



ELIMINATING POVERTY: A BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy, Washington, DC, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1986, 188 pages

Conservative voices were so threatened by this little volume that they denigrated it long before it was published, thus succeeding in diminishing its importance. Nevertheless, it stands today as an excellent summary of Biblical and theological teaching on what constitutes a just economy. "Dealing with poverty is not a luxury to which our nation can attend when it finds the time and resources. Rather it is a moral imperative of the highest priority." Pg. 83

Abraham, Laurie Kaye, *Mama Might be Better Off Dead: The Failure of Health Care in Urban America*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994, 289 pages

The vicious circle of poverty and illness is powerfully portrayed in Abraham's account of an uninsured, black, four-generational family in one of Chicago's "poorest and sickest" neighborhoods. Included in their medical misfortunes: the amputation of both legs of a diabetic grandmother; a drug-addicted husband on kidney dialysis who undergoes a kidney transplant; a partially stroke-paralyzed son; and children who lack primary care and immunization. This personally observed, lucid chronicle and call for reform of our ailing health system covers all levels of responsibility in the medical establishment, and deserves scrutiny by our administration's health service planners.

Blau, Joel, *Illusions of Prosperity: American' Working Families in an Age of Economic Insecurity*, New York: Oxford, 1999

Faith in the free market--the idea that, for instance, profit-seeking managed care companies will improve the health care delivery system--has become a basic tenet of public policy debate. But as Joel Blau demonstrates in this eye-opening book, so-called "free market" programs have been a dismal failure, heightening inequality, lowering the median standard of living, and steadily eroding the quality of our social and political life. In *Illusions of Prosperity*, Blau launches a far-reaching assault on idea that "the market" knows best. Blau writes that while the share of the national income held by the bottom four fifths of the population (the poor and broad middle class combined) has continued to decline, the top fifth gained 97 percent of the increase in total household income between 1979 and 1994. "Few experiments," Blau comments, "yield such clear outcomes. Although many had hoped to benefit from the new market economy, this affluent fifth is the only segment of the population that truly has." Blau looks at recent reforms in NAFTA, education, job training, welfare, and much more, showing that the new social policies have made matters worse, because reforms that rely on the market can't compensate for the market's deficiencies. Instead, he calls for a stronger, more caring government to counter the debilitating effects of the market, and he urges the development of the broadest possible political alliances to ensure economic security.

Boff, Clodovis and George V. Pixley, *The Bible, the Church, and the Poor*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989, 266 pages.

What is the preferential option for the poor? This central concept of liberation theology requires a thorough understanding of its historical and theological development. These two outstanding theologians for the first time analyze from a Latin American perspective the crucial question of what it means to make a preferential option for the poor. For the Old and New Testaments, and through the history and traditions of the church up to the present day situation in Latin America, this book elucidates the option for the poor and places it squarely within the scheme of Christian life. It makes clear the pastoral and evangelical dimensions of the option for the poor – and its personal and social consequences.

Casanova, Ron, *Each One Teach One: Up and Out of Poverty*, New York: Curbstone Press, 1996, 260 pages.

A memoir recounting the struggles of a black Puerto Rican activist who helps others trapped, as he once was, in cycles of poverty, addiction, and homelessness. Casanova, vice president of the former National Union of the Homeless and editor of the Union of the Homeless National News, shares two stories: his personal account of growing up in orphanages, on city streets, in detention centers and prisons; and the contemporary struggles of the homeless, especially on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. What emerges is a perturbing portrait of a callous, inefficient bureaucracy. The memoir's strength is its detailed indictment of various so-called "helping" institutions. Particularly disturbing is Casanova's depiction of Matteawan State Hospital, where he spent part of his adolescence, and where he witnessed mentally ill patients being routinely beaten, drugged, and placed in straitjackets by sadistic correction officers. He also challenges the welfare system, aspects of Christianity and its various institutions, as well as left-liberal politicians. Diagnosed as HIV-positive at age 51, Casanova sees his task--and that of all true activists and social workers--as not just feeding people, but providing them with the tools to feed themselves.

Chua, Amy, *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability*, New York: Doubleday, 2003

A professor at Yale Law School, Chua eloquently fuses expert analysis with personal recollections to assert that globalization has created a volatile concoction of free markets and democracy that has incited economic devastation, ethnic hatred and genocidal violence throughout the developing world. Chua illustrates the disastrous consequences arising when an accumulation of wealth by "market dominant minorities" combines with an increase of political power by a disenfranchised majority. Chua refutes the "powerful assumption that markets and democracy go hand in hand" by citing specific examples of the turbulent conditions within countries such as Indonesia, Russia, Sierra Leone, Bolivia and in the Middle East. Chua blames the West for promoting a version of capitalism and democracy that Westerners have never adopted themselves. Western capitalism wisely implemented redistributive mechanisms to offset potential ethnic hostilities, a practice that has not accompanied the political and economic transitions in the developing world. As a result, Chua explains, we will continue to witness violence and bloodshed within the developing nations struggling to adopt the free markets and democratic policies exported by the West.

Desai, Ashwin, *We Are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Monthly Review Press, 2002, 160 pages

When Nelson Mandela was elected president of South Africa in 1994, freedom-loving people around the world hailed a victory over racial domination, injustice and inequality. The end of apartheid did not change the basic conditions of life for the majority of oppressed South Africans, however. Material inequality has deepened and new forms of resistance have emerged in communities that have discovered a common oppression and solidarity and forged new and

dynamic political identities. Desai's book follows the growth of the most unexpected of these community movements, describing from the inside the process through which the downtrodden regain their dignity and defend the most basic conditions of life. His book begins with one specific community, with local government enforcing cut-offs of water and electricity, and evicting families from their houses whose breadwinners have lost their jobs. As the Chatsworth community begins to organize and discover leaders among its ranks, so their example spreads to other communities in Durban and the KwaZulu-Natal region, and their struggles build links with those in other parts of the new South Africa. *We Are the Poors* was a major event in the life of the South African Left when the first edition was published there in 2000.

Duchrow, Ulrich, *Global Economy; A Confessional Issue for the Churches?* Geneva: WCC Publications, 1987, 231 pages

Though somewhat dated and disorganized, this book is an urgent call to the churches to face the awful reality of poverty in which 40 million people die of starvation each year. Drawing on the deep wells of the theology of Martin Luther and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Duchrow likens today's economic crisis to the crisis that the churches faced in Apartheid South Africa and more specifically to the crisis caused by the collaboration of church with the Nazi state. While he addresses specifically the Federal Republic of Germany, with frequent reference to the Barmen Declaration, the same challenge applies to all of Christianity. How can we effectively refuse to participate in an economy that favors the few at the expense of the many? How can we once again become a confessing church?

Dujon, Diane and Ann Withorn, Editors, *For Crying Out Loud: Women's Poverty in the United States*, Boston: South End Press, 1996, 414 pages

Conservatives have assaulted welfare systems: writers respond in this collection, which moves the debate away from eliminating welfare and into the realm of eliminating poverty. Personal accounts blend with analysis of the roots of poverty and dependence in this collection of essays from well-known writers and activists, including welfare recipients and other poor people.

Edin, Kathryn and Laura Lein, *Making Ends Meet: How Single Mothers Survive Welfare and Low-Wage Work*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1997, 305 pages.

One of the unsettling facts that emerges out of this book is that mothers who work outside the home spend twice as much per month as welfare mothers on such necessities as transportation, health care, day care, and housing. Yet many women continue to move--or are being pushed by politicians--off welfare into jobs in the forlorn hope that those positions would one day lead to better careers. Almost inevitably, the economic realities of trying to raise families on the wages from low-paying jobs would force them back on government assistance. *Making Ends Meet* is a study commissioned by the Russell Sage Foundation, and its disturbing conclusions expose as myth the view prevalent in Washington, D.C., and the country at large that if people would just get jobs they could pull themselves out of poverty.

Ehrenreich, Barbara, *Nicked and Dimed in America: On [Not] Getting By in America*, New York: Henry Holt, 2001, 221 pages

Essayist and cultural critic Barbara Ehrenreich has always specialized in turning received wisdom on its head with intelligence, clarity, and verve. With some 12 million women being pushed into the labor market by welfare reform, she decided to do some good old-fashioned journalism and find out just how they were going to survive on the wages of the unskilled--at \$6 to \$7 an hour, only half of what is considered a living wage. So she did what millions of Americans do, she looked for a job and a place to live, worked that job, and tried to make ends meet.

Finnegan, William, *Cold New World: Growing Up in a Harder Country*, New York: Random House, 1998, 421 pages

Finnegan, a staff writer for the New Yorker, here functions as both a messenger and as a journalist. His message is that America is raising a new generation of young people shaped by an "oppressive sense of reduced possibilities." If that phrase smacks of sociological jargon, the book itself does not because of Finnegan's unobtrusive reportorial style that combines intuition with insight and fieldwork. While in the past 25 years poverty among the elderly has dropped by more than 50%, it has increased by 37% among children, notes the author. To find out what that means in human terms, he met with young people in four impoverished or lower-middle-class communities: the black slums of New Haven, Conn.; rural San Augustine County in Texas; the Yakima Valley in Washington, where the economy relies on underpaid Mexican labor; and Antelope Valley in California, a distant suburb of Los Angeles caught up in a struggle between warring bands of teenage skinheads. From each community, Finnegan draws vivid portraits of individuals caught between a sense of despair that they can never achieve the good life and an almost utopian dream that they can somehow break through to the middle class. The level of grim insight throughout will disturb the optimism of a healthy economy supposedly reflected in Wall Street's numbers.

Gans, Herbert, *The War Against the Poor; The Underclass and Antipoverty Policy*, New York: Basic Books, 1995, 195 pages

For most of its history, America has been fighting a vicious war that cannot be won: a war against its own poor. In this meaty book, Herbert J. Gans probes the socioeconomic, psychological, and political reasons why better-off Americans seek to indict millions of poor citizens as members of an "undeserving underclass." Although he analyzes the legitimate fears and hostility that generate this stigma, he mounts a compelling argument that the "underclass" actually functions as a scapegoat for ills in American society that have nothing to do with the behavior of the poor. Many of these ills are economic, and as more jobs are "downsized," a number of the newly jobless people will be driven into the ranks of the "underclass." The book ends with a set of imaginative economic policy ideas for an America that may never again be able to supply enough decent jobs for everyone.

Harrington, Michael, *The Other America*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997 (1981), 231 pages

Twenty years ago this volume aroused the nation by uncovering the truth that there was extensive poverty in the US. Harrington's central theme is that poverty is often invisible, but a tragic reality for millions. The book is dated, both in its statistics and in descriptions of "the poor" with whom he had little personal contact. Nevertheless, this book that sold over 1 million copies, has had a profound influence on policy.

Horsley, Richard and Neil Silberman, *The Message and the Kingdom: How Jesus and Paul Ignited a Revolution and Transformed the Ancient World*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2002, 312 pages

In a time of social upheaval resulting from rapacious Roman taxation, Jesus' message to resist through communal cooperation was welcome to rural Galilean Jews who were expecting a return to their covenant with God. When Paul extended this message to similarly dispossessed urban Gentiles, the stage was set for a Jesus movement that would take hold in the empire and transform the world. Richard A. Horsley and Neil Asher Silberman put recent archaeological and textual research to good use in an original but reasonable interpretation of Jesus and Paul as religious and social reformers. The result is a picture of Christianity that makes sense Biblically as well as historically.

Kozol, Jonathan, *Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America*, New York: Fawcett Book Group, 1989, 261 pages.

A staggering book about the homeless in this country as specifically exemplified by those who are housed in the Martinique Hotel in New York. Through direct, simply stated interviews with several families in the Martinique over a period of time, Kozol systematically strips away the stereotypic litany of what is wrong with welfare recipients (too lazy to work, etc.). He shows repeated case histories of people held captive by a welfare system that would rather pay the private sector \$1,900 a month to house them in squalor than give them perhaps a third of that amount for apartment rent and a chance to gain back their self-respect. There is much about this book that is not only infuriating but also uncomfortable; many of these people have previously been educated, productive citizens who have endured several life crises and lost everything. The true heart of this book, however, rests on two points: the lack of affordable housing for the poor and, most tragically, the children who will become adults with little education, poor health, no marketable skills, and mental and emotional scars from spending a childhood under these conditions. Kozol's writing is clear and reads easily due to his stark, unembellished style. It is always the people who shine through; they are a testament to the human spirit.

Kozol, Jonathan, *Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation*, New York: HarperCollins, 1996, 284 pages

The children in this book defy the stereotypes of urban youth too frequently presented by the media. Tender, generous and often religiously devout, they speak with eloquence and honesty about the poverty and racial isolation that have wounded but not hardened them. The book does not romanticize or soften the effects of violence and sickness. One fourth of the child-bearing women in the neighborhoods where these children live test positive for HIV. Pediatric AIDs, life-consuming fires and gang rivalries take a high toll. Several children die during the year in which this narrative takes place. A gently written work, *Amazing Grace* asks questions that are at once political and theological. What is the value of a child's life? What exactly do we plan to do with those whom we appear to have defined as economically and humanly superfluous?

Myers, Ched, *The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics*, published by Church of the Savior, Potter's House Book, 1658 Columbia Road, NW, Washington DC, www.pottershousebooks.org, 2002, 70 pages

In this book, Ched Myers rescues the Hebrew Bible's traditions of Jubilee and Sabbath from the margins of contemporary theological discourse and re-reads them in a way that places them at the center of a new ethos and cosmology. He offers a compelling argument for why the Church today must offer alternatives to the dominant paradigms of economic theory and practice.

Newman, Katherine S., *No Shame in My Game; The Working Poor in the Inner City*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999, 388 pages

Katherine Newman delivers an eye-opening look at the urban working poor. First of all, she makes clear that the vast majority want to work even when their lives would be made easier by relying on public assistance. Newman, a cultural anthropologist and Harvard urban studies professor (formerly at Columbia, where she launched her research), conducted a two-year study of more than 200 African-American and Latino fast-food industry employees in Harlem. She found a strong commitment to the work ethic, even though these minimum-wage "McJobs" keep workers below the poverty line and offer little hope of advancement. Using case histories and interviews, Newman delves deeply into the aspirations and frustrations of her subjects. Adult or teenage, native-born or immigrant, who try to make ends meet in a community hard hit by drugs, crime, a shrinking job base and underfunded schools. Among the policy initiatives Newman proposes are school-to-work transition programs, designed to forge close relationships between high school

students and prospective employers, and employers' consortia to move inner-city workers into better jobs. She cites the promising results of private-public partnerships in Milwaukee and San Antonio, which combine job training and placement with provision of support services like day care, transportation and health care.

Poppendeick, Janet, *Sweet Charity: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*, New York: Penguin Putnam, 1999, 354 pages.

Janet Poppendeick (director of the Ctr. for the Study of Family Policy, Hunter Coll., CUNY) examines whether volunteerism, food pantries, and soup lines do more harm than good in this thought-provoking work. The book explores the bitterness and frustration on both sides of the charity business of keeping people fed. During a bad economy, people "did the right thing" by pulling together to help each other. In strong economic times, she reports, people question the number of homeless and hungry and wonder why things haven't improved. The author investigates whether our present system of volunteerism, however charitable, is actually contributing to the problem instead of solving it by letting the government off the hook.

Schlosser, Eric, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*, New York: HarperCollins, 2002

On any given day, one out of four Americans opts for a quick and cheap meal at a fast-food restaurant, without giving either its speed or its thriftiness a second thought. Fast food is so ubiquitous that it now seems as American, and harmless, as apple pie. But the industry's drive for consolidation, homogenization, and speed has radically transformed America's diet, landscape, economy, and workforce, often in insidiously destructive ways. Eric Schlosser, an award-winning journalist, opens his ambitious and ultimately devastating exposé with an introduction to the iconoclasts and high school dropouts, such as Harlan Sanders and the McDonald brothers, who first applied the principles of a factory assembly line to a commercial kitchen. Quickly, however, he moves behind the counter with the overworked and underpaid teenage workers, onto the factory farms where the potatoes and beef are grown, and into the slaughterhouses run by giant meatpacking corporations.

Schwartz-Nobel, Loretta, *Growing Up Empty: the Hunger Epidemic in America*, New York: HarperCollins, 2002, 272 pages

Written in a popular style, with extensive interviews with hungry and starving people this book paints a vivid and disturbing picture of hunger in a land of plenty. There are chapters on hunger in the middle class, caused usually by separation, divorce and abandonment, hunger among the working poor, urban and rural poverty, and hunger among welfare recipients, refugees and immigrants. Invariably it is national and local policy that has created the hunger and not the moral behavior of those who suffer. Most striking is the chapter on poverty in military families – families who often have come from impoverished communities, expecting a better life, only to find that they are no better off and sometimes worse trying to survive on a military salary.

Beth Shulman, *The Betrayal of Work: How Low-Wage Jobs Fail 30 Million Americans and their Families*, New York: New Press, 2003

This is a very useful little book, packed with information about low-wage jobs (with 35 pages of end notes.) Shulman focuses on the 30 million workers who make between \$5.00 and \$9.00 an hour, who face a myriad of problems, all of which are thoroughly described and documented. At this income level, not only is there not enough money for daily living (rent, utilities, food, transportation, etc.) but also work hours are unpredictable, there is no health insurance, child care is erratic and working conditions, unsafe. Altogether there is a lack of security, respect and dignity.

The author briefly profiles many of the conditions faced by particular low-wage employees: child care workers, retail clerks, 1-800 call center workers, janitors, poultry processing workers, home health care aids, hotel maids, receptionists and more. She documents how education, gender, race and ethnicity affect job prospects and wages.. Shulman underlines the difference between welfare and low-wage work. Few people make money off welfare poor. "Corporate executives, shareholders and American consumers are making a lot of money off of [the working poor]." (Page 5)

Low wage work contributes to a spiraling down of social and economic life in many ways. The health of the nation is threatened, the quality of service suffers, children are not able to develop their full potential, families fall apart. While globalization has contributed to the growth of low-wage jobs, especially in manufacturing, the majority of today's low wage jobs cannot be sent abroad: retail, child care, nursing home, cleaners etc.

Sider, Ronald, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, Dallas: Word Publishing, 1990, 254 pages
Rich Christians In An Age Of Hunger is written for our times, when every day more than 34,000 children die of starvation and preventable diseases, and 1.3 billion human beings live in relentless, unrelieved poverty worldwide. Why is there still so much poverty in the world? Conservatives blame sinful individual choices and laziness. Liberals condemn economic and social structures. Who is right? Who is wrong? Both, according to Ronald Sider in this newly revised, expanded and updated edition of *Rich Christians In An Age Of Hunger*. Sider explains that poverty is the result of complex causes, and then he presents practical, workable proposals for change, proposals that should be taken up by every man and every woman who seeks to deserve the title "Christian" and to apply and to follow the teaches of Jesus of Nazareth in the modern world.

Wagner, David, *What's Love Got to Do with It? A Critical Look at American Charity*, New York: The New Press, 2000, 210 pages
A stinging indictment of the self-perpetuating charity industry in the US where the millions that are spent on poverty have made virtually no headway in reducing poverty in the US. Beginning with the paternalistic attitude of church and society toward American Indians, Wagner exposes the abuses, distortions and deliberate social control mechanisms that have been a part of the missionary movement and other expressions of the American charitable enterprise since its inception. This book is a must read for anyone involved in philanthropy, social welfare service provision, or social work education.

Zucchini, David, *The Myth of the Welfare Queen: A Pulitzer Prize-Winning Journalist's Portrait of Women On the Line*, New York: Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group, 1999, 365 Pages
Welfare moms are "the most hated women in America," says Cheri Honkala, a dynamic activist and formerly homeless mom from Philadelphia who is profiled in the engrossing *Myth of the Welfare Queen*. As the American mood toward welfare turned mean in the mid-1990s and politicians worked to radically change who got benefits and for how long, Honkala used her considerable talents in guerrilla theater to fight bureaucrats on behalf of a rising tide of dispossessed women and children. She keeps the TV news spotlight on the homeless with a host of inspired acts: a long-term tent city for displaced families, the takeover of a church, a grungy encampment next to the Liberty Bell and other activities of the Philadelphia-based Kensington Welfare Rights Union. Odessa Williams, a resourceful, resilient woman who supports four grandchildren and then doubles that number when new troubles strike, is the other sympathetic

subject in this tough, humanizing portrait of women on welfare by Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper editor David Zucchino.

VIDEOS

Kinoy, Peter and Pamela Yates, *Battle for Broad*, Skylight Pictures Production, 2000.

In a dazzling 25 minutes this gem of a documentary captures the tension and excitement of four days in the summer of 2000 leading up to the Republican National Convention. With the eyes of the world upon them, poor and homeless people gather to take on the Philadelphia police in a battle to hold an illegal march on the Convention's opening day.

Kinoy, Peter and Pamela Yates, *Poverty Outlaw*, Skylight Pictures Production, 1997.

Poverty Outlaw is a story of hard choices posed by living in poverty without society's "safety net." It is told by one woman who descends from middle-class security to welfare, and then to abject poverty. Her fierce and tenacious drive to raise her children has brought this woman up against bureaucrats, politicians, and her own self-doubt. Eventually the choices she must make have put her on the wrong side of the law. Shot over a period of five years in North Philadelphia, *Poverty Outlaw* tells the story of the birth and development of one of the leading poor peoples' organizations in the U.S., the Kensington Welfare Rights Union. It was an official selection of the Sundance Film Festival, was named "Best Political Film" at the Hawaii International Film Festival, awarded the prize for "Right to Communicate" at the Videolympiads in Cape Town, South Africa, and was aired on PBS stations as part of the series "Just Solutions: Campaigning for Human Rights."

Kinoy, Peter and Pamela Yates, *Outriders*, Skylight Pictures Productions for Independent Television Station, 1999.

In the heady boom times people at the bottom of the economic ladder are becoming invisible, but a handful of desperately poor Americans refuse to disappear. Fifty of them; infants, teens, mothers, and grandmothers, crowd into a "freedom bus" and criss-cross the United States documenting the effects of "welfare reform" on other poor people. Their mission: to place evidence of growing American poverty before the United Nations. The *Outriders* know that this trip won't be easy; hardly enough gas or money, cramped on a bus each day and sleeping-out each night. What the *Outriders* don't know is that this trip will challenge them in unimaginable ways and change each of them forever. This third film in the "Broke in Boom Times" trilogy premiered at the International Peace Conference at the Hague, May, 1999. Broadcast on PBS in 2000. Since then it has been used by hundreds of activists and educators around the country.

Kinoy, Peter and Pamela Yates, *Takeover*, Skylight Pictures Productions. 1997.

On May 1st, 1990, homeless people in eight cities around the country seized empty (HUD) federal housing simultaneously. It was the first national coordinated homeless housing takeover ever. Skylight Pictures followed the takeovers with 12 crews in the eight cities, documenting the secret planning, the illegal occupations, and the hopeful aftermath of this bold endeavor. An official selection of the Sundance Film Festival, broadcast on PBS on the P.O.V. series. Released theatrically at The Film Forum (New York City).

Kinoy, Peter and Pamela Yates, *Teen Dreams*. Skylight Picture Productions, 1994.

Three teens shoot their own autobiographies of living in poverty in this pioneering work.