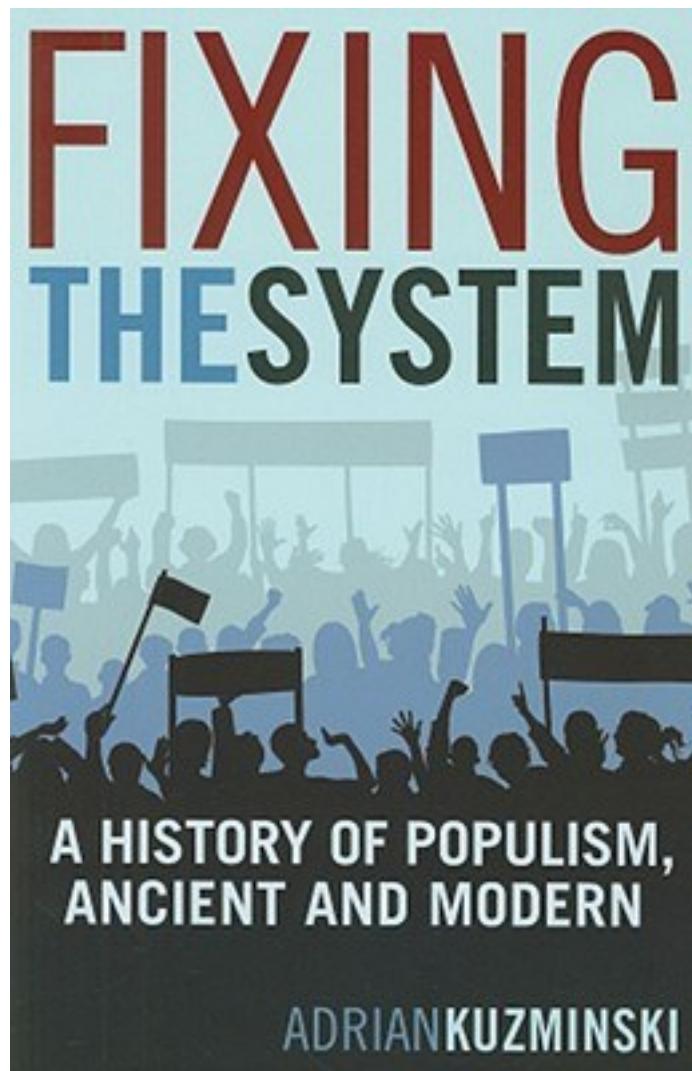


Fixing the System



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Populism is a genuine 'third way' in politics, a middle path between the extremes of corporate anarchy and collective authoritarianism. This is a trenchant and timely study. Populism is distinguished from other political movements by its insistence on two things conspicuously missing from modern systems of political economy: genuine democracy based on local citizen assemblies, and the widespread distribution among the population of privately-owned economic capital. Adrian Kuzminski's book, in offering a comprehensive historical account of populism. He shows that populism, now largely overlooked, has in fact had a consistent and distinct history since ancient times. Kuzminski demonstrates that populism is a tradition of practice as well as thought, ranging from ancient city states to the frontier communities of colonial America - all places where widely distributed private property and democratic decision-making combined to foster material prosperity and cultural innovation. The political economy of populism was first articulated by the ancient Greek philosopher Phaleas of Chalcedon and variously developed by thinkers as diverse as Aristotle, James Harrington, George Berkeley, Thomas Jefferson, Edward Kellogg and Frederick Soddy. Only where none are rich enough to dominate others economically nor poor enough to be so dominated, populists argue, can the public interest be served. By democracy-for-all, populists mean full and direct participation in empowered local citizen assemblies. This vision of a decentralised, 'bottom-up' democracy was developed in his later years by Thomas Jefferson, who called for completing the American revolution by rooting broader levels of government in such local assemblies, which he called 'ward republics.' The book includes extensive extracts from Jefferson's writings on the matter. In calling for a wide distribution of both property and democracy, populism opposes the political and economic system found today in the United States and other Western countries, where property remains highly concentrated in private hands and where representatives chosen in impersonal mass elections frustrate democracy by serving private monied interests rather than the public good. As one of very few systematic alternatives to our current political and economic system, populism offers a pragmatic program for fundamental social reform which deserves wide and serious consideration.

作者介绍:

Adrian Kuzminski is a scholar and political activist living in rural upstate New York. Formerly a professor of history at the University of Hawaii, Dr. Kuzminski has been Resident Scholar in Philosophy at Hartwick College since 1997. Dr. Kuzminski has also been a public official and candidate for office who has worked for political change through both the Green and Democratic parties, as well as through various environmental groups. Fixing the System was born out of the fusion of his political experience with his scholarly passions. He is also author of The Soul, published in 1994, and of the forthcoming Pyrrhonism: How the Ancient Greeks Reinvented Buddhism.

目录:

[Fixing the System_ 下载链接1](#)

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[Fixing the System_下载链接1](#)

书评

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