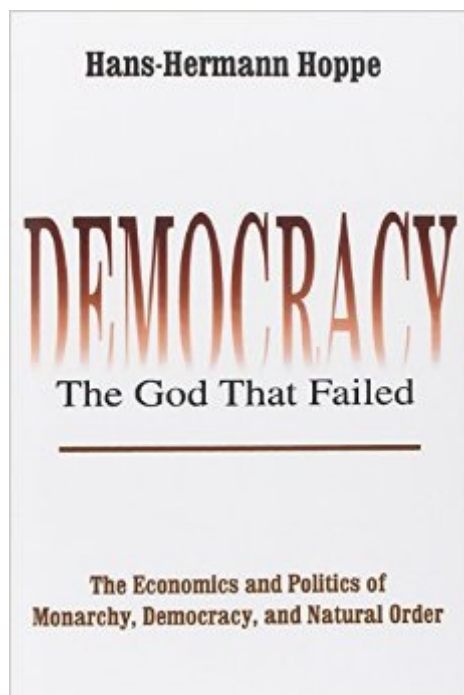


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Democracy--The God That Failed: The Economics And Politics Of Monarchy, Democracy, And Natural Order (Perspectives On Democratic Practice)



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. Democracyâ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

Jack Rain, a reviewer on another site, used the phrase above to describe this book, and I unhesitatingly appropriate it for my review because it is so dead-on accurate. This is a very, very good, and very, very important, book. It's also a strong argument for the author's elevation to the pantheon of pro-freedom writers and philosophers, alongside Mises, Rothbard, Spooner, de Jasay, and a select few others. I have to admit that I found the first two chapters, especially, to be tough reading, and had to work through them several times. The economic analysis in the sections on time preference, for example -- while the outline of the argument becomes clear soon enough -- need extra time for all the shadings and implications to fall into place. After that, though, the truly important work begins, as Hoppe is engaged in nothing less than (to use his own words from a slightly different context) "an ideological campaign of delegitimizing the idea and institution of democratic government." In so doing, he undertakes a two-pronged approach of both demonstrating the failures of democracy (failures that are part of the very nature of democracy, and therefore irreparable) and the superiority of "natural order" -- a condition known by many other names too, including anarcho-capitalism and individualist or free-market anarchism. Personally, I responded most strongly to Hoppe's argument that "conservatives today must be antistatist libertarians and, equally important, [that] libertarians must be conservatives" [p. 189]. In so arguing, Hoppe gives us a thorough and revealing deconstruction of modern "conservatism" (so-called), showing how many self-styled conservatives are in fact merely the right wing of social democracy.

Hans-Hermann Hoppe is a very important political economist and philosopher in the intellectual tradition of the Austrian School of Economics -- I would say he is without a doubt the most important anarchocapitalist thinker since Murray Rothbard. His book, *Democracy: The God That Failed*, is the most devastating and solid critique of democracy I have seen, and is essential reading for everyone in our new millennium. Democracy is conventionally regarded as the best form of government. Even most rigorous anti-statists such as Murray Rothbard (to whom Hoppe is intellectually indebted) looked upon democracy as an improvement over alternative systems of government. Professor Hoppe dissents with this view, averring that monarchy (ancien-regime-style)

is a 'better' system than democracy. However, this is not a defense of monarchy, for Hoppe sees any form of state as morally unjustifiable. Rather, Democracy: The God That Failed serves a twin purpose: firstly, to interpret history and account for the dramatic rise in exploitation observed in the democratic age. Secondly, Hoppe asserts the moral and economic superiority of a system he calls "natural order" -- a stateless society of private property anarchy. By what insight does Hoppe show that monarchy is the superior system? It is shockingly brilliant in its simplicity, yet the implications that follow are critical. What Hoppe states is this: A monarch is essentially the private owner of the government -- all exploited resources are **owned** by him. (Perhaps the insightful reader will already be able to predict Hoppe's conclusion.) As such, he will work to maximize both current income and the total capital value of his estate. In effect, he owns the kingdom.

Dr. Hans-Herman Hoppe is a professor of economics and fellow at the Ludwig von Mises Institute. It is obvious from reading this work that his primary intellectual debt is to Ludwig von Mises and Murray Rothbard. Prof. Hoppe, following Rothbard, advocates anarcho-capitalism, or, as he calls it, "natural order." He is not a monarchist, but shows the many advantages of monarchy over democracy. As Prof. Hoppe tells us, both Rothbard and von Mises, although by no means supporting most of the changes in the twentieth century, held a generally favorable opinion of the change from monarchy to democracy. However, Prof. Hoppe shows that this transition was not at all favorable to the protection of civil rights and restricting the growth of government. In fact, just the opposite happened. Contemporaneous with this change, we have seen a decline in morals and individual responsibility. This is largely explained by Prof. Hoppe's fascinating discussion of time preference to democratic and monarchical governments. A monarchical government is more likely to enact policies similar to what an individual, unfettered by government, would do. Take for example immigration. A monarch, who in some sense "owns" the country, will establish an immigration policy that reflects his country's need for new citizens. He will ask what the immigrant can contribute to the economy, whether the person has good values, and whether he is likely to become a public charge. The democratic government will permit massive immigration, more concerned with social engineering and expanding the pool of voters who will support the welfare state. He also shows that, contrary to many supposed conservatives and libertarians, "free trade" doesn't require "free immigration."

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