



The Affluent Society

By John Kenneth Galbraith

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John Kenneth Galbraith's classic investigation of private wealth and public poverty in postwar America

With customary clarity, eloquence, and humor, Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith gets at the heart of what economic security means in *The Affluent Society*. Warning against individual and societal complacency about economic inequity, he offers an economic model for investing in public wealth that challenges “conventional wisdom” (a phrase he coined that has since entered our vernacular) about the long-term value of a production-based economy and the true nature of poverty. Both politically divisive and remarkably prescient, *The Affluent Society* is as relevant today on the question of wealth in America as it was in 1958.

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The Affluent Society By John Kenneth Galbraith Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Conventional wisdom has it that John Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* spawned the neoliberalism we see in Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, and other world leaders. The economist's prose, lofty but still easily manageable, laid down the gauntlet for the post-cold war class struggle that was still far in the future in 1958. Galbraith saw the widening gap between the richest and the poorest as an emergent threat to economic stability, and proposed significant investment in parks, transportation, education, and other public amenities--what we now call infrastructure--to ameliorate these differences and postpone depression and revolution indefinitely. Widely criticized by conservatives and libertarians wary of public expenditures or increased government influence, Galbraith still influences liberal and neoliberal thinking. He has acknowledged that his work, like that of most social scientists, contains flaws (like his dire prediction of an out-of-control unemployment and inflation spiral that petered out in the 1980's), but much of it remains fresh and true even today. Four years before *Silent Spring*, he wrote about the consumerist blight that threatened our wild lands equally as much as our cities; his hoped-for increase in environmental awareness has grown significantly in recent years. Whether you support the political implementations of his views, experiencing his writing is important to put those views in context. More than this, though, it is an honest pleasure to read such original ideas so well expressed. --Rob Lightner

Review

"One of the most gifted writers alive . . . tumbling the tribal Gods of both left and right." Boston Globe

"With his customary clarity, eloquence, and humor, Galbraith cuts to the heart of what economic security means (and doesn't mean) in today's world and lays bare the hazards of complacency about economic inequity." The New York Times

About the Author

John Kenneth Galbraith (1908-2006) was a critically acclaimed author and one of America's foremost economists. His most famous works include *The Affluent Society*, *The Good Society*, and *The Great Crash*. Galbraith was the recipient of the Order of Canada and the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award for Lifetime Achievement, and he was twice awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Users Review

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