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The Political Science Shelf

The Oligarchs' Arithmetic of Plunder, Volume I: The Worker

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Leslie St. James
Crown and Lantern Books
979-8996383603, $67.99, paperback, 1200pp
979-8996383610, $34.99, Kindle
Amazon: amazon.com/Oligarchs-Arithmetic-Plunder-LeslieJames/dp/B0H6ZWTTV4
Barnes & Noble: barnesandnoble.com/w/the-oligarchs-arithmetic-of-plunder-leslie-stjames/1150504424

Synopsis: For three decades after World War II, the United States operated under a set of enforceable constraints that forced capital to absorb its own costs. Wages rose with productivity. Pensions were funded. Jobs were stable. A single working-class income could sustain a family, buy a house, and send children to college. Then in the 1970's and '80s those constraints were dismantled.

The dismantling was not an accident of globalization or the invisible hand. It was the result of a fifty-year campaign by named individuals operating through identifiable institutions: think tanks, courts, regulatory agencies, financial firms, and the political coalitions they assembled.

Step by step, the load-bearing elements of the postwar settlement were removed. Labor law was hollowed out. Pensions were converted from employer obligations into worker risk. Immigration was weaponized against wages. Arbitration clauses replaced courts. Stock buy-backs replaced reinvestment. The wealth that once circulated through workers, communities, and the public balance sheet now flows to a narrow stratum of dynastic families and the new tech oligarchy that has joined them.

"The Oligarchs' Arithmetic of Plunder, Volume I: The Worker" by Leslie St James is a forensic accounting of how this happened. It is the first volume of a planned four-volume investigation. It draws upon regulatory filings, court records, financial disclosures, and decades of published reporting, as it traces the dismantling chapter by chapter. The architecture of enforced equilibrium. The campaigns that breached it. The extractive dominance that followed. And the counterrevolution now culminating in techno-feudalism, where data centers, algorithmic management, and programmable identity threaten to replace what remains of American democratic constraint.

This political/economic study is written for two readers simultaneously. To the American: here is what was done to us, and how. To the reader abroad: here is a mechanism you can recognize early, before it takes the same form in your own country.

In the pages of “The Oligarchs’ Arithmetic of Plunder, Volume I: The Worker”, the names are real, the money is traceable, and the arithmetic is documented.

Critique: A deftly crafted, erudite, seminal and groundbreaking study based on extensive and meticulous research, “The Oligarchs’ Arithmetic of Plunder, Volume I: The Worker” is American political and economic history documenting the dramatic changes imposed upon the working class by what would come to be called the 1% during the second half of the 20th Century and leading to the economic, political, social, and cultural framework of a dysfunctional American today. “The Oligarchs’ Arithmetic of Plunder, Volume I: The Worker” by Leslie St James is an extraordinary, iconoclastic, revelatory, and unreservedly recommended addition to personal and professional reading lists, as well as community and college/university library Political, Economic, and Class Sociology collections and supplemental curriculum studies lists. The first of a four volume series, “The Oligarchs’ Arithmetic of Plunder, Volume I: The Worker” is essential reading for economic and political science students, academia, governmental policy makers, political activists, and non-specialist general readers with an interest in the subject.

Editorial Note: Leslie St. James writes on political economy, labor history, and the mechanics of concentrated wealth. He holds an MBA from the Wharton School and an MS in computer engineering from the University of Southern California, and has worked in the technology industry, at investment banks, and at investment research firms. The work that follows comes not from the academy or the policy networks that usually narrate these subjects, but from inside the firms and markets it examines. His approach throughout is forensic. His claims are built from named firms, documented transfers, and money that can be traced from source to destination, so that a reader who distrusts the messenger can still verify the message against the public record.

Jim Cox
James A. Cox, Editor-in-Chief
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