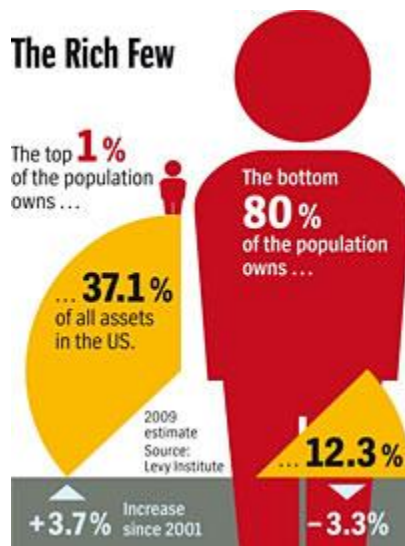


Growing Inequality Threatens Middle Class and Democracy

Posted By [James Parks](#) On August 23, 2010 @ 12:33 pm In [Economy](#), [Legislation & Politics](#) | [4 Comments](#)



Here's why the [One Nation movement](#) ^[1] is so important. The growing inequality between the super-rich and the rest of us is not only shrinking our middle class, it's threatening our democracy.

One Nation is a multi-racial, civil and human rights movement whose mission is to reorder our nation's priorities to invest in our nation's most valuable resource—our people. One Nation is holding an Oct. 2 rally at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., with tens of thousands of activists, including thousands of union members, taking part.

Speaking at Harvard University this past April, AFL-CIO President [Richard Trumka](#) ^[2] warned that massive unemployment and growing inequality are fueling the forces that are spreading hate and misinformation. Saying "the stakes couldn't be any higher," Trumka told the audience:

If you care about defending our country against the apostles of hate, you need to be part of the fight to rebuild a sustainable, high wage economy built on good jobs—the kind of economy that can only exist when working men and women have a real voice on the job.

A recent article in Germany's [Der Spiegel](#) ^[3] looks at the widening gap between rich and poor in the United States that threatens to destroy our middle class. Here are a few disturbing facts:

- Fifty million Americans couldn't afford to buy enough food to stay healthy at some point last year...
- In 1978, the average per capita income for men in the United States was \$45,879. The same figure for 2007, adjusted for inflation, was \$45,113..
- Statistically, less affluent Americans stand a 4 percent chance of becoming part of the upper middle class—a number that is lower than every other industrialized nation except México and Turkey.

Writing at MyDD, [Charles Lemos](#) ^[4] says this rising inequality is dangerous:

[Academic research](#) ^[5] has shown that...as income inequality rises, the power of a wealthy elite to control the political process increases.

It shouldn't surprise that we now live in political environment where unlimited amounts of money can be spent to influence the outcomes of election. In California, [Meg Whitman](#) ^[6] has spent over \$104 million dollars of her own money in an effort to win the governorship... In Connecticut, Linda McMahon spent \$22 million to win the GOP primary... In the GOP gubernatorial primary in Florida, healthcare CEO Rick Scott has spend \$38.7 million so far.

During its Aug. 4-5 meeting in Washington, D.C., the AFL-CIO Executive Council issued a [statement](#) ^[7] supporting One Nation and saying we must fight the fear mongering and scapegoating that is dividing our country. Read it [here](#) ^[7].

URL to article: <http://blog.aflcio.org/2010/08/23/growing-inequality-threatens-middle-class-and-democracy/>

URLs in this post:

[1] One Nation movement: <http://blog.aflcio.org/2010/08/05/one-nation-formed-to-bring-back-the-american-dream>

[2] Richard Trumka: <http://blog.aflcio.org/2010/04/08/trumka-warns-forces-of-hate-fanning-flames-of-workers-economic-anger>

[3] Der Spiegel: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,712496,00.html>

[4] Charles Lemos : <http://mydd.com/2010/8/23/stubborn>

[5] Academic research:

http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/0/0/7/9/pages100796/p100796-1.php

[6] Meg Whitman: <http://blog.aflcio.org/2010/08/06/afscme-whitman%e2%80%99s-100-million-finances-outright-lie/>

[7] statement: <http://www.aflcio.org/aboutus/thisistheaficio/ecouncil/ec08042010a.cfm>

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