

**To Form a More
Perfect Union**

To Form a More Perfect Union

*An Anthology of American Values
and the Debate on Income
and Wealth Disparity*

Edited with commentary by

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Charles Edelstein**

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*Dedicated to our grandchildren,
to their children,
and to their children's children—
that they may enjoy an America
of freedom and equality*

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of
Independence, July 4, 1776.

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address
November 19, 1863.

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Preface

This book is an unusual anthology. The book contains nine chapters — three of which contain the usual anthology readings with introductions. But the remaining five chapters are devoted to analyses, background discussions, and summaries.

The overall theme of the book is that we have a duty as individual American citizens to help end the bitter partisan and ideological divisions that have gripped this country for far too long — a condition one historian has called (in a related context) a “disease in the public mind.”

We argue that we as citizens can’t leave this important task entirely to our political leaders — because if we don’t change, they won’t either. In a democracy, political leaders necessarily represent the views of their constituents.

We center on one of the most controversial issues in our nation’s current political life: the asserted wealth and income disparity in America and the claimed erosion of the middle class.

We urge that we as citizens seek out people to discuss this issue with a spirit of moderation, including people with whom we deeply disagree — to expose ourselves to different political points of view in the media and elsewhere — and to stop living in “political echo chambers” which an alarming number of Americans have drifted into.

As a spur to these discussions, we analyze this economic issue as we see it. And we provide relevant conservative and liberal readings on the subject. This is done to promote a better understanding of the range of views on this issue, to encourage respect for the views of those with whom we disagree, and to grasp both the strength and limitations of our own views.

We also provide an analysis of our western democratic tradition, plus readings on our bedrock American ideals of freedom and equality — to help us understand what unites us as Americans.

We offer no solutions. We offer only a pathway to progress — a renewal of the democratic spirit. Perhaps a brief explanation of how the book originated will help clarify our aims.

The idea for the project began with one of this book's editors, Professor Dennis Dalton. In his lectures on political theory and freedom recorded for the Teaching Company ("Power Over People: Classical and Modern Political Thought," and "Freedom: The Philosophy of Liberation"), Professor Dalton compared the views of John Locke vs. Jean Jacques Rousseau on the twin democratic ideals of freedom and equality. In doing so, he posed the question whether the two ideals are in conflict.

Phillip Hubbart and Charles Edelstein, the other two editors of this book and long-time mutual friends, were electrified by these lectures when they listened to them on tape, CD and DVD beginning in the 1990s — although neither one had ever met or heard of Professor Dalton.

When all three of us eventually came together over a decade later, via email and mutual visits, we were transitioning from the world of work to the world of retirement. We instantly bonded and, to our delight, endlessly discussed the political and social issues of our day.

Eventually, we decided to put together an anthology of diverse conservative and liberal views dealing with the perceived growing gap between the rich and poor and the asserted erosion of the middle class. But we wanted to address the subject in light of our ideals of freedom and equality — the issue that Professor Dalton had raised in his lectures and was uniquely positioned to develop.

Our friend Janice Nolin was enlisted to provide research assistance in locating relevant readings and information with her expert knowledge of internet sources — and to proofread the text when prepared. Ted Hubbart was also tapped to provide the electronic scanning assistance essential to including the readings selected in the anthology. Both have performed their tasks superbly.

We know that our very selection of the readings in this book may be subject to some debate for including and excluding important voices. Some of these voices may even be an anathema to certain readers. And our analysis of the problem itself may be roundly disputed as well.

But we have tried to develop a fair balance of prominent political and economic views that are in our current public discourse and have to be dealt with — whether we like them or not. And we have selected what we

think are the better written pieces in this mix. We apologize in advance if we have not always achieved our goal.

In assembling this range of views, we have no intention of promoting any particular political or economic agenda to address the problem we see — whether conservative, liberal or centrist. Indeed, the current market is full of such books, articles, columns and op-ed pieces — all analyzing our economic problems and positing various right/left/center solutions for the reader's consideration.

This book is different.

Our sole intent is to promote and inform a fair dialogue on the economic and political issues raised, rather than advocate solutions.

In doing so, we hope we can eventually reach a rough consensus on how to best address our economic woes consistent with our ideals of freedom and equality. Our purpose is to lower the heat of the current debate, to find some common ground for compromise, and to move together as Americans in a pragmatic spirit.

A wise but probably apocryphal saying attributed to Winston Churchill may give us some hope: “Americans can always be trusted to do the right thing,” he reportedly said, “once all other possibilities have been exhausted.”¹

Phillip Hubbart, Miami, Florida
Dennis Dalton, Portland, Oregon
Charles Edelstein, Nederland, Colorado
August 2016

Note

1. Richard Langworth, *Churchill By Himself: The Definitive Collection of Quotations* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008), 124.

About the Editors and Aides

Phillip Hubbard served as a Judge on the Third District Court of Appeal of Florida for 19 years (1977–96) where he was Chief Judge for 2 ½ years (1980–83). He also served as the elected Public Defender for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida (Miami-Dade County) (1971–77), as well as an adjunct professor of law for over 30 years at the University of Miami Law School. He is a life member of the American Law Institute, and recently retired as a founding partner in the law firm of Wetherington, Klein & Hubbard, P.A. in Miami, Florida. He holds a J.D. from Duke University Law School, and a LL.M. from Georgetown University Law Center. His publications include: *Making Sense of Search and Seizure Law: A Fourth Amendment Handbook*, Carolina Academic Press (2d. ed. 2015), and *An Iowa Soldier Writes Home: The Civil War Letters of Daniel J. Parvin*, Carolina Academic Press (editor 2011).

Dennis Dalton is a Professor Emeritus in the Political Science Department, Barnard College, and Columbia University where for 39 years (1969–2008) he taught a variety of courses on political and economic thought. He holds a M.A. from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. from the University of London. He has recorded three series of lectures on political theory and freedom for the Teaching Company on “Great Courses” He is currently a visiting lecturer at the Fromm Institute, University of San Francisco where he teaches political and economic thought. His publications include: *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action*, Columbia University Press (2012), and *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Columbia University Press (editor 2014).

Charles Edelstein served for ten years (1978–87) as a judge on the County Court for Miami-Dade County, Florida, as well as a specially-appointed judge on the Circuit Court for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida (Miami-Dade County). Prior to that, he was for six years, an Assistant State Attorney in the States Attorney’s Office, Miami-Dade County, Florida. He

has worked as a planning consultant in over 40 court management and jail overcrowding projects in 15 states including projects in Chicago, San Francisco, and Miami. He served as the Director of the Judicial Administration Program, University of Southern California (1975–77) as well as an adjunct professor there (1977–96). He was the director of the Trial Advocacy Program at the University of Miami Law School for two years. He has also taught full-time for five years at Miami-Dade College, and has taught as well a variety of courses at Florida Atlantic University. He served for seven years as the Criminal Justice External Editor for McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., Gregg Division. In 2015 he received the Selig Goldin award from the Criminal Law Section of the Florida Bar for outstanding contribution to the criminal justice system in Florida. He is a semi-professional photographer and was awarded the Grand Prize in the 2015 Defenders of Wildlife annual photography contest. He holds a J.D. from the University of Florida, and is a co-author of *Introduction to Criminal Justice*, McGraw-Hill (1977).

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