. By William H. Cumberland. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1983. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. ix + 178 pp. \$14.95.

Wallace M. Short, a clergyman influenced by the Social Gospel of Washington Gladden and the Progressivism of Robert M. La Follette, was defrocked by the Congregational Church in 1916, in large part for his opposition to prohibition and his defense of organized labor. Two years later he became mayor of Sioux City, Iowa, and for the next three decades he was a conspicuous figure in state politics.

Following three terms as mayor, Short failed in 1923 to receive the Republican nomination for Congress. Three years later he unsuccessfully ran for mayor again. Only once more did he win office: one term in the state legislature (1931-1933). By then he was an established journalist with his own newspaper, *The Unionist and Public Forum*.

Editor Short promoted the interests not only of unions but also of the Farmers' Union and the Farm Holiday Association. Opposing both Republican policies and the New Deal, he helped form the Farmer-Labor Party, twice running for governor on its ticket. During World War II, however, he did support the Roosevelt administration and afterward endorsed the foreign policy of Henry A. Wallace.

Short retired in 1949 and died at age eighty-six in 1953. He had enjoyed an eventful life, but one which left a question: How should he be appraised? He considered himself a progressive while others saw him as a radical. He was a sincere man who fought for social justice in an era of far-reaching change and

increasingly became a "twentieth century Populist who found the well being of the family farm and small business synonymous with American civilization" (p. 95). In all, he might best be remembered by his motto for *The Unionist and Public Forum*: "This is our country. It is a place for us to be happy in: Not merely a place for a few to get rich in" (p. 86).

Relying on Short's personal papers and writings, as well as newspaper accounts and other sources, William H. Cumberland has produced an informative, although sometimes convoluted, view of Short and his times—not a simple task, for Short was "not an easy man to understand" (p. vii).

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