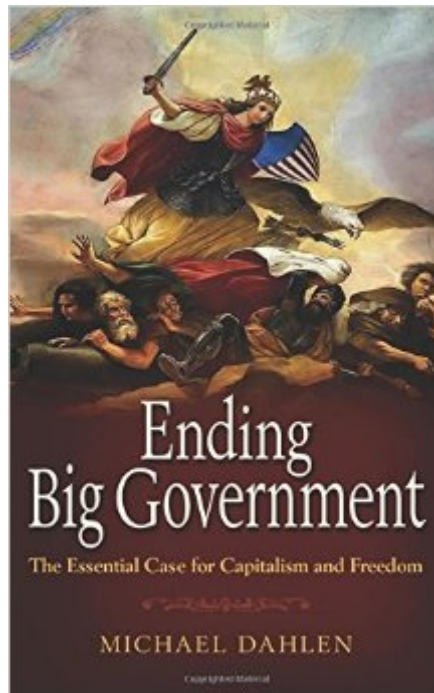


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Ending Big Government: The Essential Case For Capitalism And Freedom



Synopsis

Why capitalism is moral and practical . . . and why big government is neither America has faced many fiscal and economic problems in the last decade: the housing bubble and the financial crisis, stagnant economic growth and high unemployment, record budget deficits and unsustainable debt. What do these problems have in common? They were all caused by statism. Statism denotes any system of big government, a government that gains power at the expense of individual freedom, a government that uses its power to confiscate and redistribute wealth, to regulate and control the economy, and to micromanage citizens' behavior. As Michael Dahlen shows in *Ending Big Government: The Essential Case for Capitalism and Freedom*, the only rational alternative to statism and the only antidote to the problems it has caused is free-market, laissez-faire capitalism. This is the system of limited government, the system of economic and political freedom. It is a system that has created more wealth, offered more opportunity, and lifted more people out of poverty than any other system. Yet it is relentlessly demonized. We are told that businessmen pay "starvation wages," that the rich get richer while the poor get poorer, and that the free market is impractical--prone to crises, depressions, mass unemployment, and coercive monopolies. Michael Dahlen dispels these and many other myths. He shows that a system of free markets and limited government is not only practical; he shows that it is moral, as it is the only system that recognizes each individual's inalienable right to his own life. A provocative weave of history, philosophy, and political economy, *Ending Big Government* shows that laissez-faire capitalism is incontestably superior to statism.

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Customer Reviews

Mr. Dahlen thinks he has it all figured out, and I think he almost does when it comes to political economic systems. He does a fine job of arguing for the superiority of capitalism over statist systems like socialism and fascism. But, he insists that organized religion, in fact any religious faith, falls under the same fundamental philosophy as the statist political economies, which he identifies as altruism. And, he seems compelled to keep coming back to that argument. He is an uncompromising objectivist and as intolerant of faith as the statist are of individualism AND faith. Here's the problem. First, it is a mistake to associate statism with altruism. Perhaps (some) statist theorists and the left's useful idiots could be characterized as altruistic, but the tyrants and would-be tyrants who have been the drivers of statism have been anything but altruistic. Even among the liberal elite in democracies like ours, the statist-leaning politicians are motivated little by altruism, but rather by power appetite and narcissistic superiority complexes (we know what's good for you better than you do). Second, Dahlen exhibits little more than a superficial familiarity with the Christian faith. He conflates crimes and excesses of things done in the name of Christianity with the clear doctrine of the New (and Old) Testament. And, he exhibits no understanding of the incalculable contributions that Christianity has made to the world. Yes, capitalism and free markets have contributed greatly by unleashing the individual's creative spirit, but it is doubtful that capitalism could have emerged without the faith-based understanding that all individuals are equal in the sight of God, who has endowed them with certain inalienable rights that are understood to be foundational for free market economies.

I give a big thumbs up to *Ending Big Government*, a book that fully deserves a five star rating. Michael Dahlen has written a valuable addition to the literature of free market capitalism, a book that I will keep as a ready reference. *Ending Big Government* should get a prominent place in the intellectual ammunition department of anyone who wants to defend free markets. Dahlen's book is addressed to those who are already sympathetic to capitalism and concerned about the growing intrusion of government in our lives. The author demonstrates that American capitalism has been undermined and distorted by increasing government controls, resulting in the foundering mixed economy of the present day. The only rational alternative to this hybrid monstrosity, he argues, is laissez faire capitalism, implemented at every level of the government and the economy. Dahlen makes his case by expanding on Ayn Rand's claim that pure capitalism is not only the

most productive social system, but also the only moral system. As the author himself states:
"This book will show that capitalism is moral and practical while also showing that statism is immoral and impractical. Toward that end, this book systematically contrasts the history, economics, and the underlying philosophy of each system." Dahlen makes good on this promise, and the result is a book that is not only interesting and enjoyable, but also of lasting value, as I will describe below. Before I get into the highlights of the book, I have a minor quibble about the author's choice of a title. As Dahlen notes in Acknowledgements, the original working title was "Capitalism vs. Big Government," which he rejected in favor of a "better" (presumably more marketable) title.

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