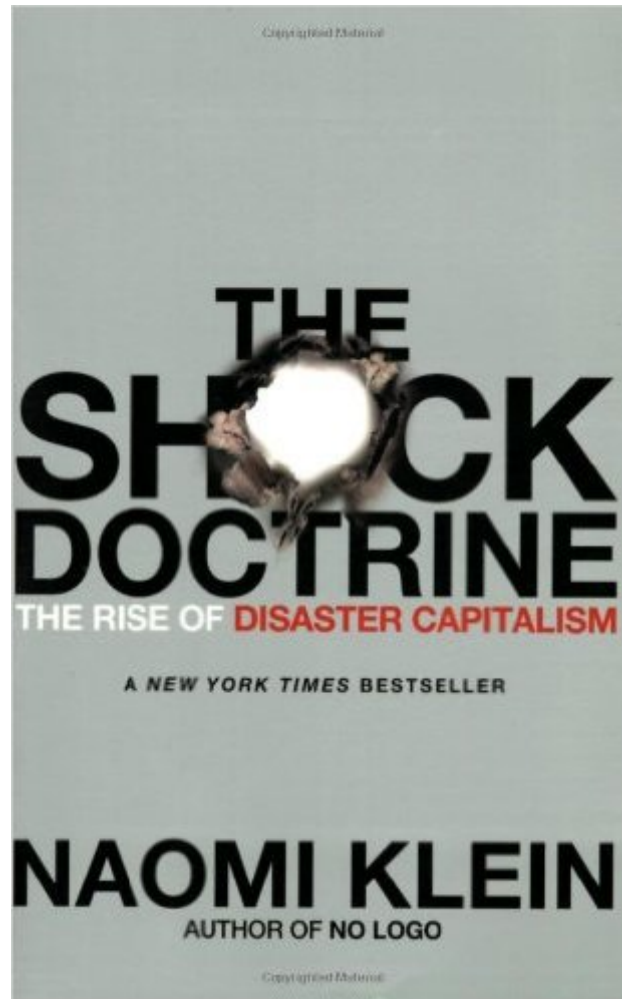


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# The Shock Doctrine: The Rise Of Disaster Capitalism



## Synopsis

In this groundbreaking alternative history of the most dominant ideology of our time, Milton Friedman's free-market economic revolution, Naomi Klein challenges the popular myth of this movement's peaceful global victory. From Chile in 1973 to Iraq today, Klein shows how Friedman and his followers have repeatedly harnessed terrible shocks and violence to implement their radical policies. As John Gray wrote in *The Guardian*, "There are very few books that really help us understand the present. *The Shock Doctrine* is one of those books."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Naomi Klein's *THE SHOCK DOCTRINE* is a stunning indictment of American corporatism and institutionalized globalization, on a par with such groundbreaking works as Harrington's *THE OTHER AMERICA* and Chomsky's *HEGEMONY OR SURVIVAL*. Comprehensive in its breadth and remarkable for its well-researched depth, Klein's book is a highly readable but disturbing look at how the neoliberal economic tenets of Milton Friedman have been implemented across the world over the last thirty-plus years. The author's thesis is simply stated: that neoliberal economic programs have repeatedly been implemented without the consent of the governed by creating and/or taking advantage of various forms of national shock therapy. Ms. Klein asserts that in country after country, Friedman and his Chicago School followers have foisted their tripartite economic prescription - privatization, deregulation, and cutbacks in social welfare spending - on an unsuspecting populace through decidedly non-democratic means. In the early years, the primary vehicle was dictatorial

military force and accompanying fear of arrest, torture, disappearance, or death. Over time, new organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank were employed instead, using or creating impossible debt burdens to force governments to accept privatization of state-owned industries and services, complete removal of trade barriers and tariffs, forced acceptance of private foreign investment, and widespread layoffs. In more recent years, terrorism and its response as well as natural disasters like hurricanes and tsunamis have wiped clean enough of the slate to impose these Friedmanite policies on people too shocked and focused on recovering to realize what was happening until it was too late. According to Ms.

**\*\*FYI\*\*** Please note to the best of my knowledge I am NOT related to Naomi Klein. **\*\*If you wonder** what happened to the middle class, why poverty is on the rise and what the economies in a democracy, dictatorship and "communism" have in common, you'll find lots of food for thought in Naomi Klein's THE SHOCK DOCTRINE. Tracing the rise of the "Chicago Boys" laissez-faire economic beliefs, their impact on South America, China, Russia, Poland and South Africa and how it impacted their form of government, Klein makes a compelling argument for the flaws in Milton Friedman's economic science. Naomi Klein's book looks at the conflict between Milton Friedman's "laissez-faire" approach to business and government where business is largely unregulated running itself and government is little more than a bare bones system. According to Klein, Friedman believed that the economic theories he espoused would be perfect and that any problems with it would be due to outside forces interfering with his free market world. His approach was in complete contrast to Keynes who believed that the prime mission of politicians and economists was to prevent unemployment and avoid a depression or recession by regulating the market place. People like John Kenneth Galbraith (heir to Keynes' mantle) believed part of the purpose of economic regulation was to keep our capitalist system fair and prevent a small group of businesses from dominating the market. Galbraith also believed in bills like the Glass-Steagall act which created a firewall between Wall Street and various banking institutions (which former President Clinton helped to eliminate).

Naomi Klein has written this book about the rise of what she calls "disaster capitalism": the global imposition/adoption of Chicago School (neoliberal) economics since the early 1970s. This is a particularly important book because, while many have written about the same topic, I have never seen it treated in a form that is both holistic (ie. a global history) and accessible (ie. largely free from the academic jargon of economics and social theory). The book does suffer from some problems however. Klein's main thesis is problematic. She writes that the idea of economic shock therapy

arose out of the same logic as Electric Convulsive Therapy (ECT). This idea is to create or exploit a destructive event in order to create regression, passivity, and a 'blank slate' on which to build a new order. In supporting this thesis, Klein uses all of Part I of her book to write about psychological torture and the CIA's mind control experiments. She attempts to develop a 'poetics of torture' that links the individual violence of ECT to the structural violence that occurs when neoliberalism is imposed as a governing strategy. Klein is no poet however, and the metaphor seems to die pretty early on in the book. She does thankfully offer a more implicit thesis that she invokes more regularly and supports more thoroughly: free markets did not develop through freedom, but through authoritarian or technocratic interventions. Secondly, Klein treats capitalism as if it were only 35 years old. Her book however is thematically similar to the work of another woman who wrote on the same issues a century before: Rosa Luxemburg. By only going as far back as the rise of Keynesianism and developmentalism, Klein makes it seem as though neoliberalism is a radical historical exception.

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