



---

# You Call This a Democracy?

**Who Pays, Who Benefits  
and Who Really Decides**

by **Paul Kivel**

---

**PAUL KIVEL HAS DONE IT AGAIN** by exploding another myth about our troubled land.

-FROM THE NEW FORWARD BY Jim Hightower

**A PENETRATING LOOK AT THE U.S. RULING CLASS**—a rich and powerful portion of the population that owns tremendous amounts of wealth and who benefits from the way decisions get made in this country. A close look at an even smaller group, the power elite—7,000 to 10,000 (predominately) white Christian men—that makes many of the decisions affecting our everyday lives. Most of the time they decide freely, while they and the ruling class benefit hugely from these decisions, and the rest of us pay in our wages, our taxes, our health, the quality of our housing, and often with our lives. The book is carefully researched and referenced, and filled with numerous examples and illustrations. It is an indispensable resource for every person concerned about the undemocratic concentration of wealth and power in our society.

**LEFT TURN MAGAZINE SAYS** “*You Call this a Democracy* is a powerful tool for those seeking to understand and change the oppressive economic, political, ideological and cultural institutions of contemporary society.”



---

## CONTENTS

### **New!! Forward by Jim Hightower**

Preface

Where Are You in the Class System?

Introduction

A Short History of the U.S. Ruling Class

What Is a Ruling Class?

What Does the Economic Structure of the U.S. Look Like?

Why Does Wealth Matter?

How Do They Rule? The Constitution, Corporations and  
the Courts

How Does the Power Elite Communicate?

How Do They Stay in Power?

How Do Members of the Ruling Class Increase Their Wealth?

Preserving Their Wealth

Passing on Their Wealth

Protecting Themselves and Their Families Financially

Protecting Their Power

How Do Members of the Ruling Class Feel About Being Rich?

Why Don't We See Them?

The Ruling Class and the Buffer Zone

Philanthropy

Why We Don't Focus Attention on the Ruling Class: The Role  
of the Mass Media

Distractions

Who Decides? Who Benefits? Who Pays?

Which Side Are You On?

Assessing Public Policy Issues and Political Candidates

Beyond Survival—Getting Together

Resistance

Globalize Hope

**New!! Afterward by the author**

**New!! Classroom & workshop study guide**

Resources

*Endnotes, Glossary, Bibliography, Videography, Magazines,  
Organizations and Website Resources*

Index



---

## PRAISE FOR *You Call This a Democracy*

PAUL KIVEL'S COURAGE to identify the structure of the ruling class and the impact of its power is a gift to all of us who seek justice and equality. Should be a required text in classrooms throughout the country.

— **Suzanne Pharr**, author of *In the Time of the Right*

A CUTTING EDGE, NO HOLDS BARRED EXAMINATION of who really holds the power in America... a severe wake-up call and a siren warning against oligarchy... a keenly written and biting expose of divide-and-conquer techniques used en masse in the modern age.

—**Midwest Book Review**

PAUL KIVEL HAS WRITTEN AN ACCESSIBLE FIELD GUIDE to our country's power elite—and how they rule the rest of us. We all should read this to understand the forces that distort our democracy and misshape the quality of our lives in a thousand different ways.

— **Chuck Collins**, co-author (with Bill Gates, Sr.) of *Wealth and Our Commonwealth* and co-founder of United for a Fair Economy

