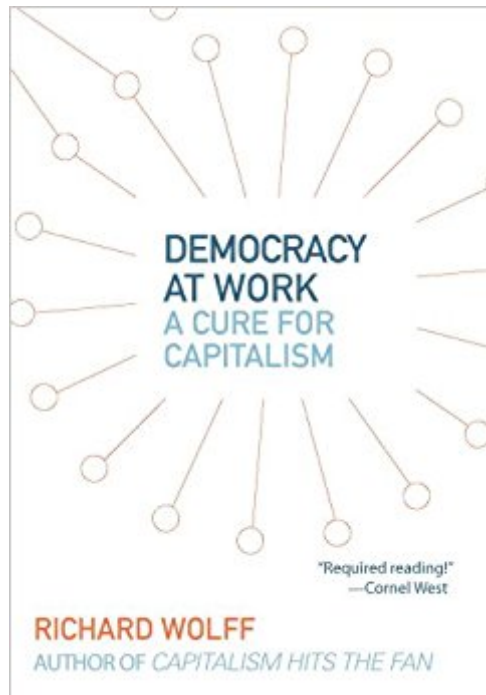




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Democracy At Work: A Cure For Capitalism



Synopsis

"Richard Wolff is the leading socialist economist in the country. This book is required reading for anyone concerned about a fundamental transformation of the ailing capitalist economy."—Cornel West; Richard Wolff's constructive and innovative ideas suggest new and promising foundations for a much more authentic democracy and sustainable and equitable development, ideas that can be implemented directly and carried forward. A very valuable contribution in troubled times. —Noam Chomsky "Probably America's most prominent Marxist economist."—The New York Times Capitalism as a system has spawned deepening economic crisis alongside its bought-and-paid-for political establishment. Neither serves the needs of our society. Whether it is secure, well-paid, and meaningful jobs or a sustainable relationship with the natural environment that we depend on, our society is not delivering the results people need and deserve. One key cause for this intolerable state of affairs is the lack of genuine democracy in our economy as well as in our politics. The solution requires the institution of genuine economic democracy, starting with workers directing their own workplaces, as the basis for a genuine political democracy. Here Richard D. Wolff lays out a hopeful and concrete vision of how to make that possible, addressing the many people who have concluded economic inequality and politics as usual can no longer be tolerated and are looking for a concrete program of action. Richard D. Wolff is professor of economics emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He is currently a visiting professor at the New School for Social Research in New York. Wolff is the author of many books, including *Capitalism Hits the Fan: The Global Economic Meltdown and What to Do About It*. He hosts the weekly hour-long radio program *Economic Update* on WBAI (Pacifica Radio) and writes regularly for *The Guardian*, *Truthout.org*, and *MRZine*.

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Customer Reviews

•Probably America's most prominent Marxist economist. •New York Times Magazine•Imagine a country where the majority of the population reaps the majority of the benefits for their hard work, creative ingenuity, and collaborative efforts. Imagine a country where corporate losses aren't socialized, while gains are captured by an exclusive minority. Imagine a country run as a democracy, from the bottom up, not a plutocracy from the top down. Richard Wolff not only imagines it, but in his compelling, captivating and stunningly reasoned new book, *Democracy at Work*, he details how we get there from here •; and why we absolutely must. •Nomi Prins, Author of *It Takes a Pillage and Black Tuesday*"Richard Wolff is the leading socialist economist in the country. This book is required reading for anyone concerned about a fundamental transformation of the ailing capitalist economy!" - Cornel West"Ideas of economic democracy are very much in the air, as they should be,with increasing urgency in the midst of today's serious crises. Richard Wolff'sconstructive and innovative ideas suggest new and promising foundations formuch more authentic democracy and sustainable and equitable development,ideas that can be implemented directly and carried forward. A very valuablecontribution in troubled times." •;Noam Chomsky•Bold, thoughtful, transformative•;a powerful and challenging vision of that takes us beyond both corporate capitalism and state socialism. Richard Wolff at his best!â •;Gar Alperovitz, author of *America Beyond Capitalism*; Lionel R. Bauman Professor of Political Economy, University of MarylandPraise for *Capitalism Hits the Fan* (book and DVD)•;With unerring coherence and unequalled breadth of knowledge, Rick Wolff offers a rich and much needed corrective to the views of mainstream economists and pundits. It would be difficult to come away from this... with anything but an acute appreciation of what is needed to get us out of this mess.â •;Stanley Aronowitz, Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Urban Education, City University of New York

A new historical vista is opening before us in this time of change, Wolff writes in this compelling new manifesto for a democratic alternative based on workers managing their own workplaces.Capitalism as a system has spawned deepening economic crisis alongside its bought-and-paid for political establishment. Neither serves the needs of our society. Whether it is secure, well-paid and

meaningful jobs or a sustainable relationship with the natural environment that we depend on, our society is not delivering the results people need and deserve. One key cause for this intolerable state of affairs is the lack of genuine democracy in our economy as well as in our politics. The solution requires the institution of genuine economic democracy, starting with workers managing their own workplaces, as the basis for a genuine political democracy. Here Wolff lays out a hopeful and concrete vision of how to make that possible, addressing the many people who have concluded economic inequality and politics as usual can no longer be tolerated and are looking for a concrete program of action. Richard D. Wolff is Professor of Economics Emeritus, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He is currently a Visiting Professor at the New School University in New York. Wolff is the author of many books, including *Capitalism Hits the Fan: The Global Economic Meltdown and What to Do About It*. He hosts the weekly hour-long radio program *Economic Update* on WBAI (Pacifica Radio) and writes regularly for *The Guardian*, *Truthout.org*, and the *MRZine*.

This book is not as good as Wolff's "Occupy the Economy." It lays out the same basic proposal--worker controlled workplaces--but treats it in a more academic and stuffy way. In "Occupy the Economy," Wolff is on fire. He not only explains his positions, he advocates for them. He gives a wealth of history and fact to support his conclusions. But here, in "Democracy at Work," he confines himself to an abstract, almost soporific, presentation. This is a shame, because his ideas have real merit. Wish I could give five stars, but after "Occupy the Economy," this one's a letdown.

Before leaving the US on a long trip, I downloaded two books to read in my spare time. After reading Robert Reich's book "Saving Capitalism", I was left with a perplexing but simple question. How..... and perhaps more important, Why?"Democracy at Work", the second book, provided a much more sensible approach to the same problem. We don't need to save capitalism, we need to replace it with something better. Richard Wolff describes a perfectly feasible possibility for doing just that. While the WSDE was probably not possible on a large scale or in a wide variety of situations in days gone by, modern education and communications technologies not only make this possible today, but inevitable.

Good review of private and state capitalism. The call for a utopian solution of the workers gathering to make decisions shows a lack of experience with large groups and the problem of 'free riders' as well as the differences in talents and skills required to address the issues of today's large enterprises. I am glad I read it but I seriously doubt that it has much practical value in contemporary

life.

This book does a good job of explaining the problem of capitalism, including state capitalism (misnamed as socialism). Essentially, it's very undemocratic, and tightly controlled by a few at the top, whether private sector or the state. It spends a lot of time, too much in my opinion, talking & reiterating the problems of capitalism, and not even close enough time discussing the options of cures for the problems. It only briefly touches on coops and democratically workers directed enterprises, including leaving out vital details about Mondragon in Spain and other working options, leaving the reader hanging. Rather than spending so much time on private and state capitalism, and their failures, spending the majority of the time and focus on the democratic alternatives of worker owned and directed enterprises would make this a much stronger book. Thus, I gave it a 4 rather than a 5 star rating. We need to know and develop the alternatives to economic capitalism to be better able to replace it. I hope Richard Wolff will maintain his focus on this in a future book.

With a critical assessment of capitalism and its inherent deficiencies, Richard Wolff offers a theory of simplicity and persuasiveness. Worker Self Directed Enterprises (WSDE) are the foundation for the proposed economic theory. It is argued that a true state democracy cannot be sustained without a total democracy in the workplace. And a true democracy in the workplace will not be realized if the appropriators of surplus are not identical to the producers. A quick, not too technical read, for those interested in cutting edge economics.

Wolff presents a very logical and compelling case (as always) for a more "social" democracy. While his arguments are straight forward with many good examples, the years he spent immersed in academia are obvious on every page; meaning, expect to use the left side of your brain more than you're used to. That said, this is an important work and one that presents a viable solution to a major problem with 21st Century society. The idea that the majority of working people have become wage slaves and spend most the best hours of the day (and most of the week) working for companies in which they have no stock in, or say in how they are run, is unacceptable. In an ideal world, Wolff would have a cabinet position in the Executive Branch of government.

Clearly written, practical answers, great examples and call to action. Good for those who haven't given this thought, or for the well-informed looking to crystallize their thinking on this critical matter.

Richard Wolff gives a solid overview of the problems of both private and state capitalism. He outlines the need to avoid jumping from one system to the other each time crisis occurs. He offers an alternative to each, WSDE (Workers self-directed enterprises). This seems like a great idea for the positive movement of workers and society itself where workers themselves control their workplace and distribution of the surplus they produce. I enjoyed this book. Such a transition to an alternative economy would be a major undertaking. If it were possible I would have liked Mr. Wolff to give his opinions/suggestions on what steps the worker can take to help begin to make this transition happen with continued success.

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