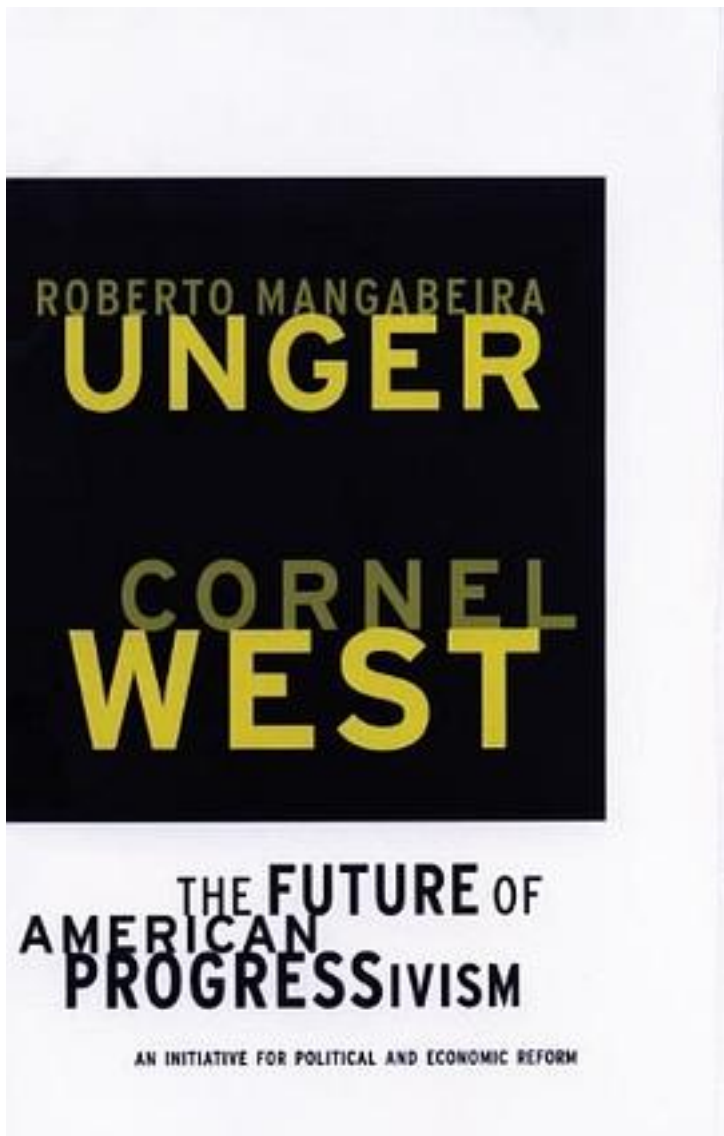


The Future of American Progressivism



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The United States boasts one of the healthiest, most powerful economies in the world--but is it ensuring a strong future for itself? In this thought-provoking collaboration, bestselling author and preeminent public intellectual Cornel West and internationally acclaimed social theorist Roberto Mangabeira Unger describe a nation suffering from an educational and health-care meltdown and an ever-growing gap between the rich and the poor. The U.S., they contend, has become a meritocracy, one that is both firmly racist and classist. Why, Unger and West ask, is America, which subscribes to what they term "a religion of possibility" and has a long, rich tradition of innovation, unable to apply its collective genius to solve the vexing problem of our times and preempt the conflicts that threaten our future?

Unger and West offer a solution that promises to "mark a path rather than to define a blueprint." They want to return the United States to the deepest goal of democracy: to realize the greatest potential of all citizens. They blast the myth that the nation comprises three major social classes (upper, middle, and lower), and instead suggest that it is divided into four: the high-power professionals and big-business executives, the small-business class, the working class, which includes both blue- and white-collar workers, and the racially stigmatized underclass. Their solution tackles the "poisonous mixture" of racism and classism head-on as they propose health care for all children; an educational system that "equips the child with the means to think and to stand on his own feet" with schools that "recognize in the child the future worker and citizen, a little prophet"; and broad-based taxation of consumption that will benefit both the rich and the poor, assure savings for all citizens of this country, and close the gap between the classes.

Drawing on progressive political and economic theories in their effort to return the U.S. to its philosophical foundation and ensure a solid future that every citizen can look forward to, Unger and West may have found an answer that is as practical as it is provocative. --Kera Bolonik --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Booklist

Harvard University professors Unger and West offer a slim but weighty analysis of obstacles that progressivism faces and reforms that could enhance both Americans' lives and American democracy. Our "religion of possibility," they argue, bears three burdens: "enduring hierarchies of class, race, and gender," the "sometimes narrow-minded obsession with individual self-reliance and self-improvement," and the "failure to submit the country's basic institutions to the experimentalist impulse that is otherwise so strong in America." If progressives hope to do more than "humanize the inevitable" cruelties of global capitalism, they must challenge received wisdom and press for institutional reform. "To democratize the market economy and energize representative democracy," Unger and West offer ideas on taxes; pensions and investment; racial discrimination and class injustice; politics, money, and media; enabling economic risk taking by middle-class and poor Americans; and new forms of organization and empowerment at work and in communities. Some ideas will be familiar; others, unconventional. But that's the point: to stimulate debate and

encourage more new ideas. Mary Carroll --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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