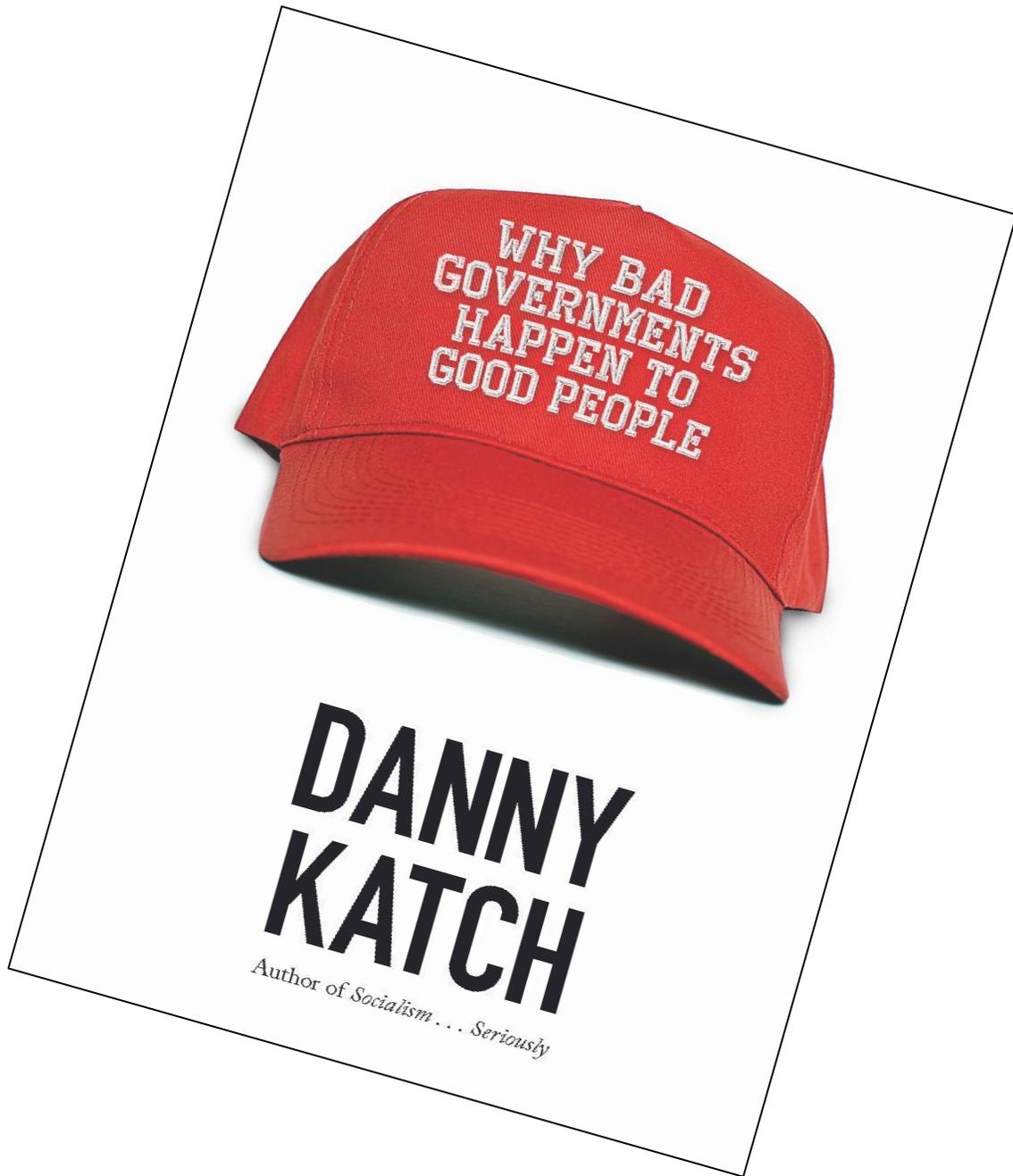


Discussion Questions and Study Guide



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Part I: Democracy in America—Would Be Nice

1. Katch argues “Trump is a tumor, not the cancer.” What is the “deeper sickness” we need to treat of which Donald Trump is just a symptom?
2. How does the 2011 Capitol occupation in Wisconsin show both the promise of mass resistance movements and some of the political weaknesses of these movements?
3. In what ways is American democracy completely undemocratic?
4. Why should one be cautious in equating election results to public opinion on major issues?
5. How have the policies of the Democratic Party over the last decade contributed to Trump’s victory in 2016?

Part II: From Hope to Dope

1. Compare and contrast President Obama's statements about the economy, healthcare, and immigration reform during his campaign for office and his actions while in office.
2. Obama's presidency produced both demoralization and also some important new movements like Occupy Wall Street and #Black Lives Matter. How does the author explain how these seemingly contradictory things happened?
3. Obama's presidency polarized people both on the left and right. How did this polarization lay the foundation for the 2016 presidential election?
4. How did both Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump speak to the anger ordinary people have about being sold out by the ruling class?
5. What roles did nationalist politics and America's endless wars play in shaping the 2016 election season?
6. How is Trump's election both a continuation of ruling class policies and a break from them in some important ways?
7. Describe the features of what Matt Taibbi calls the "the griftopia" that has taken place over the last 30 years.

Part III: Socialism: Government by and for the People

1. How does the ruling class define democracy? How should ordinary people view democracy?
2. What are the principles and policies the left should adopt? What does Katch argue? What do the Democrats argue? What do you think?
3. How can the call for unity be a barrier for building resistance to Trump?
4. How are social and economic issues connected and what does this mean for how we need to organize for change?
5. What is solidarity, how do we build it, and how can it be used to counter Trump's program of hatred and prejudice?
6. What is social democracy? How is it different from the author's ideas about socialism?
7. What are the limits of democracy under capitalism?
8. What does the author mean by revolution?

