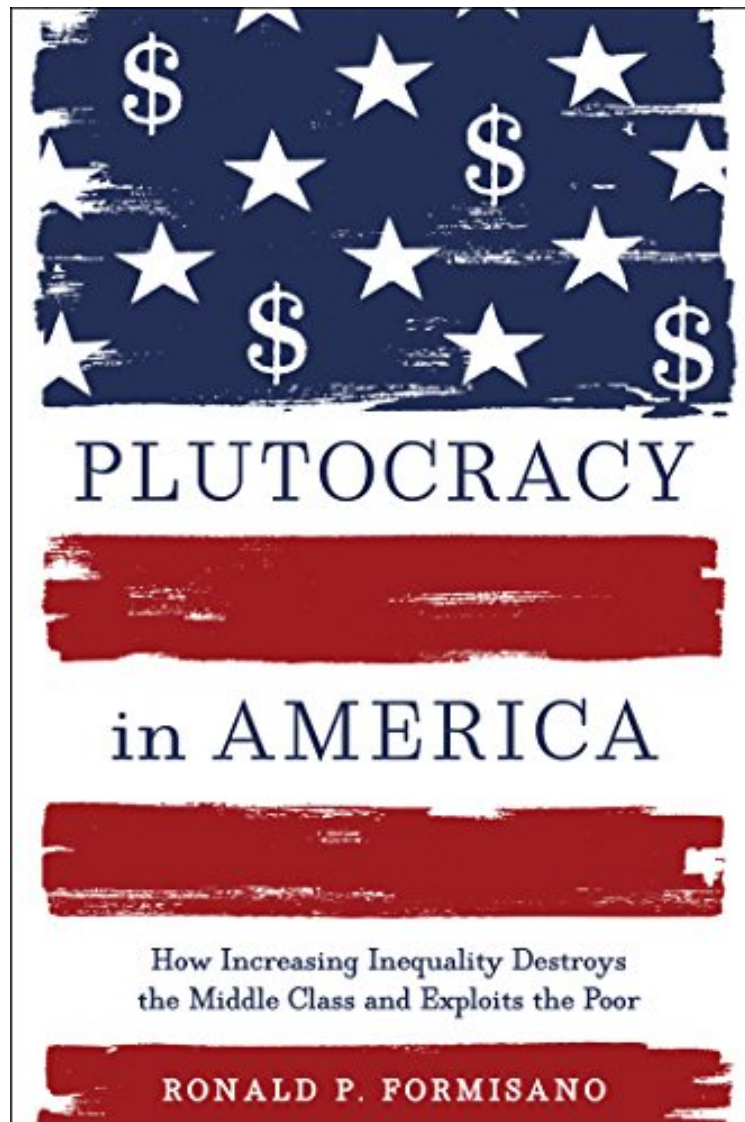


Plutocracy in America

Ronald P. Formisano

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Ronald P. Formisano : Plutocracy in America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Plutocracy in America:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. If you are awake, then buy this book for somebody who isn't. By M. Stone As the middle class dwindles under the heel of our plutocracy more and more people are waking up. Land of the free? We have the largest prison population of any country on earth, without having the largest population. Slavery abolished? Actually those prisoners above are often coerced into working for nearly free, which may explain why there are so many. Land of opportunity? While there has been a large amount of productivity in the past 50 years, the worker gets a smaller and smaller slice of the fruits of their own labor. We live in a world where capitalism has failed the

masses. The promise of a free market, that wages will increase as productivity increases, is now demonstrably a myth. Corporations hold huge sway with government, often working to capture the regulation of their industry. Monsanto execs are in charge of both the FDA and the USDA. Elections are paid for by the Wall Street elite, while Americans continue to hope a millionaire can represent the interests of the lower and middle classes. In theory it COULD happen, but it hasn't so far. The shadows and lies of our culture tell us that economic growth is infinitely expandable and that the free market ensures social justice. It's hard for people to see past the propaganda. It comforts us and enables the plutocracy. I work with women that talk about Kanye like they know the guy. And the guys try to find out what basketball team I support so they can point out "when THEY beat me". This is all operating as it was designed. We have been purposefully robbed of the human capacity of reason. Common core is carefully crafted to avoid critical thinking skills. It's a "do it exactly this way or you are wrong in spite of your answer" model. My nephew can't even read something Adams or Jefferson wrote and tell me what they were saying. So...in that light, it isn't at all surprising that when faced with something that takes some critical thinking, we now lack the ability to engage it on that level. The default setting for a human devoid of reason is to jest, detract, deflect, and avoid. It's easier to get an opinion from a blog than to dig into the facts, form your own, test it, then adjust it. This machine has been grinding for some time. Even common core curriculum is structured that if you don't answer the question or solve the problem in exactly the prescribed way you are wrong, regardless of your answer being correct. The model is set to squelch any vestiges of natural ability to think critically, to think individually. When you ask people to take a look at the truth, you are, in our world, asking them to stop believing in the reality they were raised in. These models are as real in their minds as the keyboard in front of you. I feel like I should quote Plato, and go into the two horses pulling against each other, Reason and Passion, but at the end of the day it was my Grand who set the tone of my condition. "The more you know, the less you like it." 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Is America Becoming A Two Class Country? By Frederick S. Goethel In this book, the author examines the decline of the middle class and the growing influence of the top 1% of income earners. He also examines why this has happened and what the consequences have been and will be in the future if this trend is not reversed. Currently, the middle class is being squeezed out of existence by a number of factors, including the steep decline in unions and the elimination of benefits that used to mark the middle class. In addition, pay rates, when adjusted for inflation have become stagnant over the past 30 or so years, even as upper management has given themselves obscene raises. Having been a member of the middle class for years, I know I am appalled at the decline in my purchasing power as the years have passed. As the wealth accumulates at the top end, they gain more political power. Although the founding fathers envisioned a government that listened to the public, that has given way to professional politicians who only worry about getting elected to office again... which require vast amounts of money. The author did a good job of placing blame into the hands of both political parties, as both have this attitude of catering to the rich. This is an important book to read, especially as we come into the next election cycle. The only way we will change the way the country is going is by voting out those that do not listen! 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A good and important book, but a tough read. By Jesse Walker I liked this book, but the author could have done a lot more to make it accessible and flow better. It's fairly pedantic, and written in an academic tone. As long as you're not expecting it to read like a novel, that's okay, but it's a bit inaccessible in places. Anyway... the book is filled with research and examples of how inequality is increasing in America, as well as why that's a bad thing, and how steps could be taken to reverse that process. The content is clearly extremely important. Our country is going downhill fast thanks to government and corporate policies that have made the rich richer and the poor poorer for the last several decades. Prosperity isn't trickling down, and things need to change. This book is sort of a guided tour through that aspect of our reality right now. I appreciated the research that went in to the book. There are extensive citations to original sources, and a decent index for tracking down desired information. Now if only we could get a few more politicians in key roles willing to make the difficult choices that serve those of us on Main Street rather than lining their campaign coffers with cash...

The growing gap between the most affluent Americans and the rest of society is changing the country into one defined by more than almost any other developed nation by exceptional inequality of income, wealth, and opportunity. This book reveals that an infrastructure of inequality, both open and hidden, obstructs the great majority in pursuing happiness, living healthy lives, and exercising basic rights. A government dominated by finance, corporate interests, and the wealthy has undermined democracy, stunted social mobility, and changed the character of the nation. In this tough-minded dissection of the gulf between the super-rich and the working and middle classes, Ronald P. Formisano explores how the dramatic rise of income inequality over the past four decades has transformed America from a land of democratic promise into one of diminished opportunity. Since the 1970s, government policies have contributed to the flow of wealth to the top income strata. The United States now is more a plutocracy than a democracy. Formisano surveys the widening circle of inequality's effects, the exploitation of the poor and the middle class, and the new ways that predators take money out of Americans' pockets while passive federal and state governments stand by. This data-driven book offers insight into the fallacy of widespread opportunity, the fate of the middle class, and the mechanisms that perpetuate income disparity.

"An accessible overview of recent trends in economic inequality. Formisano has a gift for presenting abstract information in compelling, even gripping, terms." (Angus Burgin, Johns Hopkins University, author of *The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets since the Depression*) "Formisano has written an obituary for a way of American life that is coming to an end." (Times Higher Education) About the Author Ronald P. Formisano is the William T. Bryan Chair of American History and professor emeritus of history at the University of Kentucky. He is the author of *The Tea Party: A Brief History* and *For the People: American Populist Movements from the Revolution to the 1850s*.