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Sommario/riassunto	Rarely has a third political party in the United States exerted a force upon national events comparable to that of the Populists during the 1890's. This force reached its climax in the presidential race of 1896, when the national reforms epitomized in the cry for free silver were at issue. Yet despite a number of recent studies, confusion and error regarding the Populists in the crucial election of 1896 still persist. Robert F. Durden, by extensive use of the papers of Marion Butler, Populist senator from North Carolina and national chairman of the party during the campaign, sheds new light upon