



Surviving Capitalism

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Capitalism Failed

Let me begin with the contentious statement that Capitalism has failed. That isn't entirely true, of course, but it is true in the most important sense. To understand this failure, and what can be done to correct it, we must first understand Capitalism itself.

Understanding Capitalism

Capitalism is, most fundamentally, the mass accumulation of capital, by the exploitation of all available resources, to the maximum extent possible. It's important to understand that this is intrinsically parasitical, and is not and never was intended to be in any way symbiotic. It's a process of taking everything, forever, without ever giving back, at least not intentionally. This unavoidably creates an imbalance, indeed it's clearly understood that Capitalism only works if it creates inequality. There cannot be winners without losers, and the exact degree to which those winners succeed is directly proportional to the degree to which the losers fail, since everything the winners have comes directly at the expense of the losers.

In defence of this predatory system, capitalists argue that this zero-sum definition of Capitalism is false, as they claim that it actually creates new wealth previously absent from the system, but there is no evidence to support this. Claims of wealth creation invariably transpire to be little more than an abstract market fiction with no physical manifestation, and nothing that benefits anyone other than the creators of this fiction. All that's actually being created is a facade, with no real backing, that boosts market confidence, allowing the creator of this fiction to raise capital to further pursue his market ventures. The capital acquired by this deception was not itself created, but only transferred from one wealthy entity to another. In that sense, "wealth creation" is merely a euphemism for recycling existing wealth among the wealthy.

Capitalists further argue that this "wealth creation" (or in reality recycling) subsequently leads to "job creation", and that is where the real wealth creation supposedly lies, but again jobs are merely being transferred, not created. Overall, the same proportion of people are out of work or in low-paid jobs, it's just that they're different people doing the same low-paid jobs, or the same people doing different but equally low-paid jobs. Moreover, each time these jobs are recycled they're devalued even further by employers, as a deliberate strategy to maximise profits by driving wages down as close to zero as possible.

Meanwhile, Capitalists would have us believe that they are altruistic benefactors "creating jobs", like Santa Claus handing out gifts at Christmas. In reality job creation is a function of consumer demand, and has nothing whatsoever to do with the supposed benevolence of Capitalists. Employers only have a need for additional workers as production increases, and they only need to increase production as consumer demand rises. Consumer demand is in turn absolutely dependent upon consumer wealth, without which they cannot buy anything. The more wealth consumers have, the more they can buy, and since their wealth comes from wages then naturally the higher those wages, the more wealth they have. In other words jobs are created by better wages, which is exactly the opposite of the Capitalist ethos, and therefore not only is Capitalism not responsible for job creation, it's fundamentally in direct opposition to it.

In the absence of Socialist policies such as Minimum Wage legislation, employers would be more than happy to literally pay nothing, leaving employees to survive purely on gratuities or other forms of charity. This is very nearly already the case for many Americans working in the catering services industry, such as waiters for example, as gratuities are legally included as part of the minimum wage, and therefore it's entirely possible for employers to literally pay nothing if gratuities are sufficiently high. This is nothing more than legalised slavery.

The capitalist argument in defence of low wages is equally disingenuous. They argue that workers are only worth as much as the profits they generate, but if that's true then it fails to explain why corporations make billions in profit, and yet the workers who generate that profit only receive minimum wages, while the fruit of their labour is harvested by idle capitalists, whose only contribution was venture capital acquired through deception and earlier misappropriation of worker-generated profits. Capitalists have no further argument in defence of this blatant theft, but seek to pacify the afflicted with empty assurances that their stolen profits will somehow "trickle down" to the victims from whom it was stolen. Even if that were to happen, which mysteriously it never does, it'd be poor compensation for the deliberate creation of such brutal inequality in the first place. It addresses neither the injustice nor the practical hardship of Capitalist theft, it's merely a token gesture of recognition that's as offensive as the injustice itself.

Defining Failure

Something can only be said to have failed if it hasn't achieved its objective, but since the purpose of Capitalism is the creation of inequality, and it has indeed achieved that goal, then in the strictest sense Capitalism has not in fact failed, it's been a tremendous success.

It only seems like Capitalism has failed because most people do not understand its objective. They're under the delusion that Capitalism means "wealth for everyone", and since they've failed to secure a share of that wealth then naturally Capitalism must have failed.

In the most important sense, Capitalism has failed, since it has failed for all but a tiny minority. This is the same minority for whom Capitalism has been a tremendous success, indeed the minority's wealth comes directly from the poor majority, which is exactly what keeps the majority poor in the first place, but again this is only a failure if you consider the purpose of Capitalism to be "wealth for everyone", which it isn't and was never intended to be.

Capitalism is certainly not about equality, but it is supposedly about "equal opportunity", which unfortunately many people conflate with equality, hence the confusion. The two concepts are not even remotely similar. Equality is seven billion people living without fear of starving to death. "Equal opportunity" is seven billion people walking into a casino, and all but the last handful of them walking out destitute.

So Capitalism has "succeeded", by some predatory measure, and the result is that [80% of the world's population lives in poverty](#), according to the World Bank, while most of the remaining 20% live a meagre subsistence lifestyle, working like slaves merely to pay bills, and little else. One of the more dire consequences of this is that [22,000 children die every day](#) as a direct result

of poverty, according to UNICEF. There are even [3.9 million British children living in poverty](#), according to the UK Department for Work and Pensions, and [80% of Americans](#) have experienced "poverty or near poverty", according to a US census report, so this is certainly not just a Third World problem. Only a tiny minority of humanity actually benefits from Capitalism, which is of course exactly as intended, because Capitalism is the embodiment of selfishness, the creed of predators. Our true failure is that we allowed these predators to reign, by allowing Capitalism to succeed.

Flawed Solutions

Capitalism can't be fixed, because it isn't broken, it's working exactly as intended by the predators who created it. The idea peddled by Progressives, that Capitalism can somehow be used to achieve social justice, is a fallacy, as flawed as the idea that weapons can be used to end war. If that were true, then why after millennia of warfare is the world still engaged in endless military conflicts? Using the cause of a problem to fix itself is futile, and only exacerbates the problem.

Revolution is equally flawed, because it merely pits brother against brother, much like war, and rarely even gets close to touching those responsible for that which motivated the revolution in the first place. Rioting, looting and mass murder do nothing to stop the tyrants, who remain protected by the sanctuary of wealth and influence. They merely wait for the revolutionaries to kill each other and run out of resources, then sweep in to re-enslave the exhausted survivors, who are now more subservient than ever. At best one tyrant is simply replaced by another, who rises from the ashes of the revolution to begin another cycle of oppression.

Even a more strategic coup, which uses targeted assassination instead of mindless riots, is doomed to failure, because again one tyrant is merely replaced by another. Nature abhors a vacuum, and there is no greater vacuum than the sudden abdication of power.

Mediation is equally futile because, as with terrorists, you can't negotiate with predators. There is no moral argument that can possibly convince a snake not to bite, as it's completely incapable of even understanding the concept of morality. Your only recourse is to cut off its head, but that only removes a single predator from the food chain, making life easier for competing predators.

Capitalists, and in particular the modern variant of Liberals who've deceptively rebranded themselves "Libertarians", disingenuously claim that the relationship between predators and their prey is somehow subject to a "voluntary contract", and therefore workers on low pay should simply negotiate a better deal with their employers, and that failure to do so indicates either incompetence or the deliberate choice to remain poor, as if deprivation were somehow an attractive lifestyle choice. This conveniently ignores the fact that the poor have no leverage, and therefore no means by which to negotiate. In a market where there are more workers than jobs, employers have all the bargaining power. You can't reasonably demand better pay and conditions, when your employer can simply replace you with someone teetering on the edge of starvation, who will gladly work more hours for less money just to stay alive.

Further exacerbating this problem is the fact that, in our increasingly service-based economy, skills have become worthless as a bargaining tool, as jobs become increasingly menial and existing qualifications rapidly become irrelevant. The irony is that our aspirational public education system presents the poor with the false hope of success in exchange for hard work, only for that hope to be dashed when presented with the unaffordable costs of completing that education to the degree necessary to actually achieve that success, and yet even the very few who somehow manage to pay these crippling costs only succeed in achieving qualifications that are then discovered to be useless, leaving them to live a life of servitude in menial, low-paid jobs. When in fact what the public education system should be teaching is the vocational skills necessary to do something better than flipping burgers, without the financially unattainable requirement of expensive further education, unless it proposes to provide that further education for free (which seems highly unlikely in a fanatically neoliberal environment).

This is the same fanatically neoliberal environment that makes all other forms of social policy impotent, such as the Welfare State (in those countries fortunate enough to have one at all). Firstly because only the poor actually pay taxes, while the rich hide their stolen profits in tax havens, resulting in a grossly underfunded welfare programme that spectacularly fails to help those who need it most. Secondly because neoliberal governments only represent the interests of the wealthy corporations that control them, and *they* are only interested in the spoils of war and Capitalist exploitation, not the welfare of those they exploit.

Capitalism cannot be fixed, it cannot be destroyed, and clearly it cannot be negotiated with. So what option does that leave, given that these are the only methods that have ever been attempted to resolve the injustice of Capitalism, or indeed any form of oppression throughout history?

This is where most people give up and concede defeat, because they lack the imagination to conceive of any solution that precludes the possibility of either fixing, destroying or negotiating with Capitalism.

However, there is another way.

Leaving Capitalism

Capitalism is a farm and we the majority are the cattle. Nothing we do can possibly spare us from the slaughterhouse, so long as we remain on the farm. This entire arrangement is rigged against us, nothing here is designed for our benefit. So why continue to participate in a game we can't possibly win?

The one answer that rarely occurs to those looking for a solution to Capitalism, who believe resistance is futile because Capitalism cannot be fixed, destroyed or negotiated with, is simply to leave.

Capitalism only works because we continue to participate in it. We do this because we've been indoctrinated into believing we have no other option, that the only alternative is starvation and death (this despite the fact that Capitalism is already starving us to death), but the fact is that humanity survived for hundreds of millennia before the dawn of what we ironically describe as

"civilisation", a euphemism for conquest and slavery that bears little resemblance to the typically inferred meaning.

Leaving Capitalism (or even "civilisation") behind does not mean a return to living in caves and bashing animals with clubs, as Capitalists would have us believe. This is the twenty-first century; we have the technology to lead perfectly comfortable lives without the slavery of Capitalism. The road back to self-sufficiency is not particularly challenging, except for one possible roadblock (which I will address in a moment).

In terms of survival, we actually need surprisingly little: water, which can easily be collected for free; food, which can be grown for free; shelter, which can be constructed from free natural materials, or from discarded waste materials; and finally energy, for heat and other purposes, which can be produced from free natural sources like the sun, wind and water.

Beyond survival lies the far more important but ethereal things that money can't buy anyway, and are therefore irrelevant to the question of poverty. Given survival, all else is possible.

The only caveat is that none of that is possible without land, and land is not free, but having somehow acquired that land then it is finally possible to be liberated from the slavery of Capitalism forever.

Like most of the world's wealth, most of the world's land is [owned by a tiny minority](#) of the population, typically inherited through a succession of ancestors, the first of whom brutally conquered that land. This makes the difficulty in acquiring land all the more galling, given that the existing titles to that land were mostly established through murder and theft. As just one example, the Queen of England, as the proprietor of The Crown Estates, controls one-sixth of the entire world's land mass, and anyone who buys property on that land is not in fact buying the land beneath it, but merely a freehold to that land which can be (and often is, by way of compulsory purchase orders) revoked on a whim.

This makes the acquisition of land very difficult, and quite impossible for the poor, so it seems this cannot be a solution to Capitalist inequality, but there may be one last hope for a solution.

Communal Living

The biggest problem facing humanity today is poverty, and the biggest problem faced by the poor is housing. Rent or mortgage payments are easily the single biggest expense anyone has to bear, and that cost is crippling the poor.

I found it so frustrating that a solution to poverty was so close, with most of the necessary resources available for free, only to be denied at the final hurdle: the seemingly impossible dream of land ownership. This dream is indeed impossible for individuals with almost no money, however pooling the resources of a large community makes the purchase of land a far more viable proposition, and the subsequent construction of housing much easier too.

It also occurred to me that the idea of "community" need not be restricted to a local area, given the power of the internet. Why not form a global community of stakeholders in an initiative to buy land and build affordable housing, in fact a series of wholly self-contained ecosystems that both house and feed entire communities, in which any of the stakeholders could live, forever if they wish, for no more than a small donation to help buy the land, and the willingness to work as part of those communities?

Such initiatives are not new, aid workers have been doing this for decades, indeed centuries, but until now it's largely been reserved for the Third World. In this bleak era of austerity, it's time to face the harsh reality that these sorts of initiatives are now desperately needed in the former First World too, a world that is now functionally indistinguishable from the Third World, at least for the increasingly poor majority.

For those who might recoil in horror at the prospect of living like a sort of Amish settler, devoid of the trappings of modern life, consider the fact that most of the poor in western nations live like animals in a zoo, in fact worse, because at least zoos feed their animals. There are people living right here in the west who don't even have enough money to keep their electricity meter running, who sit in the dark, cold and hungry, with no one to talk to and nothing to do, who don't even have any furniture because it was repossessed by debt collectors. Many of these people are not even unemployed, but their pitiful wages are so low that they would probably be better off if they were, because at least then they'd be entitled to financial support from the government, albeit an equally pitiful payment that's still barely enough to survive on.

How could that possibly be worse than living off the land, in a community of friends eager to help you, with access to all the modern technology you could ever need, indeed far more than you have access to now, because right now you have nothing?

If that isn't you (and if you're reading this then the chances are that it isn't) then congratulations, you are part of a tiny privileged minority and probably don't need any help. Then again, maybe you do, if you're unemployed and reading this from a public terminal in your local library.

If the entire world's population of poor cooperated in such an initiative, it would comprise a community of **six billion people**, and every one of those people would have a far better life than they have now. Poverty would come to an end, and with it Capitalism, because Capitalism cannot survive if its cattle walk off the farm.