

Spring Book Issue

Challenge Corporate Power; Assert the People's Rights

Radical Democracy by C. Douglas Lummis, Cornell University Press, 1996. This book is an exhilarating look at both the concept and practice of democracy. How confused we are about this form of political rule. Of course, our confusion is no surprise. The meaning of democracy has been "stolen by those who would rule over us," says Lummis. Democracy means rule by the people, and "demos," from which it is derived, stood for "the poorest and most numerous of people."

Lummis's radical democracy "describes an adventure of human beings creating with their own hands the conditions for their freedom, an adventure the main part of which is still to be undertaken.... Democracy...is a way in which people order their lives together, through discussion and common action, on principles of equality and justice." It is not a kind of government but an end of government and might better be thought of as an ideal or a project.

As we struggle to understand what this challenge of self-governance requires of us, we are helped by thinking about democracy as "a performance art," or "a state of public hope." Lummis offers assurance that we humans are capable of being democratic, of doing democracy, if we can "snap the ideological bonds that prevent us from assuming our natural attitude of democratic common sense."

Cities & the Wealth of Nations: Principles of Economic Life by Jane Jacobs, Vintage Books, Random House NY, 1985. A useful understanding of basic economics in the framework of decentralization and democracy.

Want to Start a Study Group?

Packets are now available from the Philadelphia office or can be downloaded from the WILPF website, www.wilpf.org. The revised packet consists of 10 sessions and includes tips on getting a study group started. Each session includes a list of supplementary materials (books, pamphlets, websites, and videotapes) for those who want more information or discussion material. The revised packet includes new sessions, new readings, and new discussion questions, and we've made cosmetic and usability improvements. To obtain the packet, contact Charmaine Sprengelmeyer in the Philadelphia office; the requested donation for a complete packet is \$15.

A Minnesota member wrote: "I expected solid information about the rise of corporate power, but the way it is contextualized right from the start — 'who we are as human beings,' what this knowledge means to us, how it will change us and challenge us — whew!"

The Populist Moment by Lawrence Goodwyn, Oxford University Press, 1978. The late 19th-century agrarian revolt known as Populism was the largest and most intense mass democratic movement in U.S. history. Goodwyn documents the motivations for and events of the movement, but more importantly, offers a fresh means for assessing both democracy and authoritarianism today. The book explores ways in which Populists had a broader vision for democracy than is common a century later and why.

Private Property & the Limits of American Constitutionalism by Jennifer Nedelsky, University of Chicago Press, 1990. A valuable analysis of the Constitution for the serious reader.

No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies by Naomi Klein, Picador USA, New York, 2000. First-person account by an investigative journalist tracking the early stages of backlash against multinational corporations. Klein analyzes and documents the forces opposing corporate rule and the particular set of cultural and economic conditions in different parts of the world that made the emergence of the opposition inevitable.

In the Absence of the Sacred by Jerry Mander, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1992. Puts corporations in a larger context, showing how the corporate form works its ways in the world and contrasts its characteristics with those needed for authentic democracy.

The following resources are available from WILPF, 1213 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107 or call (215) 563-7110. Ask for Charmaine Sprengelmeyer. Prices include postage.

Women Define Globalization Written by a 10-member International WILPF working group, it details how global corporatization is driven by a few at the expense of the many, showing the impact on women, workers and the poor everywhere. \$10 (goes to International WILPF).

By What Authority? by Tony Clarke: Unmasking & challenging the global corporations' assault on democracy through the WTO. Published by the Polaris Institute of Canada and the International Forum on Globalization. \$4.

Taking Care of Business: Citizenship & the Charter of Incorporation by Frank Adams & Richard Grossman. How did giant corporations come to govern? This pamphlet provides a concise history of corporations and corporate law. 1993. \$4.

Building Unions: Organizing, Past, Present and Future by Peter Kellman; illustrated by Matt Wuerker. This new booklet combines historical perspective and activist insight, in a compelling account of the power imbalance that enables corporations to exercise free speech, assembly and organizing rights at the denial and expense of workers and unions. \$7; 10 or more \$5 each

Citizens Over Corporations, A Brief History of Democracy in Ohio and Challenges to Freedom in the