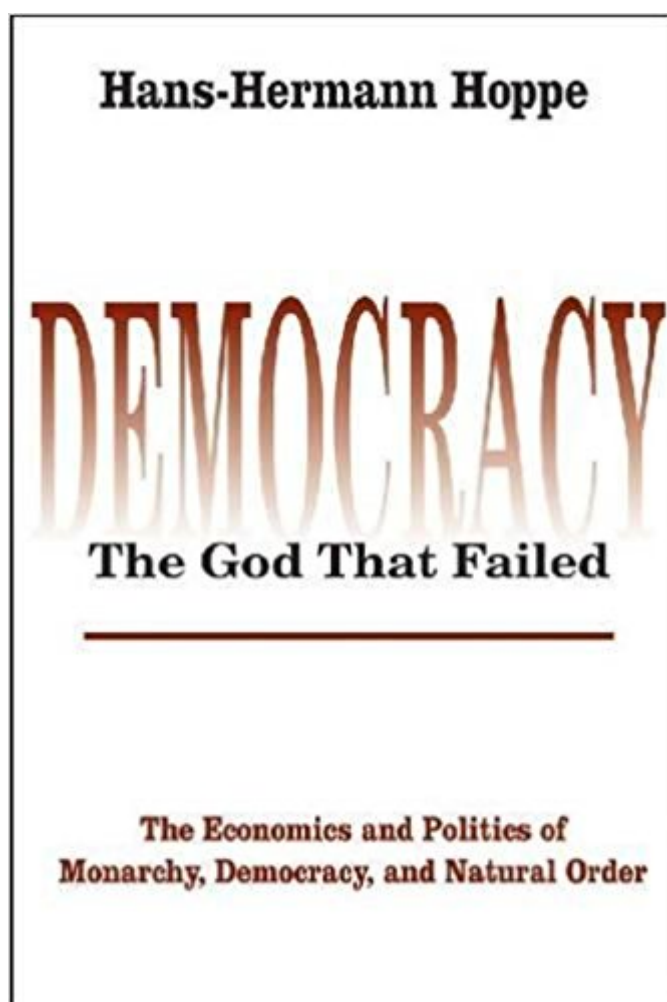


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Democracy – The God That Failed: The Economics And Politics Of Monarchy, Democracy And Natural Order (Perspectives On Democratic Practice)





Synopsis

The core of this book is a systematic treatment of the historic transformation of the West from monarchy to democracy. Revisionist in nature, it reaches the conclusion that monarchy is a lesser evil than democracy, but outlines deficiencies in both. Its methodology is axiomatic-deductive, allowing the writer to derive economic and sociological theorems, and then apply them to interpret historical events. A compelling chapter on time preference describes the progress of civilization as lowering time preferences as capital structure is built, and explains how the interaction between people can lower time all around, with interesting parallels to the Ricardian Law of Association. By focusing on this transformation, the author is able to interpret many historical phenomena, such as rising levels of crime, degeneration of standards of conduct and morality, and the growth of the mega-state. In underscoring the deficiencies of both monarchy and democracy, the author demonstrates how these systems are both inferior to a natural order based on private-property. Hoppe deconstructs the classical liberal belief in the possibility of limited government and calls for an alignment of conservatism and libertarianism as natural allies with common goals. He defends the proper role of the production of defense as undertaken by insurance companies on a free market, and describes the emergence of private law among competing insurers. Having established a natural order as superior on utilitarian grounds, the author goes on to assess the prospects for achieving a natural order. Informed by his analysis of the deficiencies of social democracy, and armed with the social theory of legitimation, he foresees secession as the likely future of the US and Europe, resulting in a multitude of region and city-states. This book complements the author's previous work defending the ethics of private property and natural order. *Democracy - The God that Failed* will be of interest to scholars and students of history, political economy, and political philosophy.

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Customer Reviews

Hans-Hermann Hoppe received his Ph.D. and his "Habilitation" from the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. He is currently professor of economics at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, senior fellow of the Ludwig von Mises Institute, Auburn, AL, and editor of the Journal of Libertarian Studies: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly Review.

I bought this book because of the situation in Chile, my country, that lives under an incompetent socialist government. Thinking about a present situation brings us normally to ask some questions about the reality: Is it in fact democracy a dead end? Is it any alternative? Is it possible to put limits to a government? Are taxes fair? Are governments really thinking on us, on our welfare, when they legislate or control? Well, my answer before reading the book was that democracy is a failure because of the size and the power it has reached, and the asymmetry that occurs between what it pursues and what it gets. Ancient city-states were proportionate to the government as long as almost any citizen could participate in the discussion and in the solution of any public affair. Democracy, let's say, was just at the round of the corner of any single citizen. Today, that is not the case. Not anymore. Hans-Hermann Hoppe's "Democracy, the god that failed," has written a superb book on this topic, analyzing the present state of the world as a derivative of the previous state which was --fundamentally-- monarchical. That's why the in the cover we read "the economics and politics of monarchy, democracy, and natural order." As you read, you discover that this sentence represents exactly the content of "Democracy..." Thus, in thirteen chapters, Hoppe compares the present democracy with the past monarchy and then proposes that the natural order is the very alternative (and the solution) to break the dead end which is democracy (or so it seems). His insight in this respect is the clue to convince you that, for instance, democracy wasn't an advance or a social conquest with respect to monarchy. He is a professor and the hours giving lectures are evident. He is not only talking to you, he is also teaching you. In general, as a reader, I appreciate the author's capacity to show things from different angles, specially when the topic is so common, universal, and close to you (as it is the case with democracy). We are so submerged in politics that

we have the very equivocal idea that we understand the whole phenomenon. After reading Hoppe's book you discover that there was some loose ends that usually you don't take into account and that deserve your attention. Now, the basis of the discussion (the floor) is private property, economy, state interventionism, and taxes. Ludwig von Mises, Murray Rothbard, and the Austrian School of economics are the ghostly presences whose words, works, and insights remember you those of the prophets or heroes of religion. In fact they are both prophets and heroes --although of a non religion quest-- as long as they developed a new way of looking at the problems that liberalism faced when the end of the monarchies and the rise of democracies left it out of the party. Democracy, Hoppe says, was a model imposed by the U.S. after World War I. Since then, nothing has changed. Who would dare to put into question a model which rules almost all over the world? Well, the book touches any single theme in depth so it has nothing to do with a pamphlet, therefore do not expect a fast reading because it demands time for a non expert to comprehend some analysis, long footnotes or economic concepts like "time preference." A couple of consultations here and there will give you, anyway, the clarity for continuing the reading. I should add here that the study of the past and the present is the best part of the book. In this regard, the weakest part is the last one, where Hoppe talks about the future, and proposes the "prospect for revolution" based on what private owners could do for living without a state. He talks about the possibilities of structures like insurance companies for protecting you of the risks and dangers of living inevitably among bad guys. Not only that, he also holds that those companies should act against any menace to a free society (of private owners). As long as it is true that in theory anarcho-capitalism is better than democracy for fulfilling a life in freedom, in practice is difficult to imagine how all this is going to work in a world with no states, plenty of independent and prosperous cities. Unfortunately, Hoppe doesn't put much discussion in giving you an idea of what detractors think about it and I think it would have been a valuable plus for the book. My only objection to "Democracy," is the repetition of some topics in several chapters. Even some notes are repeated and that, I guess, should have been avoided with a more rigorous edition. At the beginning of the book the author says that much of the studies "have grown out of speeches delivered at various conferences," and I'm sorry to say that it is too much obvious. A very good companion for "Democracy" is *For Good and Evil: The Impact of Taxes on the Course of Civilization* (Series; 2), *The Evolution of Everything: How New Ideas Emerge*, and *Economics in One Lesson: The Shortest and Surest Way to Understand Basic Economics*. In sum, "Democracy" is a very instructive, interesting, and necessary book on democracy, a god that really failed.

Democracy has come to be the great presupposition of the Age- like breathing in action, involuntary, unconscious, unthinking, democracy has near become evaluatively synonymous with so many emotionally laden "positive" affirmations. Hoppe, such being the case, is one of the great heretics of the times. This work is a step outside, a breath of fresh air from the suffocating clamoring of the masses for recognition in the sweltering collectivities of our modern Westphalian states. Rightfully, the work has been deemed part of the neoreactionary canon. The work is a warning, a great blowing of the Watchman horns, as Paul Gottfried ended his work "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt:" "In Greek mythology the Litai, the divine respondents to our supplications, come only after Ate, the goddess of mischief, has wrought havoc. For the managerial class and its supporters, it might be best if the repairing deities come sooner rather than later."

Everyone should read this book.

Personally I had never fallen for the myth of democracy (neither had any of the founding fathers of America; do a web search on James Madison quotes, for example). It ought to be obvious to any thinking person, or anyone who talks to the typical voter, that mob rule cannot work. But my objection was always more along the lines of that of Traditionalists, such as Julius Evola. Despite my knowledge of Austrian economics, of which Hoppe is of course a devotee, I had never thought of objecting on a purely economic basis. That's what makes this book so valuable: Hoppe uses economic theory to demolish any illusions any serious person might have about mob rule. The book is not perfect. Austrianism is itself rather ideologically limited, especially compared to, say, modern ideas such as Elliott Wave analysis, which understands that markets are not logical but emotional, and that civilization proceeds in predictable waves. Hoppe lacks the perspective that comes with an understanding of history as cyclical. This causes him to imagine that ideas are what drives social organizations; of course, ideas are only invented after the fact, to rationalize whatever stage a given society has reached. Humans act on instinct. All civilizations pass through the same phases. There is nothing that can stop the ongoing collapse of the West. Likewise, monarchies always follow the anarcho-capitalism phase Hoppe prefers (which in practical terms will reduce to a benign feudalism, as the natural elites emerge as rulers of small domains). Monarchies are in turn replaced by mobs as the society comes unglued. It is much the same on the individual level. The poor strive and save and become rich; the rich become decadent and spend their capital inheritance, and again become poor, and the cycle starts anew... Nevertheless this is the best book on political theory I have seen simply because it is the only one written from the perspective of economics. It gets extra points for

not shrinking from very important ideas which are controversial, for example footnoting the work of social scientists such as J. P. Rushton, which of course the false schools of sociologists and egalitarians despise and fear. And personally I like this better than Evola's pro-monarchist works because it doesn't ever devolve into mushy mysticism. An absolute must for the bookshelf of anyone who wants to understand the exact mechanisms by which the West was undone.

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