

# The Rise of the Plutocracy And the Role of Donald Trump

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Plutocracy — rule by the wealthy and powerful — is neither a new development in civilization, nor just a recent phenomenon. It goes back a long way, to the earliest stages of human civilization. Although I don't love writing this, the assumption that the rich can and should call the shots for all of us does seem to be the normal, status-quo state of affairs for the great bulk of human societies.

What has been unusual about America was our attempt in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, to create a more just and equitable society where the accumulation of wealth was concerned. Various intentional and idealistic communities were founded in America's first century that embraced the rejection of conspicuous wealth for some individuals over others (this included the Amish and Mennonite settlements that continue to this day). Most of those communal social experiments failed after varying periods of brief success, and none grew into a mass movement.

The first larger inklings of collective efforts to resist the power of concentrated wealth were the populist co-op farming movements of the late-19th century that grew out of Texas, Minnesota, and elsewhere. By that point, American These were precursors for the early-20th-century trust busting efforts in politics. That period resulted in some noteworthy achievements, such as our system of National Parks in America. After that, the United States settled into a reluctant role of saving Europe from the stalemate of World War I. That opened the door to the amazing and ridiculous decade of so-called economic prosperity that followed called the Roaring Twenties, where conspicuous wealth had a field day.

The most significant developments I'm talking about came after the onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s. Having seen the disaster that resulted from America's untrammelled (and unregulated) pursuit of material wealth, certain individuals, namely Franklin Roosevelt, decided to try something different. FDR's New Deal and its many federal programs were created to help get America back on its feet. Did these programs help? Sort of. Sometimes. Did they work? Not as a recovery for the full ravages of the Great Depression. What finally ended that was World War II, through America flexing its industrial muscle to create the war

materiel — armaments, tanks, guns, airplanes, and the massive amount of non-military supplies — to win the war against the Axis powers and their aggressive worldviews of eugenic purity.

This new “egalitarian economics” in America continued after the War throughout the second half of the 1940s and into the 1950s. America did something truly unprecedented — we created a burgeoning and robust middle class. I was born into that effort in 1949. My family had wealthy relatives and friends, but we were not. We were solidly middle class in our values, frugality, and culture. As a child, I didn’t understand this. I chafed some to see the privileges and pleasures enjoyed by people my family knew, but which I did not. Things like extended vacations, trips to Europe, or tennis lessons were simply not available to me.

Well, the hard fact is that the American middle class didn’t last. Early on, a war began between the rich and the rest of us. That war raged just under the surface through the radical social changes of the 1960s, but the 1970s changed the dynamic. While many in the middle class hoped to increase their wealth and privilege, the rich got their act together and, along with evangelicals, used their abundant wealth to organize a spectacularly successful propaganda wing of right-wing think tanks and media outlets. The 1980s saw their ascendancy with Reagan, and though the war was not yet won, Republicans redoubled their efforts with each subsequent decade.

In the 1950s, corporate top executives such as CEOs were typically rewarded with financial compensation that was about 11 times as much as the average hourly-wage worker within the corporation. By the end of the 1970s, that disparity had risen dramatically to 40 times as much. Each succeeding decade upped the ante. In 1990, CEOs were paid 85 times as much as the average hourly-wage worker. By 2000, the ratio was approaching 500 times. Stiffening resistance to pay disparity slowed further increase, but the tone was set and the damage done.

Stated another way, from 1980 to 2020, average CEO financial compensation rose 1200%, while average hourly-wage worker pay increased only a meager 15%. Basically, the rich had won, and the fix was in.

In my opinion, the single most dramatic change in American culture over my lifetime has been the steady and mostly unchecked transfer of economic wealth upward in our society from the masses in the lower half to the elites at the top. Trillions of dollars of wealth has been concentrated into fewer and fewer hands.

During the 1960s, I knew of only a single billionaire. His name was J. Paul Getty, an American-born British petroleum industrialist. Now, barely half a century later, we have a whole class of billionaires — 800 of them in America, and 2,000 more in other countries around the world. The disproportionate amount of power they

wield over events and policies in civilization is egregious and shocking. In quite literal terms, they run the world.

So, my first assumption is that the middle class I grew up in was never the bedrock of society. It was always a temporary bubble, although I didn't know that at the time. What has happened over the past 50 years is a return to a more normal state of affairs in human social organization.

Astrologically, this shift backwards is indicated by two different but parallel developments.

First is the current Saturn-Pluto cycle in late Capricorn that began in 2020 and will continue through 2052. This is a mundane or civilizational cycle (meaning that it affects the general zeitgeist and applies to everyone on the earth). Saturn-Pluto is far and away the harshest and most cruel of the ten long-term cycles in mundane astrology. Earlier Saturn-Pluto cycles began in 1914 at the onset of the first of two back-to-back world wars that consumed much of the first half of the 20th century, and another kicked off in 1946 at the beginning of the Cold War between America and the Soviet Union. So, the cycle tends to be associated with repressive, difficult, and dangerous times.

The current Saturn-Pluto cycle began right as the COVID pandemic hit the world stage in early 2020 and will (astrologically) cast a dark shadow over the entire decade. Trying to deal with COVID wreaked havoc with national economies around the world, and now, a mere four years later, we are witnessing a global rejection of basically ALL incumbent governments, including America's. This rejection and destruction of existing structures of governing is a hallmark of this cycle's late-Capricorn symbolism and will probably continue for decades to come, since the current Saturn-Pluto cycle will last until 2053.

The second indicator of a shift backwards toward plutocracy was a cascading series of very significant Pluto transits within the birth chart of the United States that transpired sequentially over more than a decade. The first set of these transits occurred in 2008-2011 when Pluto in the heavens was perpendicular to the U.S. natal Midheaven (the vertical axis of the chart), then moved opposite the U.S. natal Venus and Jupiter. These three cascading transits began right at the time of the massive Wall Street investment bank meltdown in 2008 that followed the bursting of the housing mortgage bubble and the ongoing derivatives scandal. The second phase was in 2014-2016 when Pluto moved against the square between the U.S. natal Sun (in Cancer) and natal Saturn (elevated in Libra). Pluto transited opposite the Sun and square Saturn. The third of these major destructive transits transpired in 2020-2021 when Pluto in the heavens opposed America's natal Mercury. Finally, the biggest Plutonian event of all was America's Pluto return in 2021-2022, when Pluto in the heavens moved through late Capricorn and passed over her natal Pluto. That occurred during the COVID pandemic.

The difficult meaning of Pluto in the Sibly USA chart, with its position in late-Capricorn and the 2nd house, is an obsession with and dramatic overemphasis on material wealth, the belief the money is the only value that matters, and the marked tendency of the rich to want to wield power over society.

Pluto's position in the Sibly USA chart also implies that at certain critical points in the history of the nation, America will be dramatically upset by death-and-rebirth experiences, most likely through the destruction of national wealth, as a way of confronting and re-evaluating our collective belief that self-worth is or should be based solely on amassed wealth.

In other words, astrology suggests that America will go down the road of believing material wealth to be the most important factor in the world, until Pluto arises to pull out the rug from under us and we suffer terrible loss. So why didn't that happen during the series of decade-long Plutonian transits in the USA chart? I'd suggest that it may have actually happened, but invisibly, through a hollowing out of the institutions of America. Among those hollowings out were the U.S. Supreme Court decisions confirming money as "free speech," encouraging corporate takeover of our elections, as well as the wholesale abandonment by Democrats of both the working-class and what remains of the middle class. The Democratic party chose to chase wealthy corporate donors over providing support for regular working people. As an astrologer, I fear that the set-up for America's economic collapse was put in place during the 16 years from 2008 to now.

Even though America hasn't yet experienced the harshest losses of "collapse," it looks from where I sit that there's some real chance of that happening if soon-to-be second-time President Donald Trump carries out his campaign promises about the round-up and deportation of many millions of immigrants and the imposition of steep tariffs on imported products. Even months before the inauguration, Trump is selecting lackeys and sycophants for leadership positions in his cabinet and critical government agencies. Every indication is that Trump will do everything he can to overturn the status quo.

As an 11th-house Gemini Sun conjunct Uranus born during a total Lunar eclipse, Donald Trump has always been an entertainer/performer who loves celebrity culture and being the star of the show. Trump is also someone who seeks to throw a monkey wrench into the gears of all traditional hierarchical structures of institutions. If he gets his way (and this election has certainly opened that door), he could become the primary agent of the fulfillment of America's unconscious Plutonian death-wish.

I've been writing about the possible collapse of modern civilization for more than two decades. Whenever I'm shocked by something that happens in America or the world, I say to myself, "*Bill, what did you think collapse would look like?*"

Well, friends, what collapse apparently looks like seems to be imminently where we are now. It's right in front of us, and we're going to have to tough it out and suffer through it. We're in a long, dark tunnel, and I don't see us emerging into the light of a new day any time soon.

As always, I hope I'm wrong about this.