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Social Democratic America

Lane Kenworthy

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America is the one of the wealthiest nations on earth. So why do so many Americans struggle to make ends meet? Why is it so difficult for those who start at the bottom to reach the middle class? And why, if a rising economic tide lifts all boats, have middle-class incomes been growing so slowly?

Social Democratic America explains how this has happened and how we can do better. Lane Kenworthy convincingly argues that we can improve economic security, expand opportunity, and ensure rising living standards for all by moving toward social democracy. Drawing on his extensive knowledge of social policy in America and other affluent countries, he proposes a set of public social programs, including universal early education, an expanded Earned Income Tax Credit, wage insurance, the government as employer of last resort, and many others. Kenworthy looks at common objections to social democracy, such as the oft-repeated claim that Americans don't want big government, which he readily debunks. Indeed, we already have in place a host of effective and popular social programs, from Social Security to Medicare to public schooling. Moreover, the available evidence suggests that rich nations can generate the tax revenues needed to pay for generous social programs while maintaining an innovative and growing economy, and without restricting liberty.

Can it happen? Kenworthy describes how the US has been progressing slowly but steadily toward a genuine social democracy for nearly a century. Controversial and powerful, *Social Democratic America* shows that the good society doesn't require a radical break from our past; we just need to continue in the direction we are already heading.

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