

# THE MAXIFESTO

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10 ESSAYS ON MODERN POLITICAL SHIT-FUCKERY

MAX BLACK

# **The Maxifesto:**

## **10 Essays On Modern Political Shit-Fuckery**

**Max Black**

## **Table of Contents**

<b>1. What If We Could Stop The End Of The World?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. The Weaponisation Of Civility</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3. Our Politicians Need Humbling</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4. The Lesson We Refuse To Learn</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>5. What If You Could Be A Comedian Without Being A Bigot?</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>6. Decolonisation And Healing A Nation</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>7. Our Society Will Collapse Without Compassion</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>8. Is It Possible To Be A Billionaire And A Good Person?</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>9. The Cult Of Individuality aka Engineered Selfishness</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>10. A World Beyond Capitalism</b>	<b>67</b>

## **Intro:**

The purpose of these essays is to inspire thought about long established political beliefs and question the inertia and traditions that keep us from making fundamental progressive change in our politics and society.

Nothing in this collection represents anything close to a 'universal truth' indeed, it may be that I am entirely wrong... about everything.

I do not pretend to have all the answers nor are the solutions that I present here the only ones to consider. These are primarily thought exercises, and I hope that you take much away from them. If however you take nothing else away from, let it be this; the world we live in today is a world of crisis. Crisis caused by our collective refuse to meet new challenges with new solutions. Fundamental change to our society and economy is going to happen whether we want it to or not (necessity will demand it eventually) so let us all take effort to control that change and channel it into the formation of a better world and brighter, more just future.

Please challenge the assumptions of our ruling class, please hold them accountable, and please dust of your apathy, if you want to live in a democracy, then it is vital that you participate in it.

With these words in mind, please enjoy these ten essays.  
May they energise and excite your political thinking as  
much as writing them did mine.

Max Black  
December 22 2020

# **1. What If We Could Stop The End Of The World?**

## **December 5, 2019**

There are three existential threats our world faces today.

Each one alone a big enough threat to warrant massive government and societal attention. And we will face all three while our government runs at record levels of corruption, ideological fervour, and incompetency.

But the looming catastrophe is not inevitable and if we play the terrible cards we have been dealt deftly, it's possible we could turn the whole situation around and make the world a better place.

Let's start by going over the three crises.

Number one shouldn't surprise anyone, it's climate change.

First of all, calling it climate change is a misnomer, an intentional one in fact. A few years back some fossil fuel PR people thought "Global Warming" sounded too scary and gave it the non-threatening name "Climate Change" as though the rapid artificial heating of our planet was business as usual. Which is why every politician who takes fossil fuel bribes today (sorry, campaign contributions) will only call it that, if they even acknowledge it at all.

But even global warming is an inaccurate term, really it should be called “Ecological Collapse” because it’s more than just carbon build up in the atmosphere we are talking about here. Ecological collapse is a mixture of issues including; deforestation, over-fishing, clean water pollution, plastic pollution, and the US military. The thing they all have in common, is they are caused by the same thing, corporations.

Although we often use the terms synonymously, corporations aren’t businesses. Because corporations have only one metric for success, profit growth. Whereas a business is considered profitable if it makes a profit at all, a Corporation is only considered successful if its profit growth is higher each year

This concept is insanely dangerous to the planet. It is also a mentality that is almost impossible to break. To understand why, let’s step out of our shoes and become the CEO of Seal Clubbers Inc. You are appointed by the board of directors, for only one job; make these people more money this year than last year.

You realise you need to make a tonne of new money with only a few months to do it. You then remember about a colony of endangered seals living on a forgotten island, unfortunately they are legally protected by a sovereign government that is determined to keep them safe. So what do you do?

Simple, you just bribe (sorry lobby) the ministers of that nation to get the island taken off the endangered list and boom, profit growth!

Now you know this behaviour is unethical and amoral, but everyone has their price and the board will happily pay it. Ever wondered why CEO's are given salaries worth tens of millions of dollars a year?

The second crisis you have undoubtedly heard about many times before and probably never considered it to be an existential crisis at all, but it is, and its name is wealth inequality.

Decades ago, something happened that turned this societal issue into a societal crisis, an inequality tipping point where the entire economy is now at risk of collapse. A point where approximately all of the money is in the hands of only a few people, and the economy, which is designed to keep money flowing, started drying up like a dammed river.

It started with Reaganomics, or the belief that economic growth is best achieved by cutting regulations for our old mate's the corporations. The logic being if corporations are unhindered by "red tape" they will make more money, resulting in the economy performing better and excess profits trickling down to the rest of society. Sounds great, in theory. Except that "Red Tape" was put into place for good reasons, things like minimum wage,

OHS and environmental protection are all “Red Tape to corporations.

The other major problem with this idea is the trickle-down part is not legally binding, there is no requirement for the profits made by these corporations to trickle anywhere but to board members, and if you will recall, the entire point of a corporation is to make money, so good luck with that.

Because corporate lobbyists bribed (sorry, campaigned) so many governments around the world, this whole philosophy has been adopted by many nations, but as we now know if you give poor people money they spend it back into the economy, but if you give rich people money they hoard it in tax free Caribbean Trusts.

The whole point of an economy is to provide that society with all the goods and services it needs. For this system to work people actually need money to buy those services, so an economy that both ends minimum wage requirements AND starts sending all of its money offshore, will eventually collapse.

Now this crisis wouldn't be the end of life on Earth, but it would end our ability to mitigate the effects of the other two. Because remember all three crises are set to hit us at about the same time.

Finally the most fascinating of the three crises. The existential threat posed to us by Automation.

The academic reports around AI almost universally agree that while automation will displace many workers it will also create more jobs that will offset the displacement. The justification for this view seems to be, ‘well that is what has always happened.’

But the situation we face today is completely different.

AI is growing in capability at a geometric rate. Within decades AI capabilities will be indistinguishable to human capabilities, at this point AI will effectively be able to do every job, and our ability to make new jobs will be irrelevant, because AI will do them too.

Automation isn’t a threat to the economy or jobs, it is a threat to humanity itself. Specifically the fundamental change from a society no longer centred around labour, and no one has made any plans for what happens when we get there. which, of course, is right in the middle of the other two crises.

But crisis is opportunity.

Ultimately the solution to fix all three crises is simple. We already have the solutions, the hard part is creating the political conditions where our government takes these threats seriously.

The solution is to end private money in politics.

If you take the private money out of politics, doing a good job, and addressing real societal issues suddenly becomes a necessary part of being a politician. Without that private money, politicians need to present results if they want to keep their jobs.

We have for centuries lived on a planet where economic growth is seen as the most important aspect of governance, to the point that it has become more of a cultural issue than an economic one. We are at the stage now where resources are running out due to over-exploitation and over-consumption. Infinite economic growth on a finite resource planet will eventuate in collapse.

Our current leaders refuse to believe that the end of this centuries old economic culture will happen on their watch. Simply put, they can't handle the massive transition our world needs in order to survive.

So it is our responsibility to replace them with people who can.



## **2. The Weaponisation Of Civility**

**December 10 2019**

Civility is a weapon designed to deflect accountability and it is a weapon that conservative commentators have learned to wield very effectively.

It's the perfect weapon, because it can be so easily buried into the back of any justifiable protest. We are a land of law and order, we are reminded, and civility is the safeguard to our way of life. This lens is supremely powerful, and it can burn a dissenting voice like a leaf under a magnifying glass.

Weaponised civility can twist the most justifiable protests into narratives of pure evil.

Take the School Strikers for example, how did a story of children bravely finding their voice and standing up for their future, with well thought out speeches and valid concerns...

How did THAT get turned into a media narrative solely focused on belittling them and demanding they be quiet and go back to school?

The government certainly focused on this point, they completely ignored the entire reason the protest was being held and focused on how they were hurting their futures by not attending school. They minimised the entire issue down to school attendance, an act, they tell us, that is uncivil.

Or what about the Ferguson protests in America? Police brutality against Black Americans is extremely well documented, Hell we have all seen dozens of videos of police gunning down unarmed Black people for absolutely no reason, in just the past few years alone. Black America has taken every ‘acceptable’ avenue of legal and civilised redress, and they are routinely and systematically ignored. So riots started out of sheer frustration and anger.

The media response?

“Why are they so uncivil? This is NOT the way to protest! They hurt their message when they talk like that!”

And just like the School Strikers, the reason for the riots was completely drowned out in the media by calls for civility.

The technique of weaponised civility is so finely tuned now that it has become the main technique for deflecting

accountability, and everyone who is invested in the social, economic, and political status quo uses it. From Fox and Sky News commentators, to government ministers and senators.

They have learned that the best way to quell justifiable outrage is to label that outrage as disrespectful or ungrateful, or selfish, or entitled. Etc etc

And you know that it is a weapon of the status quo because calls for civility are never made toward people who UPHOLD the status quo, no matter how egregious or horrible their words and actions are.

Take for example the difference in the media portrayal of Indigenous Activists and White Supremacist campaigners. One we are told deserves our endless patience and respect because they are expressing their 'freedom of speech' while the other is chastised, insulted, belittled and literally told to shut up.

The reason for these dramatically different responses is that one isn't threatening to upset the status quo, while the other one is.

Another example, look at how conservative commentators treat the people who protest Indigenous deaths in custody, it always comes with calls for patience, for everyone to remain calm and respectful and

‘let the police do their job’ ‘let’s not jump to conclusions’ the mood is condescending to say the least, and it centres around calls for civility and for everyone to defuse and be calm. The status quo after all must be maintained.

Keep in mind that these calls for civility and de-escalation are coming from the same commentators that were frothing at their mouths and lost their minds when a child refused to stand for the national anthem at school. Because that child was challenging the status quo, the mood shifted immediately to escalation and attack.

So to recap, when someone threatens the status quo, calls for civility will drown out all other voices, but when someone maintains the status quo, no matter how belligerent, civility will never be a part of the conversation.

We even see heads of state use this weapon. Trump is infamous for responding to tough questions by declaring those asking them as ‘fake news.’ The implication being that the reporter has bad intentions and therefore is not worthy of an answer, it is deflection disguised as indignation, it is a purposely crafted image of civility besieged by barbarity.

Even the ‘right way’ to protest will be deflected by weaponised civility.

Colin Kaepernick's famous silent knee protest against police brutality met nothing but derision, deflection and labels of disrespect from the media, even though he was exercising the exact type of silent, peaceful protest they had clamoured for during the race riots. It didn't matter that he was protesting the right way, he was challenging the status quo and for that, he had to be deflected by calls for civility.

The coining of the term 'cancel culture' and its subsequent vilification is also an example of weaponised civility.

Ask any comedian that now says "you can't make comedy anymore because of woke culture" this is simply repression disguised as civility. Because the boycotting of those that thrive on the upholding of the most problematic parts of our society, like sexist and racist jokes, or saying diversity has gone to far, is seen as a threat to the status quo, and therefore must be 'uncivilised'

Civility is not just a defensive weapon, it can go on the attack too. That is what the infamous saying 'Thoughts & Prayers' is designed to do, it is a deflection of accountability, it is used when awful events demand an answer and the answer that is given is 'how can you talk about this NOW? Be civil, we can talk about this later' but the later will never arrive and the questions will remain unanswered, because civility is the shield that deflects accountability.

Weaponised civility is about removing the power of emotion from protest, it is about telling victims that they 'brought this on themselves' it is about labelling those that smell smoke as alarmist, it is about maintaining the inertia of an unjust status quo. It is the PR campaign of corrupt power politics.

It is the Status quo, above all else, maintaining the Status Quo.

It is very important, more than ever, that those of us that want to see change in this world, a change toward a more just, equal, and sustainable world, learn to say:

“Fuck civility.”

### **3. Our Politicians Need Humbling**

**January 5 2020**

The last 20 years has seen the value of our political class drop dramatically. In the literal sense of how much work they do for our nation compared to how much we pay them. The value for money that we get is possibly the worst it has ever been and shows no signs of improving soon.

It can look at times like our country runs just fine on auto-pilot, but if the institutions of leadership in Australia are so diminished that they barely perform the basic functions of their role, what happens when a emergency occurs, and the institutional memory and practices are so rusted and broken that our leadership has no ability to respond?

This is not a hypothetical question; this is practically the situation we now face. A governmental system so choked up with corruption, nepotism and incompetency that the gears of government have clogged to the point of inoperability. When the country is running on autopilot, it's not the biggest issue, but when a crisis looms, like say, the imminent collapse of our environment, that clog is going to have devastating consequences.

And even without a crisis, there are many things a country needs to actively do to provide itself with a future.

And the number one thing a government needs to provide a future for its people, is a specific value, and it's one that might seem surprising at first. But it is of paramount importance. That value is humility.

One of our better leaders was Gough Whitlam, he got a tremendous amount of work done in a short period of time, and even if you didn't agree with his policies, no one could have accused him of not doing what he genuinely believed was in the best interests of his country.

Compare that Scott Morrison. A man who became prime minister after he helped facilitate coups against both of his predecessors for no apparent reason. Then once he became PM, effectively shut down parliament between August of last year until the election in May this year.

Since then he has worked to cut the number of parliamentary sitting days, given himself a pay rise, ignored every petition and report that counters his own beliefs, has worked almost solely on creating an incredibly convoluted and wholly unnecessary religious discrimination bill (that only focuses on Christians)

reopened a breathtakingly expensive offshore detention centre to house just a single family, (that no one wants imprisoned anyway) and now the unbelievable clusterfuck that is his jaw-dropping negligence in the face of an unprecedented climate emergency

Can anyone say with a straight face, that Scott Morrison has earned his pay? He has brought us to the lowest point I have ever seen in Auspol and the trend indicates that every day will continue to lower the bar further.

I have facetiously mentioned in the past that our government isn't even worth minimum wage. But what if we entertained this idea?

First of all let's talk about why we think our politicians deserve to be paid 200-400 thousand dollars a year. I get the logic of course, you want to attract the best people to the top positions, in theory that is great, but I think when we have a look at the front bench of our government, we can see that something has gone horribly wrong. There is no usable metric where these people could be considered the most competent people in the country to hold their positions.

Paying our politicians more is not increasing the quality of our politicians. So, the next most logical question, would the quality fall if they were paid less?

But I think we already have the answer to this question too, you just have to look at low paying professions to see how that works out, I think you would struggle to find a nurse working 12 hour shifts that would ever lower their standard of care from being underpaid.

And isn't that really the mentality people working in government are supposed to have? Isn't public office a duty? Where you are charged with looking after your nation and giving it direction to a better future? In fact, I think you could argue that the big pay politicians receive is bringing forward WORSE people, people who only pursue the job because of the money, who will turn to endless nefarious means to stay on it. Which I would argue is exactly what has happened.

When combined with the modern realisation that there really are no real-world consequences for corruption, it is easy to see why narcissistic, self-serving people would be attracted to these positions. And if these positions are full of amoral opportunists, the people we want to attract just open the door, see it is full of screeching idiots, close the door and walk away. I mean how often have we seen bright eyed, wholesome people enter politics and only a few years later leave it looking dishevelled and morose?

The big pay is not working to attract the right people, it seems in fact, that it is an active detriment to getting them.

For the good of the nation, that sense of public duty really needs to return. But how do you translate that into reality?

This is also not a hypothetical question. Our politicians NEED to understand how their constituents live.

And maybe there is a practical way to make that happen.

Our country would benefit if politicians spent some time on minimum wage. This isn't a punitive thing. It's a practical way to get our politicians back in touch and to stay in touch with their constituents. What if we started a tradition where our politicians had to spend one month a year working for minimum wage?

This would have two effects, first, it would humble our politicians and remind them they serve their country not themselves. By spending a whole month of the year working for essentially just the duty of their office, they can be practically reminded about why their position exists, and the humility that is so important to good decision making can be effectively applied to them.

But the second and most important effect of this idea, is that they can never forget what it is like for the most vulnerable people in their electorates to survive day to day. Because our politicians will be working for the minimum wage, they themselves have set, they will have

practical lessons about how their decisions impact the most vulnerable people in society.

To complement this idea why not tie parliamentary pay to the minimum wage? Perhaps a multiplier of no more than 10x whatever the current legal minimum wage is. This would stop Parliament wasting time discussing their own pay rise, and would force them to help our most vulnerable people before they help themselves.

If we could introduced these two ideas we would bring humility back into our political practices and we would see the quality of our politicians and the health of our democracy begin to improve overnight.

#### **4. The Lesson We Refuse To Learn**

**January 7 2020**

There are two ways that we learn, from observing our own mistakes or from observing other people's.

There is a common mistake that every generation of humanity keeps making, despite the fact this lesson has been taught to us countless times. What is more shocking however, is *this* particular mistake keeps ending societies.

You see the mistake is that we believing the end of our society will be dramatic. We imagine war, or disaster, or nuclear holocaust bringing a very theatrical end to our world.

But History is looking up from its newspaper right now, peering over its glasses and condescendingly shaking its head at us.

Because it knows that the most likely cause of collapse for our society will be something as mundane and banal as corruption, caused by the stratification of our economy.

Or as we like to call it today, wealth inequality.

This is the cause of death for so many states throughout history, yet it is one of the most under reported points you will find in any recognised national story.

There is a very clear pattern to how corruption and economy stratification partner up to ruin and devastate societies, a pattern that for some reason, we still refuse to learn, despite it happening again and again and again.

From antiquity to as recently as the 2000's we have seen corruption collapse governments, with an uncanny sense of deja vu.

And it is such a simple formula to remember:

Corruption + Economy Stratification = Fucked Society

So why don't we learn the lesson? Why don't we follow the evidence? Why does every successive society think they are somehow immune to this?

One thing is clear, it doesn't seem to matter which one comes first, because they inevitably lead to each other. A stratified economy will lead to corruption, and equally, unchecked corruption will lead to a stratified economy. Let's look at some examples.

There are signs of this dynamic appearing toward the collapse for the Persian Empire in 480 BCE but the first time you can definitively point to it, is the collapse of the Roman Republic. The Roman civil war that would usher in the age of the Roman Empire and the eventual decline of Roman power, happened in 146 BCE at the conclusion of the Punic Wars, specifically the razing of Carthage and the very lucrative campaigns against the Macedonian, and the Seleucid Empire.

Rome was drowning in captured wealth and slaves, and on the surface this seemed like a win for Rome. But in reality all this wealth went overwhelmingly into the hands of the Patrician families which lead the Roman economy to become severely top heavy in a very short period of time.

But most significantly all those slaves started taking over the jobs of Roman freeman and citizens. Because the now eye-wateringly rich patrician class could afford to bribe and corrupt the senate to change labour laws to favour their extremely lucrative slave economy.

The result of this was the stratification of the economy, and the senate was corrupted to the point that it became the fashion-accessory lapdog of the Patricians rather than the fierce wolf defending the Republic. All of the economic and social power went into the hands of less and less people, this eventuated in the rise of the popularii leaders like the Gracchi brothers and

eventually Julius Caesar who used the discontent of the people to build momentum for a war that eventually ended the Republic all together.

It was the combination of the stratified economy and the corruption that destabilised Roman society to the point of collapse.

Another example (and probably the most famous one) is the collapse of Bourbon dynasty France. Once again we saw a society that had an endlessly stratifying economy that no one was able to fix because corruption of political systems by the hyper-wealthy prevented it from happening. Guillotines would eventually resolve this issue.

Or what about the American Civil War, why did slavery persist in America for so long that it took a fucking war to end such a corrupt (not to mention absolutely horrifying) system? Because their stratified economy made the corruption so embedded in the US governmental system that nothing short of the government's collapse was able to resolve it.

The Confederate States broke away from the country because the stratified elite choose to protect corrupt systems they benefited from, rather than reform the economy in a practical way. The corruption part is very important here, because it was the corruption that created the propaganda that justified the war.

The average Southern State citizen had no reason whatsoever to go to war with the Northern States, but the corruption from those that held all the economic power (because they were the slave owners that held the overwhelming amount of wealth) willed it to happen for entirely self-serving reasons.

Tsarist Russia and Communist Russia had the same cause of death. Both had crippling corruption problems at the highest levels of their government as a direct result of a stratified economy. But what's interesting here is that the start of the collapses had opposite causes. Tsarist Russia was corrupt and that's how its economy became stratified, but Communist Russia had a stratified economy that led to corruption. The end result however was the same. The economy failed to serve the country and corruption prevented reform, and this impasse went on until the whole system collapsed.

And then there is the most recent example. After the Iraq war, United States companies like Haliburton were charged with rebuilding the country, but almost immediately the new fledgling Iraqi government was corrupted to the point of total inefficiency, as the corporations drained the wealth of the nation and stratified the economy. This led to massive instability that brought about the arrival of ISIS and now as I write this in 2020 Iraq is on the verge of civil war.

So why do we refuse to learn this lesson? Why do we continue to believe that OUR stratified economy and OUR corrupt governmental system is somehow exceptional?

Perhaps it is because the fall always seems to come immediately after the highest point of perceived success. How can one believe collapse is imminent when all they see around them is success?

This point is interesting because it highlights an added danger in our society that was not present in the previous eras, and that is advertising and marketing.

One of the core pillars of capitalism is the glamorisation of those that live at the wealthiest levels, to showcase and justify the stratification of the economy.

Think about the endless wealth-centric Instagram accounts, TV shows, movies, and events that are the basis of our culture, that serve to associate wealth with the notion of success in our society. The same society, by the way, that congratulates hyper-wealthy people for small acts of charity to the poverty stricken, while simultaneously vilifying any notion that society might benefit from a more equal distribution of its wealth.

It is very hard for anyone who grows up in that society to equate immense wealth with the idea of societal

collapse. How could they? The stratified economy they are at the top of is the basis of our very culture, it is the aspiration we are taught to aim for, how could that possibly destroy us?

But it can. And it will. As it has done innumerable times before. Because a stratified economy will eventually make that economy fail its core purpose of serving society, as it begins serving only a handful of people, and the corruption that it enables and empowers will forever protect the hyper-wealthy who always fail to realise their self-serving motives are ultimately self-defeating.

In the end it is not the structure of a government that brings about collapse, the Roman Empire, the American Republic, the French Monarchy, Communist Russia and dictatorial Iraq all shared the same fate. It was not their ideologies, races, toughness or any other vague label that collapsed their society. It was simply corruption enabling an economy to stop serving society long enough for the whole thing to collapse.

And for us living today in modern society the signs are everywhere that we are in the midst of making the same mistake as all those that came before us.

And we will make that mistake.

Unless we finally learn the lesson all of history has been trying to teach us.

## **5. What If You Could Be A Comedian Without Being A Bigot?**

**January 18 2020**

There seems to be a pattern emerging between comedians and being an unrepentant bigot.

Enough to allow me to ask this incredibly sardonic question, what if you could be a comedian without being a bigot?

But I suppose the more serious question is, why are all these revered comedians suddenly outing themselves as defenders of bigotry?

There has been a backlash against their offensive jokes, and their reaction has been (almost universally) to get defensive and use a phrase so common, it is practically its own punchline now. They respond to criticism by saying

“People can’t take a joke anymore.”

I think the perfect example of this is Todd Phillips, a former comedy director who is the reigning king of People-can’t-take-a-joke-anymore-land.

Phillips abandoned making comedy movies to immediately go on and direct the movie 'Joker' which is literally about a comedian who perceives society not accepting him, so becomes a violent terrorist. Definitely no bitter sub-theme there.

Keep in mind that before 'Joker' Phillips biggest claim to fame was making the 'hangover' movies, which ah...well let's just say they haven't aged well.

Phillips is probably the most high-profile example of a comedian who met criticism of his humour with antagonism for his audience. But he is by no means the only one.

Recently Ricky Gervais did something similar. He has become well known for his double-down on transphobia and (for some reason) vocal hatred of Greta Thunberg.

Anyone who voices political beliefs that don't align with his own, he will antagonise with his characteristically mean-spirited comedy, which until recently I always assumed was ironic.

And even though Gervais is now rightfully being called out for his behaviour, he refuses to address any of it, if anything he seems resolved to embrace it harder.

Louis CK of course got ‘cancelled’ because of sexual assault allegations, and when his weak apology wasn’t accepted by a lot of his fans, the wholesome progressive values that Louis became famous for, were immediately thrown out the window, and Louis became a cruel, spiteful, MAGA crowd-pleaser.

He did a full 180 degree turn from his own values, the moment he was held accountable for his actions.

My point here is there is a pattern of comedians acting badly and rather than taking any accountability for their actions they attack the audience for not loving them for it.

The big one for me, the heartbreak moment, was Dave Chappelle, when he started ripping into the LGBTI+ community, especially trans people.

As I was watching his latest show, I tried to find a way to laugh at it, because I love Dave and I want him to be right, but I couldn’t do it.

And this was a huge moment for me.

In the early 2000’s Dave introduced me to all the issues that I would spend my life fighting, he was, essentially an activist.

And he had morals, we will never forget how he abandoned one of the biggest network deals ever because he refused to sell out his principles.

The difference between THAT Dave and the one I now watch punching down on trans people, was a devastating thing to witness. Now Dave was just like all the other comedians that have turned cruel.

The list goes on, don't even get me started on Shane Gillis or Brad Williams.

So what the hell happened? Where did it all go so wrong?

What is the common thread that ties them all together?

This is what I think happened.

When all these young idealistic comics started out, they wanted to change the world, they were talking about injustice and all the wrongs in our society, Dave more so than anyone. But once they got successful, they became addicted to that applause and to that success.

And then like any addiction, they started chasing it, and so they stick with what they know will get them their

applause high. Rather than grow with their audience, they go wherever their jokes are applauded.

But that's not us anymore.

We have outgrown them.

We have stopped clapping at shit we know is wrong and cruel. And rather than confront the fact their attitudes need to mature, they run away and find people who will applaud them unconditionally.

When they started their careers they were punching up against discriminatory power structures and systemic oppression and that's why, even when they said horrible things, we still cheered for them, because they were fighting for a better world, and we would excuse their other problematic views because they were still perceivable 'good guys.'

But now their addiction has made them very different people. Now they are older and richer and they punch down. They attack the most vulnerable people in our society for cheap laughs, and they benefit from the power structures they once railed against.

And that is all the difference in the world.

Because once you start punching down, you inevitably go for the easiest targets, people who are relatively powerless. Once you start doing this you are no longer a comic, you are a bully.

And THAT is why we find them so repulsive now, because they aren't funny or pushing boundaries.

They are just bullies.

And we find the people that we once respected to be weak, cowardly old men, and that is why we turn our backs on them now.

I find it impossible to respect a comedian who says 'people can't take a joke anymore'

We can take a joke, we just don't feel like pity laughing to lazy bigotry.

That's why today, more than ever, it is important that we remind comedians that we will not lower our standards to comfort their mediocrity.

It is their responsibility, like any other job in the world, to supply the demands of their customers.

And the demands are simple.

We don't want to watch entitled privileged men beat down on vulnerable people.

They need to grow up or find a new profession.

## **6. Decolonisation And Healing A Nation**

**June 9 2020**

All colonial countries are built on a lie.

And like a house built on a rotten, irreparable foundation, the only real solution is to knock the whole thing down and rebuild it. We can try and reform it of course, but everything will always be a work around solution, so long as the rotten core identity of white supremacy remains our foundation then reform will only ever delay the inevitable.

Because that house is going to collapse one way or another, our only real choice is to decide whether we will control the deconstruction in a safe and organised manner, or whether we wait for the house to collapse onto our heads.

White supremacy was used to justify colonialism, as a consequence, white supremacy became the founding culture of every colonised country.

It is the centrepiece of every colonial identity. Because colonists and their descendants have no other roots to remember. They are too far removed from the old country to share in its history and culture, while at the

same time the land they now occupied had no history they could share in, because they brought genocide against it.

The central theme and attitude of colonists everywhere became domination. Dominating the foreign land and dominating the Indigenous cultures, aggressively, relentlessly.

All of it driven and rationalised by colonial white supremacy.

Resistance to this from Indigenous populations only created more animosity towards them. Between the ensuing genocide and the reckless exploitation of the occupied land, hate and greed fuelled expansion cemented white supremacist ideology as the core culture of the emerging society, this attitude in turn became the foundation of national identity.

This means that our systems of government were from the very beginning devoid of justice. And a society that isn't built on justice can't possibly be peaceful.

If there is a fundamental lack of justice within a society then there will always be unanswered and unaccountable violence against the people within it.

That is why prisons are full of Indigenous people and why the police can murder Black people in broad daylight (while being filmed the entire time) and still not face any criminal charges.

Because justice is not the point of the police force, oppression is.

Of course there were going to be riots. What other option was there? Peaceful protest is at best ignored, but more often than not sees the protester lose their career and be blackballed from their industry.

What we are seeing around the world now, especially in traditional colonial countries, is the violent will of white supremacy meeting the firm resistance of those trying to survive it.

It is the result of a total failure of societal justice.

It can scoff and complain about looting all it wants, but it doesn't matter now, the opportunity to have meaningful, open, and peaceful conversation has passed, and unapologetic rebellion has now become undeniable. It is the voice of justice screaming under a 400 year gag order. It is the broken heart of a people that has turned to righteous rage.

Peace cannot exist without justice, in every conceivable way, from literal violent resistance, to the peace that should be at the soul of a nation, justice is the foundation of society, we cannot be at peace with ourselves or anyone else without justice.

Just as importantly there can be no healthy or sustainable national identity without justice. Culture comes from generations building upon the works and accomplishments of those that came before them.

But colonial countries don't have this dynamic, because every early generation spent its time erasing history, not building it. Australia and America for example committed countless atrocities and genocides against Indigenous people, these acts do not make our history books because the successors of those that committed the acts, understood that they were shameful, and not to be spoken of.

This creates a dynamic where future generations have enormous gaps in historical data, but more importantly, they inherit a national attitude that is centred around denial.

That is why our history is told almost exclusively from the selective memory of white settler colonisers. It is a fabrication almost in its entirety.

How can a sustainable national identity grow when it is built upon a system of hollow lies, used to deny unspeakable atrocities?

How can a nation ever heal if it refuses to even acknowledge the wounds exist?

That is why our culture is so shallow, it focuses on the glorification of war, it is sports obsession, it is about building strangely possessive nationalism around items of food. It is profoundly hollow celebrity worship, and elevating mediocre historical figures to almost demigod status.

The reason this is the best we can do, is because we know that if we dig any deeper into our national psyche, we will be forced to deal with the ghosts and horror of our ancestors, and although we never admit it, we know in our hearts that the truth is much worse than anything we can imagine.

Our national identity and culture will never be able to grow until we confront our colonial past with honesty and humility.

Colonisation is based on violent oppression and exploitation, for those on the receiving end of it, it was apocalyptic, it was their holocaust, that was then erased

and white-washed by every subsequent colonial generation.

So long as colonialism is upheld as our primary culture, we will never grow up, we will never mature as a country, and our deep societal wounds will never heal.

Holding onto white supremacy and pretending that our violent colonial history was in any way glorious, is an incredibly toxic mentality to maintain. It poisons every facet of our nation, from the highest levels of government policy down to the micro-aggressions of strangers passing in the streets.

Decolonisation is about healing, it is about creating a national identity based on compassion rather than hate, a national identity that seeks to grow and build rather than repress and exploit.

The only place that journey can start is with justice, treating the wound that infects our whole society as seriously as we would treat an infection in a hospital, it is not an issue on the periphery, it is urgent and nothing will recover until it is treated.

Decolonisation will be hard work. It is a process that will take a long time, and it will take the commitment and dedication and deprogramming of all of us. But no matter how hard or how long it takes, it must be done.

Because the whole system is rotten to its core, and our home will forever disintegrate until we take it down and rebuild it properly.

Then, and only then, will we all have earned justice and peace.

## **7. Our Society Will Collapse Without Compassion**

**August 11 2020**

What is the single most important responsibility of leadership?

Is it decisiveness? Is it vision? Is it communication?

The most important aspect of leadership is group cohesion.

For how can a group be led if the group itself does not wish to stay together?

This is such a baseline expectation of leadership that it is often overlooked as it is simply assumed.

But it should not be assumed, especially after this last decade of endless scandal and corruption from our top government officials.

For what does it say about a nation's leadership, if that leadership not only fails to maintain national unity but actively seeks to divide it?

Even at the best of times societal division is massively destabilising, but in times of climate disaster, unprecedented wealth inequality, and a global pandemic, it leads to catastrophe.

Division in a society is created and fuelled by hate. This is something that can occur naturally of course, issues of classism, as well as political, religious and racial differences, will always cause friction between groups that do not understand each other, especially if there is a lack of leadership to defuse and unite against that tension.

But what we are experiencing today is something much worse than that. Our hatred is purposely manufactured *by* our leadership.

The primordial stew of neo-liberalism and white supremacy has created a leadership class of exclusionary elitists, who have no interest in unifying the country they hold power over.

They are in fact the antithesis of leadership. Their decisions are not based on anything even remotely resembling the common good. Their decisions are fuelled by nothing but greed and hate.

And it is tearing our society apart.

So how do we get off this road of division and collapse?

How do we unify this country? And build a future through these darkest of times?

Compassion.

Society itself cannot endure for long without compassion because compassion is the very basis *of* society.

Compassion is why we have society in the first place, compassion is what brings us together, it is how we survived and prospered, together.

Compassion is the heart of all culture and art, community and governance. And we are seeing now exactly what happens when a society abandons its compassion.

We are left with leaders that lock children locked in cages, it is why partisan politicking is prioritised over public health, it is why our police are militarised, it is why the economy is protected before our lives, it is why art funding is gutted.

Without compassion, our society is held together by nothing but fear, propaganda, and violent

authoritarianism. It is a society without purpose, goals or future. It is the dead-end of both humanity and history.

But compassion breathes life into society. Compassion gives us purpose and hope.

So what does it mean to have compassion? It is one thing to care for others, but how does that translate into an action of leadership?

What compassion really means is your willingness to help and sacrifice for others without expectation of reward. When we look at it through this lens, our whole perception of society changes, and our understanding of how a society is only as strong as our desire to protect it, becomes clear.

Our leaders love to declare wars on abstract concepts, (usually as nothing more than a pretext to roll out fear and police state measures) that is why we had the war of terror, the war on drugs etc

But what society really needs is a war on selfishness

We live in a society that demands rights without taking on any of the responsibilities of defending them. We demand freedom but refuse the duty of defending it. We scream for liberty but scoff at the idea of accountability.

And at no point do people see the irony or realise that the freedoms they demand must be defended to exist.

Freedom is essential for a healthy society, but so is social responsibility.

Somewhere over the years our perception of freedom became synonymous with doing whatever we want, regardless of consequences.

Look at the things the people screaming about freedom are talking about;

not wearing masks, not using plastic bags, not paying tax to support Medicare...

The freedom people are fighting for today is the freedom from responsibility, and with it we forsake the values that really matter.

We have come to accept that selfishness and individualistic privileges are somehow more important than the safety, health and unity of our communities.

The social contract is supposed to work both ways, but that is not the mentality of most western countries today.

Freedom without responsibility to your community is meaningless.

And that responsibility is the foundation we must concentrate on rebuilding. At the community level we need to connect and care for each other again.

We need to re-learn compassion, show it to each other, and teach it to our children.

We must be willing to sacrifice and be responsible to our communities.

We must remember that in times of crisis, it is only through unity that we survive.

And all of that, all of it, requires compassion.

Let this be the rock we build our future on, let compassion unify us again, let it be a value we refuse to compromise on.

If we build this foundation, then no leader will ever be able to steer this nation toward evil and division again.

And our children may know a future that we have only dreamed of.

## **8. Is It Possible To Be A Billionaire And A Good Person?**

**October 17 2020**

If you had a million dollars would you consider yourself rich? Would that be enough for you to live a comfortable life? What about \$10 million, would you stop working then?

What if you had a 1000 million dollars?

At that point, would you no longer care just about yourself, and begin helping those around you? If you had thousands of millions of dollars, would you help improve your community? Would you invest in your neighbourhood's wellbeing? Would you try to help starving people or the homeless?

These are all questions billionaires never ask themselves.

Because the mindset needed to become a billionaire, means you not only don't care about the suffering of those around you, but you are actively profiting from it.

Because it is impossible to be a billionaire and be a good person. They are mutually exclusive.

It is also physically impossible to 'earn' a billion dollars. If you are on an average yearly wage of \$50,000 per year it would take you 20,000 years to earn a billion dollars.

Can you name a single billionaire who has earned, with their labour and skill, their fortune? Let's have a look at a few billionaires and review how exactly they 'earned' their fortunes.

Elon Musk – \$93 Billion – Wealth inherited from family owned apartheid mines/ Worker Exploitation/ Political Interference / Tax Avoidance

Jeff Bezos – \$175 Billion – Worker Exploitation/ Political Interference / Tax Avoidance

Clive Palmer – \$16 Billion – Worker Exploitation/ Land Appropriation/ Political Interference / Tax Avoidance

Jay Z – \$1 Billion – Worker Exploitation / Tax Avoidance

You may notice a pattern here, whereby egregious wealth is not so much earned, as it is extracted by the exploitation of workers, political systems and of course, the planet itself. The key word here is exploited, none of this wealth was given to these billionaires willingly, it was given to them because the billionaires were able to leverage extremely unequal power dynamics onto those that produce the wealth for them.

Whether you are a struggling musician forced to hand over the royalties of your album to a record mogul or whether you are a child working in a cobalt mine for an

eccentric tech-company or whether you are a warehouse worker who will have their pay cut if they try to take a toilet break, the end result is the same, the billionaire profits from the workers suffering.

But billionaires can't be all bad right? What about the massive amount of philanthropy and charity work billionaires do?

Well on the surface it looks like billionaires are doing their part to help society and save the world, but well... they aren't. At all.

Every now and then you will see a billionaire say something like "I am pledging \$100 million to help fight climate change" This is a very clever PR move, but it ultimately amounts to nothing.

Firstly because of the key word in that sentence, 'pledging' this is a fantastic weasel word, that actually negates the entire commitment. I, too, can pledge to give \$100 million dollars to charity, and my word on the matter carries the same weight as that of the billionaire's, the pledge part holds countless caveats.

Also it is important to point out who they are pledging to. If you look closely you will almost universally find that the money is being pledged toward a charity or organisation the same billionaire created. this is also

brilliant, because the organisation is really just a big washing machine.

It washes two things, the billionaires reputation and the billionaire's money. Because that organisation will almost certainly be tax exempt, so by pledging hundred's of millions of dollars into that charity, the billionaires does not have to pay taxes, and at the end of the year, the billionaire can simply take that money back like nothing ever happened, it did after all, never leave their possession.

Not paying taxes is a HUGE part of the problem here, these charities are designed to make the billionaire appear to commit themselves toward society, but really their 'pledges' are infinitesimal compared to what society would gain if those billionaires simply paid their taxes.

But billionaires aren't just horrible to their workers, the planet and society at large, billionaires also destroy democracy itself.

They call it lobbying, but what it really is, is legalised bribery. Because once a politician accepts a massive 'donation' from a billionaire's corporation, they are now bound to that billionaire, the politician's entire political career now depends on it, and I guarantee you, your vote and your petition, do not stand a chance against *that* level of influence.

And because billionaire's have direct access to politicians they can get politicians to change laws to always favour the interests of the billionaire, that's why you see essential services become privatised (and then sold to billionaire owned companies) and why anytime the economy takes a hit, it is the billionaire's company that gets bailed out, not the workers who are now unemployed. It's also why you hear politicians talk about cutting 'red-tape.'

Red-tape has another name, 'regulations' and regulations exist specifically to stop exploitation. Work Health and Safety laws exist to stop billionaires from cutting corners on unsafe working spaces, anti-child labour laws exist to stop billionaires putting children in factory sweatshops, and environment laws exist to stop billionaires from deforesting the Earth for profit. These regulations were hard fought for and exist to protect society and the environment from exploitation. So, the next time you hear a politician talk about 'cutting red-tape' remember what they are really saying is 'freeing heartless billionaires from any form of accountability for their destructive practices.'

Ok, so this is all well and horrible, but what can we do about it? How do we get rid of billionaires or at least limit their destruction? Well the end outcome will be the abolition of capitalism, we have dozens of practical economic theories, we don't *have* to keep letting a dozen multi-national corporations destroy the planet so they

can hoard infinite wealth.

I assure you, there are alternative economic systems that are better for the world than capitalism (literally any other system is better than capitalism, because only capitalism is based around the notion of driving all life to extinction for profit *growth*).

Short term however, the most important thing is to reign in the billionaire class and that means making them pay taxes and establishing a wealth ceiling, nobody needs a billion dollars. Nobody.

But if billionaires have all the money and political influence, how on Earth will we accomplish that? I would love to tell you that we can vote them away, but that would be a lie, wouldn't it?

The only way we as a society get our political power back, is to take it, and that ultimately means striking.

Billionaires only gain their power through exploitation, if everyone collectively refuses to be exploited, then the billionaire loses all power.

I don't pretend that this will happen tomorrow, or even necessarily in my lifetime, but it will happen, the necessity of saving the planet will eventually demand it.

And so must we, as a society, as communities, demand that wealth be gained ethically and morally. We must demand that the well being our planet and our communities always be prioritised, and that must be ingrained in our culture and in our values and in our politics.

We must learn from this period of horrific corruption and selfishness. That we may never permit someone to ever again exploit our people and our planet for profit.

This, possibly more than any other gift, we owe most, to our children and to the future.

## **9. The Cult Of Individuality aka Engineered**

### **Selfishness**

**October 28 2020**

Have we become conditioned to celebrate selfish behaviour?

Have we lost our will for collective sacrifice toward communal wellbeing?

Are all the crises we now face now, from climate emergency, to economic recession, to pandemic response, the consequence of a cult of individuality?

The very idea of a cult of individuality is of course, an over simplification, no society on Earth is a single homogenous being with universally shared beliefs and values, but as a rough short hand, I think there is a noticeable pattern between societies that drag their feet solving problems and societies that have an obsession with championing individual rights, even when they don't face any discernible threats.

Moreover I would argue that the essence of the selfishness in our community is artificial. It is not something we are born with, but that we have become conditioned to,

a form of engineered selfishness.

But who would want to condition a society to *become* selfish, how could that possibly benefit anyone?

Well, it benefits capitalism enormously. In fact, the very essence of capitalism is rooted in selfishness, the existence of the entire billionaire class, for example, would be impossible without it.

The very core of this idea comes from deep within the philosophy of corporations, which unlike, companies, do not serve any purpose beyond ducking accountability like a champion limbo-er.

Corporations are merely legal entities whose entire purpose is to avoid legal responsibility for anything they do, and to avoid all the taxes they possibly can. Ever notice that oil corporations can devastate entire continental coastlines with oil spills and not only will no one see jail for it, the corporation won't pay extra (or any) tax to clean it up.

It takes a profound level of selfishness for somebody to abandon their duty of care, yet corporations are specifically designed to never have any, and more importantly, somehow the societies these corporations devastate never seem to rise up in revolt. How do you make a society so placid that outrages like this go completely unanswered?

This is where Engineered Selfishness comes in. Our entire culture is centred around selfishness. Every advertisement is about making YOU better, about improving YOUR life, every politician is telling you what YOU get by voting for them, and why YOU will suffer if you vote for the other guy.

It is never about collective gain or collective responsibility. It is only ever about what is in it for YOU, personally.

This idea expands into many parts of our society. Our culture for example, primarily revolves around competitive sport, to win trophies, and tv is completely overrun by vapid reality shows about competition for personal glory. All of this is saying to you, that your goal in life is to be better than everyone else around you. This mentality is 100% artificial and you are absolutely being conditioned to believe it.

This is all set up to enable and reinforce the idea of the rat-race. Capitalism absolutely depends on it. Have you ever noticed that whenever people talk about the rat-race they are talking about how to *escape* it?

It is interesting that we are so conditioned to the idea of escaping the rat-race that we rarely stop to consider why it even exists? Afterall if everyone in the system is trying to ESCAPE the system, doesn't that mean the system

itself is broken? This is an obvious observation, so why is it not something we, as a society, talk about more often?

The key to the rat-race and why it is able to exist completely unfettered, is in the idea of escaping it. Because, we are told, escaping the rat-race isn't just the promise of life being easier, it is the glowing promise of wealth and freedom and fame beyond your wildest dreams.

But in order for people to believe that their goal in life is to reach levels of wealth and fame that *proves* they are better than everyone else, the system must ensure that there are plenty of examples available, of people doing exactly that.

The idea of exceptionalism permeates through our society for this very reason. Exceptionalism is about *believing* you are better than everyone else, it is a way to justify selfish behaviour, after all, if you *are* better than everyone else, don't you *deserve* to be selfish? Haven't you earned it?

It is this emotion, subconscious or otherwise, that consumerism is designed to both target and sustain, the commodification of our bodies and lifestyles is ultimately about making money for corporations, and it is through advertising that the market is created and regulated.

Why is TV and social media buried in an endless molasses of reality shows and influencer content? Why are formally hard-hitting news shows focusing on celebrity and sport star family drama? Why and how, did everything in the mainstream become so painfully vapid and shallow? Why does every movie have the same actors doing the same roles over and over and over again?

There is a word for this, *branding*, and it is exactly what we are seeing in our media, ALL of our media, turning into. When everything in our society becomes commodified, then everything in its media turns into advertising.

Even examples of philanthropy, charity and activism are often just cleverly disguised branding. Benevolent acts are frequently used to hide malevolent behaviour, the best example of this is of course billionaire philanthropy, where charities set up by billionaires, are just tax loopholes used to launder both money and reputations, it is after all, impossible to be a billionaire and a good person.

In fact billionaires in general are a perfect example of how engineered selfishness works. Every billionaire on the planet has fantastic branding (they can, after all, afford it) whereby the image of their egregious wealth hoarding is held up as an example to follow, not a horror to be condemned, they are presented to us as exceptional people, who managed to become wealthy paragons through hard work and laser focused vision, as opposed

to the reality, where their inherited wealth was used to create a company that exploits workers, consumers and the earth itself, for profit.

Capitalist advertising is the one the most insidious things ever created, because it goes far deeper than simply informing consumers about a product. No, capitalist advertising isn't about fulfilling demand, it is about *creating* demand, and it discovered that the best way to create that demand is by targeting people's insecurity.

It is deeply psychological and manipulative, from influencers, to celebrities, to entire industries around fashion, movies, and music. Everything that can be commodified in our society has been, and it has intentionally created a society centred around intense competitiveness and manipulative envy. It is engineered selfishness.

And all of it, for the same core point we began this essay on, which is corporate profit. None of this is natural, none of it evolved out of society, none of it is human nature. Our selfishness is engineered, we are conditioned to see the world in the most competitive, toxic, commodified state, because this mentality is what makes us perpetual consumers, our insecurities are hacked at by malevolent corporations in order to drain every cent possible out of us.

It made us stop working toward improving society and communities, we focus not on trying to fix the rat-race, but on escaping it, to break free from this quagmire of selfishness. But it is a trap, the whole thing, there is no escape from this system. Because this game was rigged from the start, like a snare that only tightens if one tries to struggle or break free from it.

There is an answer though, one that will take a lot of collective will and determination from all of us to enact. But it can be summarised succinctly in the saying ‘if the game is rigged, break the rules.’

This establishment demands we be selfish, we are not supposed to cooperate and help each other.

So in these dark days of neo-liberal hellscape, the most revolutionary act we can do...

Is to care for, lookout for, and work for, each other.

## **10. A World Beyond Capitalism**

**November 6 2020**

What is the most destructive invention in human history?

Aeroplanes? Nuclear power? Oil derricks?

They have all lead to incalculable environmental damage, not to mention applications in war.

Maybe we could go back further, maybe the invention of swords and guns is the most destructive thing we ever created, there is very little I can think of that led us down a more destructive road than that.

Except one thing.

What if the most destructive thing we ever created wasn't a weapon at all? What if it was an idea? And not even necessarily a bad idea, but rather an idea we implemented without fully understanding the consequences.

Moreover what if it wasn't even a fully formed idea, but merely the slight variation of an already existing, perfectly harmless one?

I think there is a case to be made that the most

destructive thing humanity ever did, was change our accepted idea of what an economy is, from a principle about resource sharing, to a demand for profit.

It sounds so small and benign. But I think that tiny little ethics shift unleashed so much horror onto the world that it is the reason we face existential danger today.

But let's start at the beginning, shall we?

Economies have existed for as long as civilisations have, but the idea of an economy existing for profit is a relatively new invention. Economies were invented to facilitate resource sharing, if you are working on a farm all day, you don't have time to go and bake all day, and if you are baking all day, you don't have time to make pottery, and if you make pottery all day... you get the idea.

Economies were created to ensure that everyone shared in the collective resources of their community, so that no one went without. If you were lucky your community ended the season with a surplus of something that could be sold to your neighbouring community for a nice little bonus.

The overriding point however was simple, the economy existed to serve society, society did not exist to serve the economy.

But somewhere along the way, this idea started to go horribly, horribly wrong. The idea of immense profit and limitless wealth may have been a dream in the eyes of some, but it took the invention of colonialism and the industrial revolution to make it happen. The combination of plundered natural resources from around the world, and the production capability of slavery and industrialised production gave birth to capitalism.

And the world has not seen peace or stability since.

Not only has the world become more de-stabilised in the past 200 years, than the rest of human history combined, but we now face existential danger from our own economic systems.

The planet will die under capitalism, our society will divide and fall under capitalism, The weight of massive wealth inequality, and the insatiable hungry for profit, will see all natural resources and environments become extinguished.

To put it simply, if we don't end capitalism, then capitalism will end us.

So that is really that, capitalism must end. Soon.

This of course presents us with an obvious question, what do we replace it with?

Well despite the endlessly nauseating public discourse, that our only choices are some weird binary of extremism, between dead-eyed capitalist apathy, and totalitarian, brutal subsistence living under Stalinist communism...

There are in fact many solutions to our sustainable economy problem, and since civilisations have managed to have functional economies without capitalism for approximately all of human history, there is no reason to believe that we cannot dig ourselves out of this mess if only we find the will to do so.

The key word here is sustainability, we must move away from a profit driven economy back to a resource sharing economy, that does not mean however that we cannot upgrade our thinking to incorporate some of the newest and most advanced economic theories to get there.

Since we don't really have a choice anyway, why not take this opportunity to fundamentally rethink our entire concept of how an economy should function.

A great transitional starting point, for example, is Firewall Economics. This is the concept that nothing which is essential to the preservation and safety of life should be run for profit. So for example, hospitals, infrastructure, housing, groceries, utilities etc... are all run by government or non-government organisations, to ensure that service delivery is the first and only priority.

Now this is of course only a half-measure and it still technically operates under capitalism, since any industry that isn't 'essential' can still be run for endless profit growth. However, this system is a fantastic first step because it can be implemented almost immediately, and it cuts away a lot of the most harmful aspects of capitalism quickly.

If capitalism is the bleeding wound of the world, then Firewall Economics is like a tourniquet for saving our planet's life.

The next most sensible economic reform to implement is aspects of Participatory Economics. This is the idea that a workplace should be run in a universally democratic manner, from rotation of roles to democratic policy decisions, to the equal share of profits. There is a lot to like about this system because it completely reimagines all the traditionally harmful views of work and production.

It gives every employee equal power, responsibility, and reward, not only is this the fairest way to run a workplace it is also the most inclusive, most empowering, and most responsible.

It transforms the workplace from a centre of profit generation for capitalists, into a community, where those that spend their time, effort and labour working it, are

rewarded fairly for it, not just monetarily but with a sense of purpose and inclusion.

This complete mental dynamic shift would be a massive change from the root of many of capitalism's core problems and remove the aspect of selfish capital gain completely. A bonus to this system is if every workplace transition to this system, then a lot of bonus effects start happening to the economy as a whole.

For example, if every work place is holding mostly consistent, average salaries, then the entire country's tax laws can be overhauled for simplicity and fairness, creating a much more stable economy as a whole as well as making budget planning considerably easier and more accurate to predict.

It also means that resource sharing and product delivery can be more accurately prepared. There is no need to recklessly strip mine the earth resources if we know precisely what is needed to run the economy and where the resources already exist.

At this point our economy has already undergone significant philosophical change, and the destructive forces of capitalism have been mostly negated.

But all these ideas so far have been about immediate changes, what about planning for the long term?

What could we do to ensure an advanced, sustainable economy that can meet not just the needs of society today, but the needs of our future?

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is already well under way. Automation, machine learning, and advanced construction techniques like 3D printing, already exist and are becoming more advanced every year. Yet our social planning around this revolution still anchors itself in economic theories that are hundreds of years old.

But is the day fast approaching when our society should no longer be built around jobs? What happens when the technology becomes so advanced and dependable that it can hopelessly outperform any human worker? These may sound like hypothetical questions, but they need answers soon, and they need policy and social reform built to accommodate them.

We already have ideas like Universal Basic Income, is this an inevitability as the next 100 years see the total automation of most, if not all, workplaces?

I don't pretend to have the answers to these questions, but I do know that the questions themselves will not resolve themselves, and as we face some of the greatest crises in human history, so too are we presented now with some of its greatest opportunities to build a better world.

The ideas we have looked at today are just some of the potential choices we have as an alternative to capitalism, but there are dozens of practical and realistic economic models we could implement.

We have alternatives, we have options, we have choices. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

We don't have to keep destroying the planet just to give like 8 people the GDP of entire continents every financial year.

We can do better. Much better. And we must.

## **Outro:**

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Thank you.

Max Black  
December 22 2020



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