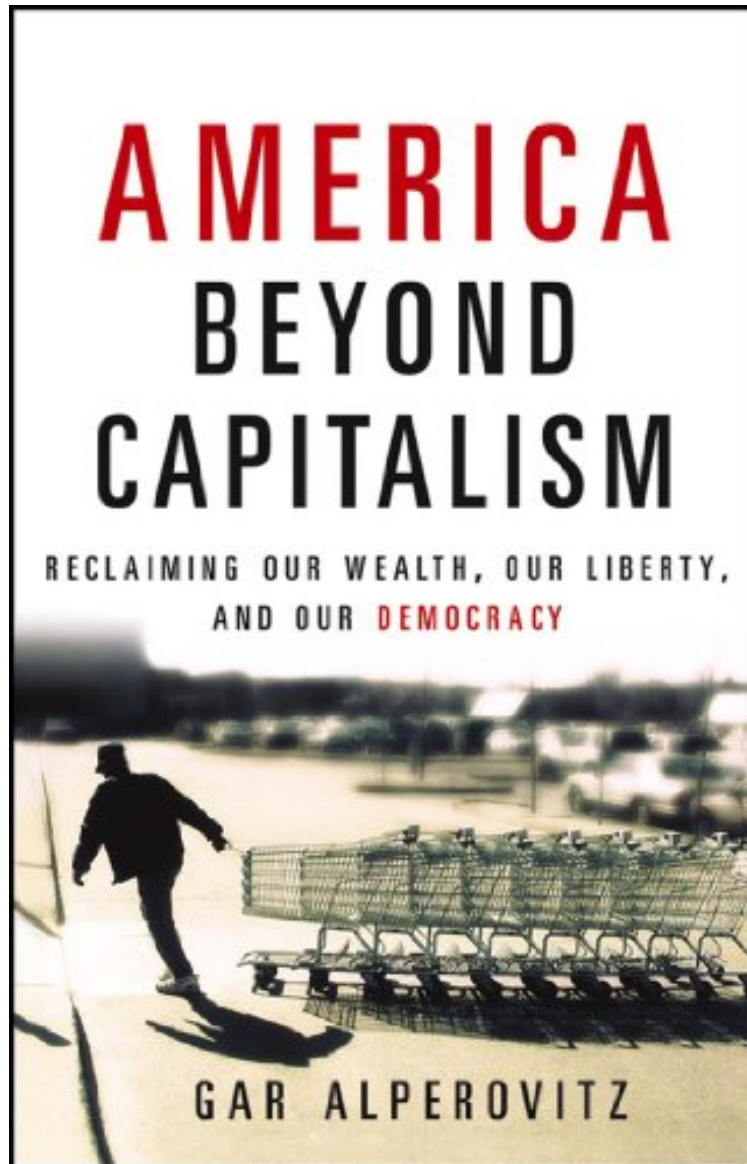


America Beyond Capitalism: Reclaiming our Wealth, Our Liberty, and Our Democracy

Gar Alperovitz

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Gar Alperovitz : America Beyond Capitalism: Reclaiming our Wealth, Our Liberty, and Our Democracy before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised America Beyond Capitalism: Reclaiming our Wealth, Our Liberty, and Our Democracy:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Capitalism doesn't seem to be working for the working class. By Marcus Pete Hoover Jr Capitalism doesn't seem to be working for the working class. This book takes a hard look at, if

not replacing it, at least tweaking it in some areas and gives some suggestions on how to survive it. The ever increasing accumulation of wealth to the top one percent and widening inequality with the accompanying insecurity of the workers causes great anxiety. The working class feels more powerless as the financial failings solutions, prescribed by the governing class, fall heaviest on those least able to afford it. It's like the 1920s song says, "there's nothing surer, the rich get rich and the poor get poorer." 12 of 13 people found the following review helpful. ypf_reviewBy Malcum LittleFine collection of alternative methods of economic development instead of following the same old neoclassical capitalist model. Richly described examples of things occurring beneath the mainstream media's radar yet viable on small to moderate scale by factual existence and providing plausible choices for large scale deployment if and when the opportunity comes nationally. Makes the excellent connection between need for new institutions to promote community wealth acquisition, community stability and real democracy versus plutocracy. A very worthy read! 7 of 9 people found the following review helpful. The Next Step ForwardBy Subversive TeacherThis book is remarkable in that it advocates a dramatic societal transformation, but does so in a practical and realistic manner. Gar describes the new social order as a "Pluralist Commonwealth", a society based on civil liberty, means of shared wealth ownership, and decentralized, democratic institutions. The book's real strength is that it does not rely solely on theory. Even though much time is devoted to developing Alperovitz's perspective on the adverse effects of wealth concentration (a perspective backed with an avalanche of statistics), most of the book is a broad overview of presently existing, but quite obscure, institutions. Credit unions, worker coops, municipally owned housing, non-tax based government revenue, individual development accounts, and community development corporations (just to name a few institutions mentioned) are all studied in both historical development and contemporary application. It becomes easier to envision a new society when the nascent institutions which, the new society will be based on already exists. No abstract theory here, just tangible examples of alternatives to the neo-liberal order. The book's title should not discourage conservatives though. Act's of conservative activist and politicians are also touched down on and praised for utilizing pluralist commonwealth principles. This is truly a book for everyone.

"Be prepared for a mind-opening experience."-The Christian Century"Highly readable; excellent for students. . . . A tonic and eye-opener for anyone who wants a politics that works."-Jane Mansbridge, Adams Professor, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University"America Beyond Capitalism comes at a critical time in our history-when we all know our system isn't working but we are not sure what can be done about it. This book takes us outside the confines of orthodox thinking, imagines a new way of living together, and then brings that vision back into reality with a set of eminently practical ideas that promise a truly democratic society."-Howard Zinn, author of A People's History of the United States"Succeeds brilliantly in taking the Jeffersonian spirit into the last bastion of privilege in America, offering workable solutions for making the American economy one that is truly of, by, and for the people."-Jeremy Rifkin, author of The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream"The kind of careful, well-researched, and practical alternative progressives have been seeking. And it's more-visionary, hopeful, even inspirational. I highly recommend it."-Juliet Schor, author of The Overspent American: Why We Want What We Don't Need"A compelling and convincing story of the future."-William Greider, author of The Soul of Capitalism: Opening Paths to a Moral Economy

From Publishers WeeklyScheduled for publication on the 75th anniversary of the Black Thursday stock market crash, this closely argued treatise from University of Maryland political economist Alperovitz (The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb) claims we are in the midst of another deep economic, social and political crisis. Capitalism, democracy, equality and liberty have disappeared from the United States, he says. Corporations and rich people control the wealth and government; their power destroys liberty and the entrepreneurial freedom necessary for capitalism. Traditional reforms are inadequate. Progressive taxation and social programs only redistribute income; we need to redistribute wealth. Easier voter registration and campaign finances miss the point; federal power must be reallocated to regional governments and local citizens' associations whose scale makes participatory democracy possible. We need shorter work weeks, stronger labor unions, worker-owned or directed firms, less debt and more respect for the environment. The first six chapters could have been written in the 1970s. The statistics and quotes are current, but there is no discussion of recent global experience with many of the ideas. The remainder of the book combines these ideas into what the author calls "21st century populism" working toward a "Pluralist Commonwealth." The book's strength lies in its integration of diverse populist issues into a coherent agenda rooted in deep American values from the Declaration of Independence. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.From BooklistAlperovitz, an academic and political economist, calls on Democrats to "change the system," believing many Americans are searching for new policies as we face large deficits; unemployment; terrorism; and loss of belief in equality, liberty, and democracy. In his view, our unresponsive government, growing inequality, corruption, sprawl, and rising personal debt are reflections of a creative free market system that is no longer completely free or totally creative. Examining the extraordinary income and wealth controlled by elites and major corporations, he suggests that the future requires the development of a more community-centered,

democratic market system. The author offers four fundamental suggestions to address current problems, including developing new institutions that hold wealth on behalf of small and large public groups (community-centered enterprises and worker-owned firms), and a regional rather than continental political system to appropriately represent a rapidly growing American population. His well-framed insight will appeal to a more liberal segment of library patrons during this presidential election year. Mary Whaley Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved

From the Inside Flap We can all imagine a future where there's more to the American way than our current no-holds-barred capitalism, but will that future ever arrive? In his new book, Gar Alperovitz, the renowned scholar of politics, economics, and history, predicts that we've reached a major turning point in history. *America Beyond Capitalism* argues that the first decade of the twenty-first century—challenged by growing economic inequality, the devaluing of civil liberties, and a government unresponsive to the people—is already producing conditions that will force the United States to undergo historic changes. There have been five major political realignments in American history, from before the Progressive Era to beyond the New Deal. All have occurred in the face of the argument that major change was impossible. *America Beyond Capitalism* shows that increasing numbers of citizens are also quietly beginning to take meaningful local and national action that can ultimately give explosive force to a new approach. The fall of communism and the painful ramifications of a globalized market free-for-all have left many yearning for a realistic alternative. Alperovitz makes clear that capitalism and socialism are academic ideas that have never existed in their purest forms anywhere. Our nameless current system, which is a haphazard one, mostly controlled by the largest corporations, is not the only one possible. If we look closely, *America Beyond Capitalism* suggests, the basic outlines of an achievable and community-sustaining vision are quietly taking shape—a vision that offers far better market-based ways to use our vast wealth to realize equality, democracy, and liberty. The rapid changes of the early 1960s, a time of explosive ferment and new ideas, seemed to come out of nowhere. So, too, did the modern conservative revolution—which once was seen as a marginal political project. Fundamental change, Alperovitz suggests, is the rule, not the exception, in history, including in our own time, here and now. Eloquently reasoned, passionately argued, and grounded in a wealth of irrefutable facts and data, *America Beyond Capitalism* offers anyone who wants to take part in this momentous enterprise a new way to think about—and then get to work to help build—a new future.