

RECAPITALIZING AMERICA: Alternatives to the Corporate Distortion of National Policy. By S. M. Miller and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, \$16.95.) In "Recapitalizing America," two sociologists who claim they are not liberals present a thoughtful critique of Reaganomics as well as some interesting "alternatives to the deeply flawed policies of recapitalization." The villains here are legion and bipartisan. In the opinion of S. M. Miller and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey, Ronald Reagan's illusions are not all that different from Jimmy Carter's. Both have embraced the conventional wisdom that what is good for big business is good for the country. "The bedrock of the [mistaken] diagnosis," say the authors, "is that American productivity is declining; the prescription is to decrease taxation in order to increase incentives in order to promote productivity." The lamentable consequences, we are told, are everywhere in evidence. The authors see an economy that rewards large corporations at the expense of small businesses, a system that "threatens to cow the indigent into submission." The spread of unemployment, the authors warn, "may be the social disaster of the 1980's." Not surprisingly, their own prescriptions center on employment as "the central social policy" and on something they call "a participatory social sector," or a shift in day-to-day decision-making from the top down to the bottom up. "Those who use [any social service] should play a major role in controlling and running it," they write. Government services "should move from a bureaucratic and professional [system] to a community enterprise." The authors think they see the makings of a political coalition that can push us off the Carter-Reagan dime and closer to an economy managed with compassion and with more room for democratic control. The wish may be father to the prophecy, but their careful argument that challenges many a threadbare assumption will encourage those in search of new directions.

—Richard J. Margolis