Privatization has been part of the conservative agenda for years, but now it has the power of the Bush administration and the Republican controlled Congress behind it. Schools, Social Security, public lands, the military, prisons—are all considered fair game. But does privatization really serve the public good? Or is it a payoff to powerful corporations intent on replacing the government with a “private profit culture,” in which there is no meaningful public accountability and the bottom line rules all? In *The Fox In The Henhouse: How Privatization Threatens Democracy*, legendary activist Si Kahn and public philosopher Elizabeth Minnich argue that privatization is a threat whose seriousness few appreciate.

Kahn and Minnich expose the damage privatization has done in several specific areas of society, as well as to society as a whole. They argue that corporations are, by their very nature, unable to effectively fulfill the role in society that the federal government has played since the administration of Franklin Roosevelt. There are functions in the public realm that are worth doing for their sake alone—education of our children, defense of our country, and protection of our environment—that should not and cannot be done purely for profit. Without a balance between the public and private sectors, vulnerable populations will be chronically underserved and critical public functions will be under-funded to the point of virtual elimination. As noted columnist Paul Krugman wrote in his column "Killed by Contempt" (NYT, Sept. 5, 2005), "For 25 years the right has been denigrating the public sector, telling us that government is always the problem, not the solution. Why should we be surprised that when we needed a government solution (as in the case of Hurricane Katrina), it wasn't forthcoming?"

Privatization is usually dealt with in dry economic terms, but is anything but a dry inconsequential topic. Si Kahn and Elizabeth Minnich take a passionate and lively approach to the issue. By combining stories, analysis, impassioned argument, and even song lyrics, they discuss how the concept of privatization has evolved, emphasizing the extremist anti-government ideology that motivates most privatization advocates. The authors close the book by outlining principles and practices needed by concerned citizens for combating privatization and its proponents.

*The Fox in the Henhouse* makes a powerful case that the market is not the measure of all things, and that a vital public sector is an indispensable component of a healthy democracy.

*More...*
"Si Kahn and Elizabeth Minnich have written a brilliant book...a great book; it's absolutely marvelous...A brilliant summary of what we have seen since Reagan came into office...the privatization orgy, absolutely the greatest danger to democracy we face."
—Thom Hartmann, host of The Thom Hartmann Show

"While we stare at American Idol, the privatizing corporations and their right-wing political buddies are running the Constitution through a paper shredder. Like this excellent and timely book says, these days the foxes aren't just guarding the henhouse—they're on the inside. Unless we want to be devoured by the corporate foxes, we chickens better get organized. Reading The Fox in the Henhouse is a great place to start."
—Jim Hightower, New York Times best-selling author and publisher of the populist newsletter, the Hightower Lowdown

"The Fox In The Henhouse is one of the most important political books of the year. The authors make a compelling moral case that American treatment of prisoners has silently been shifting from a function of a civilized society to a means of profit with decreasing regard for essential and long held moral boundaries. No one can talk authoritatively about the moral climate of America without taking into account the issues this book brings to light."
—Danny Goldberg, CEO, Air America Radio

"Inspiring to read, The Fox in the Henhouse will be of great value to organizers, activists, citizens of conscience in these perilous days ahead. At a time when nothing less than our democracy is at stake, when extremists want to roll back our hard-earned rights and achievements, it offers a spirited blueprint for all citizens who care about renewing America's best and most generous traditions."
—Katrina vanden Heuvel, Publisher, The Nation

"This book has some fancy long words in it, but it also has some great stories and songs. You'll learn what some of the long words really mean—the long words used by high and mighty people in this land of the free. Remember, Ben Franklin was age 81 when the U.S. Constitution was finally put together 218 years ago. A woman asked him, 'Mr. Franklin, what kind of a government do we have now?' He replied, 'A republic. If you can keep it.'"
—Pete Seeger, Musician

More...
Si Kahn has worked for 40 years as a civil rights, labor, and community organizer. He is executive director of Grassroots Leadership (www.grassrootsleadership.org), a 25-year-old progressive non-profit organization that works to abolish for-profit private prisons, jails and detention centers. A songwriter and musician (www.sikahn.com), Si Kahn is releasing his 15th CD *Blood From Stones* concurrently with *The Fox in the Henhouse*.

Elizabeth Minnich is Senior Fellow at the Association of American Colleges and Universities. She has worked for 40 years as a university professor and administrator, author, speaker, workshop leader, consultant, and scribe. A feminist philosopher, she has lectured at over 150 colleges and universities (www.elizabethminnich.com).

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*The Fox In The Henhouse: How Privatization Threatens Democracy*

By Si Kahn and Elizabeth Minnich

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