



## **AxisOfEasy #7: Nevermind the Influencers, Here Come the Revolts**

Charles Hugh Smith, Jesse Hirsh, Mark E. Jeftovic

AxisofEasy Salon #7: Nevermind the influencers, here come the revolts  
Mark Jeftovic, Jesse Hirsh, and Charles Hugh Smith

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Well, our pre-roll won't be as pithy and funny as usual but because I'm rolling now...  
But at least we got pictures and at least we got sound

**[opening credits]**

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Hey everybody, Mark Jeftovic here with Charles Hugh Smith and Jesse Hirsh for another episode of the access of easy salon cyber salon. This is number seven. So seven weeks welcome guys.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

Pretty impressive. We're still there.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

It seems like in just a week, the whole world has changed again since we were last here last Thursday.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

And it's remarkable.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Yeah.

### **Charles Hugh Smith:**

Why don't you fill in what you mean. I mean just, you know –

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

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<https://axisofeasy.com/podcast/salon-7-nevermind-the-influencers-here-come-the-revolts/>



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Well, just the whole breakdown in civil order that is starting to happen, and when we taped this last Thursday – Thursday night – I was editing it and putting it up online. And I think that's when the first serious protests started spreading or at least turning a little unruly.

And I think it was on Thursday night or on Friday night, someone in my Facebook feed was commenting: *"I hope the riots aren't really bad again tonight"*.

And I almost said: *"You know, I think last night was the crescendo. It's all, it's all going to be a non-event and a nothing burger from here"*.

And then I just stopped myself from saying that, and it just got worse and worse, and worse and it spread from city to city, and now it's overseas. Even Montreal here in Canada had some looting over the weekend, which I didn't even hear about, but I kind of try hard to ignore mainstream media so it's easy for me to miss stuff, but that was odd.

There was also quite serious protest in downtown Toronto on Saturday because there was another death in Toronto. A woman went off of a balcony in High Park. After police were called to the scene – I don't even really know what happened there – but the protests in Toronto stayed peaceful. They didn't accelerate from there, which I was happy to hear. So, that's basically –

### Jesse Hirsh:

Although I **got taken aback** because I kind of feel that you're internalizing the mainstream narrative, and maybe a good place for us to start is how we would describe what's currently going on. Cause I certainly disagree with the idea with the narrative causality of there were protests and then the protests turned violent. Cause don't I think that's accurate.

I think if we're to use a better taxonomy to describe what's happening, I prefer the word revolt. And what we're seeing is a kind of revolt because revolts are usually not organized. They're usually relatively spontaneous and they comprise a plurality of actors. So there are lots of people who participate in a revolt for different reasons. Some are protestors who legitimately are showing up with signs and chants and demands. Others are just people looking to wreak havoc – and they include police – but they also include looters as well as far right extremists who wanted to show up and cause chaos. In addition, there are all the digital people, all the people who were at home watching, who some of which you can also identify as protestors, but others are agitators. Others are propagandists. Others are satiricists. The reason I liked that revolt is it sort of reflects that A) this is unorganized and B) there's no one you can really hold accountable for any of it.



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And that it reflects the breakdown of society more than it does a creation of a new thing. And in that sense I personally don't vilify looters. I see them as a symptom. I see them as it reflects the larger breakdown of support though. And I, myself am not engaged in looting or suburban looting, but I do think it's important to look at the phenomena accurately as possible and say: "Hey, wait a minute. Either A), as Charles might say, people are opting out; or B) people are pissed off and acting out. And that acting out I think is too indicative of the current state of affair.

### **Charles Hugh Smith:**

Yeah, and I think –

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Charles, can I just interrupt you before you jump in? Hold that thought.

Jesse, you said one thing that triggered me a little bit, and that was when you talked about the far right. The far right extremists, which I'm sure are involved – but you didn't – you kind of didn't mention the far left extremists, and I kind of strive for that balance because you know, let's face it – there's antifa guys out there. They're not exactly on the right wing of the political discourse. I just think it's the extremists – there are agitators out there for sure. But hang on, hang on. You hit on something that has been bothering me about the mainstream media narrative around this since the beginning of the COVID epidemic, which is hitching dissent and hitching nonconforming narratives to white supremacists and all-right and that sort of thing, it's almost... That, I think, is very problematic.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

So I want to flag this for a discussion later in the podcast, because I want to give Charles a chance to come in, but I will grant your point that there absolutely were people right across the political spectrum participating in this revolt. I think the primary reason that the far right is identified, is because they identify themselves. Versus many of the other groups do not. But let's reach this after. I'm interested to hear what Charles has to say.

### **Charles Hugh Smith:**

Okay, I'm going to do my historical analogies here because I think a huge driver which Mark wrote about recently and we've discussed in the past – salons is wealth inequality and disempowerment, right? And so when we go back to the early 1900s in the US, that's when we saw anarchist bombings, right? And extremely violent protests, and the first kind of union, formation attempts which were brutally suppressed. And so, I think that the



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wealth inequality and this still called “Gilded Age of America” took 20 years to build, right? I mean, it started in the 1880s and then it finally reached culmination in 1907, 1912 kind of era. So I think we've seen the same thing now. The last 20 years have been nothing but a ramp up of extreme wealth inequality getting more extreme.

And just as important, the social mobility ladders have been broken, removed, so that you don't – fewer and fewer people are able to get into that top 10% or 5%. And that's where all the wealth and all the income is going now, right? Roughly 5% of the entire population's wealth is collected. Uh, I'm sorry. Income is collected by the top 5% and 85% of the wealth is held by the top 5%, right? So then you've got frustration because the ladder has all these broken rungs.

And now, if you happen to be an extraordinary person, the type that gets a PhD and then a medical degree, and then gets a law degree just so that you know, what the heck right? And you're a concert pianist. Okay. I get it. You know you're going to rise at the top, but what about the rest of us, you know?

So the last point I would make is that this frustration has no mainstream political outlet. That's the problem. There's no other outlet for it. So, if you said, you know what, I'm going to organize behind a political candidate who expresses my values, and it's all like: Okay, we tried that with Bernie, he got shut down; and, and so on. And so, at the local level, it's also frustrating. So it's like, okay, you've taken away social mobility, you've increased wealth and income inequality to extremes that haven't been reached in a hundred years, and you've, de-legitimized any sort of dissent which is what Mark was speaking to. So, in that context, it's like, wow, you know, where are you going to take it? And I would just, as a footnote, I would say, if I own the Rolex store, I would get a shipment of those really good, 15-dollar Rolex knockoffs from like China or Thailand that you can buy from the sidewalk. And I would just stock the hell out of my store with that – the knockoffs – which are really good. I mean, if you've been to Bangkok or China,, then you look at those things and it's like, yeah, they may stop working in six months, but they still look good. Who's, you know...

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

Various counterfeit capital.

Go ahead, Mark.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

I was only going to say that it wasn't just Bernie that people tried to say: *okay, here's a guy who sort of represents the everyman*. That's actually what Trump ran on. And won



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on. He was supposed to drain the swamp. He was supposed to be a non-elitist political outsider who was going to change the game of politics. And that's why he got in, really. He was like the antiestablishment candidate.

And that isn't really what happened, actually.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

Well, and, and to both of your points, I think the nature of this revolt is it is letting go of steam. All this pressure has been building and building – the pandemic and the lockdown was a pressure cooker of increasing that stress and anxiety. And this was an opportunity for anyone who had a grief. For anyone who had a reason to say: *I'm fed up and I can't handle it anymore*. And I think that's where we're at the precipice, or if artistically, a pivot point where I think – if we don't take this seriously – I think if traditional institutional authorities don't get serious, we're really going to see either on the one hand, total breakdown, or on the other hand, the kind of authoritarianism that we keep referring to, that we keep anticipating in part, because there is a combination of people who are fed up and just ready to opt out, people who are fed up and just ready to burn down, and people who are fed up and are willing to entertain anything that's different than what we have. And I think that that combination, with a lack of healthy alternatives, creates a very volatile spot. I mean, the analogy I used in my newsletter on Monday, it's a powder keg. The fuses have been lit and the fuse is very short. Doesn't mean that the powder keg's going to explode, but it does mean we don't have the usual ability to procrastinate. The ability to placate. And instead, we're heading to what could be a raucous summer, especially if unemployed. Especially poor people. Especially if people right across the spectrum feel that they have no hope, and they have no other options or avenues for change.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Yeah. I mean, I think the single biggest driver of all of this unrest, well, I mean, it's a culmination of what both of you have been saying. 20 years of accelerating wealth and equality and what we've all said, I think numerous times going into this, is that the Corona Virus didn't bring about this economic depression that we found ourselves in. It was the catalyst. Now, we have a catalyst within a catalyst because the lockdowns – I mean – how many people – like – it still hasn't really sunk into people.

What this really means is when governments worldwide can just basically hit the pause button on the entire economy and start picking and choosing, who's got an essential business and who doesn't have an essential business, you get to earn a livelihood. You don't, you do, you don't. And that completely changes the nature of everything. Capital



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allocation, trying to invest, trying to plan your career, trying to plan where you're going to settle, who you're like, what you're going to, where you're going to raise your family. All bets are off because no one ever thought that the governments of the world could just basically pull the plug on the entire thing and say: *Everybody stop what you're doing. And wait till we give you permission to start doing it again.* And so, not everybody has a cash cushion, or savings, or anything.

So yeah, go ahead. I think you know where I'm going with this.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

But I mean, I agree with your premise, and I agree that most people are unprepared, but we do have – historically, the example: Soviet Union, to know that the government have tried this in the past. For me, I think this has broken the myth of the free market. That as someone who does believe in markets, as someone who does believe in the efficiency of markets, it's always struck me that there's a hypocrisy in most industrialized society. That there are certain industries, certain companies, which are basically subsidized by the state. Which are basically favored or championed by the state. Aerospace and telecom are two obvious examples of this. But the technology sector's not that much different. That they wrap themselves in myths of market freedoms. But in fact, this type of state-based intervention, at least as far as I'm concerned, is not new. We're just seeing it in a very naked, blatant way that takes the veneer off of was previously presented as free market capitalism, right?

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Yeah. If what you're saying is what's presented as free markets aren't, that's something that's kind of been my mantra for over 10 years. And we have an unabashedly command-and-control economy now, and we do know that those do not work. They end in failure every time. And now governments have kind of painted themselves into a corner because there's no easy way for them to paint themselves out of the corner because they can't stop printing money now. They can't stop sending checks out now. They can almost – they can know better just throw open the doors and say, everybody re-open the economy as much as they can. Take their foot off the gas at the central bank and say, yeah, let's just let interest rates find their natural clearing level. It's just going to be complete and total bedlam now. It's really...it's...it's...I'm speechless. And it happened like the actual accelerant era, the accelerant phase of this happened so quickly that...it's just my head is still spinning.



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### **Charles Hugh Smith:**

Yeah. Let me, um, I want to pick up on what you guys are talking about – the free market, and the topic we discussed last week, which was the loss of legitimacy. And Jesse wrote some pieces last week relating to trust, right? And I'm going to connect trust with confidence and certainty, which is what Mark, you are speaking to.

So now we have uncertainty on multiple levels – basically everything. Loss of confidence, because of course, when you're uncertain, you face up to the fact you're gambling. Now, there is no confidence that anything you're going to buy is going to be a good decision, right? Or any move you're going to make. And then you have lost trust in institutions and there's no ready substitute for that loss, right? Because all we have is these centralized, hierarchical institutions and everything else has been stripped away, right? So you've got corporations and government and government-related institutions, and that's it.

So, there's this huge vacuum in our social order and in terms of the free market, it's interesting to me, related to trust, I think, that the central authorities and the institutions don't trust the market, right? Because it might go against them. So they had to wipe it out, take control of it. And they also don't trust their population to make the decisions that they think are wise, right? i.e. you know, serve their interests. So they've de-legitimized the political process. They've stripped out away too. So, – and I'll bring up another historical analogy – I happened to be reading some more history about the early American Republic, which was the 1792, 1799 era, the first decade where everyone was kind of playing around with this new thing called Republic Democracy.

And when the French revolution kicked in, which incidentally was the exact year that the constitution was finally approved –1789 – about five or six years into the thing, there was a bunch of Americans who were afraid that the French were going to subvert the American Republic for various things. And so, there was this huge growth of conspiracy theories. And again, there was a lot of uncertainty, a lack of confidence in the new government and in the economy. And the world was in turmoil because the French revolutionary government and Napoleon had basically started conquering all the monarchies and that upset the applecart in a number of ways.

And so now, I'm looking around and like, there's just a huge proliferation of polarizing conspiracies, right? And a lot of it is fed by the medias trying to suppress so-called fake news, but there's also a hunger to nail somebody down for doing this. And that add to Jesse's point about revolt. That's a fool's game because you're not going to be able to pin it all on George Soros or Bill Gates, as comfortable as that would be.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

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Well, and I too, am fascinated by the rise of conspiracy theories, partly because they always happen. On the one hand, there's often a kernel of truth with any conspiracy theory and on the other hand, I think conspiracy theories can be very riveting entertainment. Then, if you accept them as false, if you accept them as made up, just like any novel or just like any fiction, there can be some truth in them. But in this particular instance, I actually see conspiracy theories the same way I do looters. That they're actually a symptom of a larger cause. And in particular, I see conspiracy theories as both a crisis of ideology and a failure of edict. And I mean that as two things, but I actually think of the same thing.

Now when I say crisis of ideology, I mean, I think ideologies failed us. I think the 20th century was the century of ideology where people believed in liberalism, communism, and capitalism, and whatever it is that they decided. It turned out, those beliefs were just beliefs. They were virtual realities. They actually don't reflect the world that we live in. And I think part of what the internet has done is paint ideology obsolete. Or, at the very least, paint existing ideology obsolete. And we don't have an ideology now that helps the existence of the world. Because I think that I agree with you, Charles, that part of the motivation of conspiracy is to find blame. Is to find some doctor evil behind it all, who can be held accountable. But I actually think it reflects a design narrative with the other side. That as human beings, we love story. We make sense of the world through story. And if we don't have a story that explains something, we can't get up. And I think part of the failure of government, part of the failure of public health officials, part of the failure of the corporate media, is their narrative sucks. The story that they're giving to describe this pandemic, and describe this world, is unsatisfactory. People don't like it. It doesn't make sense to them. It doesn't explain what's happening in their world.

So, conspiracy theories fill that void. They're the stories that are made up, that people are ready to believe in because they make slightly more sense than the information coming from traditional institutional authorities, because we don't have any ideology. Because maybe, there is no ideology to explain all of this. Once again, conspiracies fill that void. So I really see this as a failure of ideology, a failure of narrative. And either someone's going to come up with a new ideology, which I actually don't think it's going to happen because ideologies are increasingly irrelevant, or more importantly, someone's going to come up with a better story. It's that story that is going to compel people as that's happening. And I think that's part of what we, ourselves are seeking. I think each of us in our own research and our own writing are trying to understand our world, and we're pursuing the story of decentralization. We're pursuing the story of innovation when it comes to critical thinking and democracy, and perhaps there's much more work that needs to be done in terms of finding a narrative that is compelling enough for people to get by.



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### Mark Jeftovic:

The phrase that kind of formed in my mind while I was hearing you describe that was the vacuum of meaning. It is what I think is happening here. When the narratives break down and the ideologies break down, you have the vacuum of meaning. All of the cherish notions that we're heretofore in effect have been kind of exposed to be illusory or inapplicable in the new reality. And people are like, *what does it even matter anymore?*

And Charles, when you started talking about the French revolution, I find that period in history fascinating, because I have been thinking a lot lately about technocracy, and in my mind, the French revolution was the first technocracy. When they took over and they said: *okay, we're going to do everything. No more superstition.* So religion is out. Everything is by logic and reason now. So they decreed that the borders between counties were now going to be straight grid lines – straight grid line borders. And it didn't take into effect the natural boundaries between different localities and communities. And it was a disaster. And they created a new calendar out of nowhere with the even number of days. And so, they just tried all of these reason-based ideas that just created a complete shambles of society, which is one of the reasons why a guy like Napoleon could come to the fore after all of this. And so, in researching that period, I came across this book called *Symbol and Satire in the French Revolution* written in 1912. And it was about all these cartoonists writing. You know, the cartoons and the satire that came out in the runway up to the revolution. And it's the 4chan of the day. It's Pizzagate of the day. It's like Marie Antoinette eating babies, you know. This is a theme throughout history of the way people try to make sense of this. And, and somewhere along the line, I think, where today is different from the past is in the past, maybe all, but the most superstitious in society knew that it was allegorical and a story and a satire, and it symbolized something.

But today, people literally believe it. And they literally believe some of the most outlandish conspiracies. And maybe I'm wrong. Maybe they literally believed it back then. It's possible. But Jesse, one of the things you said about the story sucks –the stories we're expected to believe today, suck. And that has been going on since before corona virus, but it's just becoming more and more absurd now where it's like, data points come out that say this and if that's not the mainstream narrative, then you're a conspiracy nut for believing it. But you have to believe this other thing over here, which is even nuttier. But if you don't believe it, you're anti-science and you're wearing a tinfoil hat. And that, to me, sucks all the meaning out of everything. And so, people are walking around going: *what does anything mean?* It's a kind of nihilism.



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### Charles Hugh Smith:

Yeah. Let me speak to that.

I think you've really nailed modernism. And of course, the French revolution predated what we can think of as modernist art or modernist literature by a couple of decades, but it was certainly the modern political movement. And as you say, technocracy.

Just to go back briefly, and I don't mean to mock people who believe that George Soros is pulling strings or that Bill Gates isn't pulling strings. Clearly, they are. They are billionaires. Wealth and power are connected. That's part of why it's so easy to see their hand in things. It's because they have spent extraordinary amounts of money gaining influence, right? In ways that non-billionaires cannot, right? You just don't have the mass of money that these guys can spend, I guess. But my point was not to say that they weren't influential, or might not be critical figures in this point in history. But the ground has to be fertile for whatever anybody's pushing, whether it's an unknown revolutionary or a billionaire, right? If the ground is not fertile for their message, then there's limits on what they're going to accomplish. So, that's also true conspiracy theories.

Mark, to your thing about the French revolution, and of course, Jesse – I know you're going to have some interesting comments on this idea – that modernism, if I had to describe it or define it, it would be the supremacy of the individual, right? In other words, we get rid of all those old superstitions and religious values, right? Which were considered fixed and permanent. You get rid of that. And it's up to everybody to decide what they think is right, and fair and valuable. And so the powers that have used – modernism, if you will, or taken advantage of that kind of ideology; if you want to call modernism and postmodernism – sort of virtual ideologies, is it's now anything goes and winners take all. In other words, they've exploited the freedoms of modernism and postmodernism to say: *well, yeah, anything goes and winners take all. Oh, guess what? I'm a winner. Oh, well, sorry.* You know? And so it's very interesting to talk about modernism as the ideology that was criticized, if you will, by postmodernism. But they're both ideologies that place the supremacy of the individual above any fixed values. And that leaves us a system that's ripe for exploitation, in my view.

### Jesse Hirsh:

I would almost refer to modernism and postmodernism as meta-ideologies. I think that they include ideologies within it, the way that liberalism, the manifestation of modernism and modernity, but they also transcend ideology at their eras. Literally. As one who's slightly on the opposite spectrum, I wrinkle any time someone refers to the contemporary period as the modern era, because in my view, the modern era ended around the 20s or the 30s. And as a media centric guy, I believe that we're talking about media effects. That



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modernity is the printed page, and it created the individual because this was created by the printed page. In an oral society, everyone's United by what they hear. Cause they all hear the same thing.

But when you read a book, when you read a printed page, you do so alone. and you will, alone, go on page and interpret the text. And that allows you to create an independent relationship with the text – with the media. And that creates the individual.

So modernity was pretty much a reflector – a reflection of the world. The printed word was the dominant media versus postmodernism, which I absolutely agree, Charles, is hyper-individualism. That's the broadcast era, that's radio. That's television. That's where the printed page created the modern man, which was a man and a white guy until all of a sudden, everyone else said, Hey, I'm not white. I'm not a guy. I want individualism too and postmodernism. Postmodernism created feminism. Postmodernism created a lot of the cultural repetitions that we saw in the 1960s and it was byproduct of radio and television. So me, as the meet-the-guy, I go: oh, radio television. It was the past era. we're living in the internet era. And some people call it post postmodernism. I actually found this scholar who wrote about auto-modernity. That auto modernism is when automation and autonomy mesh up with hyper individualism, and all of a sudden, that's where you get the auto individual – the Facebook individual, the YouTube individual who appears as an individual, but is in fact, part of a larger hive or a larger board.

That was my joke I think I made in a previous podcast that both globalization being when key, most distracts from Confucius organizing. That the world is organized into these transnational corporations while culture is held up as individualism. That we all believe that the individual is the prime actor when in fact, it is these massive corporations, these massive board or hives that actually hold the world.

And that's why I personally reject the idea that George or Bill Gates has power. They have wealth. They could use that wealth to exercise a little bit of power, but Microsoft has the real power in so far as Bill Gates has benefits at corporate power. I think that there are corporations in the world who are not eye to a single individual in terms of ownership. That pose a far greater threat than any billionaire. And I think that by decentralized phenomena are so important. That we are facing the types of corporate power, the types of an account of power that cannot be stopped. Any individual, or even a group of individuals, not only by competing institution and those competing institutions can, should be decentralized because only then will you find the counter power that can stand up to the centralization of wealth, the resources that we currently see.



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### **Mark Jeftovic:**

There's some kind of juxtaposition here because when I think about hyper individualism, I think about almost the Golden Era of Liberty, right? Personal freedom and that sort of thing. And I think, those days are over and we don't glorify personal liberty anymore. In fact, liberties are being stripped away, and liberties are out of fashion. They're kind of old news now.

And so, we take specific hyper individualized people like an Elon Musk or a Mark Zuckerberg. We kind of idealize them as sort of like, this represents some faction of tribalism that we're all supposed to be members of. But so, we pay this, it's almost the same as free markets and capitalism that we paid as lip service to it. We paid as lip service to individuals in hyperindividualism but we're actually, I think, it feels to me like it's becoming, there are more collectivist impulses in society now. you didn't build that.

It's all for everybody else's safety. Stop being so selfish and wanting to work, or wanting to get yourself ahead. Don't do that. You have to think about the safety of others. You have to think about how your ancestors created the institutional inequality that everybody else is suffering through today. And you know, your own individual preferences or wants or desires should really take a backseat to what might be hurtful or offensive to everybody else in society around you. You were supposed to be this amorphous sort of blob of collective desires and wants. This is what you should want as part of society. You should be concerned about this. Your moral compass should be tipped this way. And if it's not, then you're being bad and you should feel bad.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

See, I don't agree with your characterization at all. I think that you are describing the downfall of liberalism. That there are a lot of liberals who are currently in an existential crisis because their ideologies are failing them, and they are doing what you described. But most people are not. Most people do not reflect the characterization you described. I think most people still are interested in liberty, are still interested in their own individual lives, but are also part of a community, and families, and other group identities. And do not be a mutual contradiction between the two. But I think so far as there is a mainstream yet, and in so far as there are dominant places on social media, there is a lot of liberals expressing existential angst in a very public way that you think you're reacting to, but I'm not sure that they're the representative of everybody. Let alone most people.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

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Well, possibly to your point, because as a person who doesn't watch a lot of mainstream media, what you're talking about is not what I'm seeing in mainstream media, or in the incumbent big tech platforms. That what you're talking about is not being reinforced there. So maybe it's a skewed perspective that the few times I –

**Jesse Hirsh:**

You mean the good part of what I'm talking about.

**Mark Jeftovic:**

Sorry?

**Jesse Hirsh:**

You mean the good stuff of what I'm talking about. Not the bad stuff.

**Mark Jeftovic:**

Yes, yes. You're saying like, well, people are still participating in multiple communities and being...

And I'm saying that: Wwhat is he talking about? That's not what I see.

**Jesse Hirsh:**

Okay. Sorry. I agree. They're not represented on most places. You would look on social media and they're not represented on mainstream media. I agree with you entirely.

**Mark Jeftovic:**

And so what I was literally –

**Jesse Hirsh:**

They literally are the majority, and I think –

**Mark Jeftovic:**

So, what you're talking about then is a silent majority, a neglected a majority that's unacknowledged. And that brings us right back to what's driving all the unrest today.



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Because it's a type of...the best phrase I've ever heard for, it was Ken Wilber who called it *Eight Perspectival Madness*, right? We've come to this place. Or even the hyper normalization phrase that we were kicking around a few weeks ago.

If what you say is correct – and I tend to suspect that you may be – normal people, everyday people, are walking around saying: you know, what's important to me is that I get fulfillment as an individual. I have meaningful work. My family is important to me. My friends are important to me. My community is important to me. My various groups and constituencies are important to me. And then, you're tuning into a mainstream Zeitgeist saying, none of that matters. All this other stuff should be important to you. And you're an immoral person if you think differently.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

I think to quickly re-paraphrase Charles, people have opted out. You know, I don't think there are a silent majority in that. I don't think they're silent. I don't think they care about the mainstream media or social media.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Do you think so? I turned on CNN the other day, I was washing dishes and my phone was charging So I couldn't listen to a podcast. And I turned on CNN first time in I don't know how long I kind of puked in my mouth a little bit. like this is news? Is this really news? like this –

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

Then don't turn it on! I don't.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

I know. But my point is, this is the mainstream. Like, this is what everybody is watching, you know? This is what's on in the airport lounge.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

No, they're not.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Recorded: June 04, 2020

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Yeah, I suppose. I mean, the ratings are plunging. The ratings are plunging and they're losing money. So I suppose they're kind of like, we've got to be as bombastic and –

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

They're relevant to your point. There could be a niche, But anyway.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

I don't think they're irrelevant. You know what? I think maybe we wish they were irrelevant, and they're irrelevant to people like us three, and probably irrelevant to everybody who actually tunes in and watches a podcast like this or listens to it. But they are not irrelevant to the majority of the population still. We're the minority. We're not speaking for the zeitgeists.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

I mean, again, I feel we're getting off track, but they're not relevant to the majority of the population. They're relevant to the elite. They're relevant to the people who still believe in the system and uphold the system. The majority of people are involved in their own lives, are involved in doing their own thing. They don't watch CNN. They don't read the New York Times. They probably don't consume news at all.

The etiology of the news is their own self importance. And as soon as you disregard that, as soon as you recognize that they're not important at all, you recognize that only the elite thinks that they're important and the elite have a vested interest in getting everyone else to think they're important. But they're not.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

This is not getting off topic. This is actually the core of what we're kind of talking about because – and we are at a different point of agreement here – because you think that this process, this “Great Opt-Out”, as we like to call it, you think it's further – way further advanced than I think it actually is. And when this started, I remember I said to Angela, my wife, “you just wait”, right?

When your head is being held under water by a foot, all you want is to breathe again and you'll agree to anything. You'll give away any right. You'll give away any freedom. You will give up any hope for your future. You will do whatever it takes to just get your head above water and start breathing again. So, when all the businesses are shut down, when the economy is at a stop, people will say: *Please, Mr. Government, just snap your fingers*



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*and make it all go away. And I'll do whatever you want. And that, I think, is going to be what will happen.*

Now, there's this huge pandemonium erupting. And I think we have it correct that this is not a protest, and this is not a riot. It is a revolt. That, I can say – that's probably a more accurate way to look at it but where we are in disagreement here is I think you think the mainstream is a lot smaller than it really is.

### Charles Hugh Smith:

Okay. Thanks for the uh..

No, I just want to make a couple of points on what you guys are discussing, okay? If we look back at the printed word era that Jesse described and the mainstream media that still exists, the one that's in the airport lounges, the one that when I go in households and people have the quote news on whatever channel it is, the background noise in their lives, I think what a lot of people have been revolting against sort of demanding their individuality is: *Hey, my history or our history of my tribes has not been covered adequately, right?* In other words, it was like the historical figures and all of that. But what about the hidden history of the last 200 years of culture and society? And so, that's been a positive element. I think that we're uncovering a lot of these hidden histories that were suppressed because they were marginalized groups and ethnic and cultural bias etc etc, right? So that's been a positive thing.

And the mainstream media has now of course, embraced that hugely, right? Because now they're playing catch up and they want to be politically correct and all that. So, there is some positive movement is what I'm trying to say in the broader cultural milieu, you know? But when that becomes politically correct, then of course you're suppressing other histories. which is a way of saying that maybe, we're all touching the same elephant, but which part are you touching at the moment, right?

So, we have this confusing picture where the mainstream media is a corporate media, so it wants to support the elites, but it needs to do it by being politically correct and suppressing and sort of elevating histories that were ignored and then putting them on the pedestal. And then now, we're suppressing other ideas in histories. And so it's kind of like – to use Jesse's words – it's kind of a counterfeit...I don't know, a counterfeit media? No. Counterfeit history, a counterfeit transparency or inclusion. You know, it's like, well, we're going to include these people now, and we're going to not include you people. And so it's like this free-for-all. That people want to belong to something. And so that's where, if you say, Jesse, the death ideology has died and then people want a meta-ideology, or



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they want a tribe. And so that, to me, is one of the dynamics here that you guys are discussing. As I see it.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

Well, and I think the resurgence of tribal identity is a definite reflection of that, but as we're trying to come up with the word – you know the word that magically or synonymously popped into my head was Facebook. I thought, well, what is a synonym for Facebook? Like, so who are the fake friends in my life? They're the Facebook friends I have, right?

And that's where I think in strong words, I use modular, but in more loose words – phony. We live in a very phony society, right? I mean, all of reality television, quote unquote: “just phony this with a little lights and makeup”. And the extent to which influencers on social media have become the economic endorsers, the micro celebrities of our world. They're almost entirely fake. And yet, the paradox is they're claiming to be authentic. That what makes them influencers are they're just putting themselves, but they're photo shopping every photo.

The story of the last week was an influencer/reporter in LA who showed up at a small business, was putting plywood up in its windows, took a photo as if she was helping put the plywood up, and then got back her Mercedes and drove off to the next photo op. And it was exposed. And she got a whole lot of flames, and she had to close her Twitter account and shut down her Instagram account because people rebelled at the phoniness. And I think that's what makes this so precarious is that to your point, Charles, you know, on the one hand, these companies are kind of towing the line of their shareholders in the line of their senior managers, but at the same time, feel beholden to their audiences feel beholden to the general public. And so, it does become fake. It does become this social media dance where it's big wink, nudge, nudge. But, you know, everybody knows. And that's what I feel is is one of the things that could have lasting power to this role.

I mean, as we record this, there are now curfews in many major American cities, as well as some European ones. And it does seem as if some of the energy in this revolt slowed down, but all it needs is another cycle to get going again, all it needs is a little more fuel, and I think it can get right back. Because the pandemic's not ending anytime soon. And I think there is a general resentment at the phoniness of society on multiple layers. And there is a real desire to throw a brick through that window of phoniness if only to make it all fall apart.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

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Oh, I just wish they wouldn't loot people's businesses and go like, take it to the governor's mansion instead, you know, city hall or the government buildings.

### **Charles Hugh Smith:**

Yeah. I'd like to see the federal reserve best yield.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Yes.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

Yeah.

### **Charles Hugh Smith:**

Like cars and stuff like that.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

It is truly just – in a truly just revolution. The first against the wall would be the central bankers.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

But –

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Oh, Jesse just cut out.

It almost looks like he's giving me the finger.

### **Charles Hugh Smith:**

Okay. Well, we're going to pick up his point a little later but I think he's absolutely right about authenticity, is what's being sold. And then of course, to sell it, it becomes phony. So what I'd like to see Mark is let's be, I want to become one of those influencers. Let's each collect like a hundred grand for, for pitching some kind of product, you know, that's



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just, it's, it's fake. I mean, I don't know a paper towel, um, you know, uh, give it to us, man. We're, we're influencers.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

The biggest influencer horror story I saw this week – I know the one Jesse's talking about – but there was another one where this employment, you know, YouTube couple adopted this child from China who was autistic and has learning disabilities. And then suddenly he stopped appearing in their videos and people were like, what happened? It's like, Oh, we rehomed them. And it's kind of cringy. They just, you know, Oh, we found another forever home for him. And they just kind of like, he's off, he's out of the band now. And they're taking a lot of flack for that too. And it's like Jesse said, this authenticity became a buzzword years ago. And then authenticity is now the new hyper-reality. It just isn't real anymore. These people that are just snatching for this dangling hoop of authenticity.

### **Charles Hugh Smith:**

Yeah. And I tend to think that's what we're trying to do here. On our salons, we are being our authentic selves. And I think that does resonate with people. That it serves an audience.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

It certainly isn't polished. I'll give you that.

Jesse. Welcome back.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

At what point did I cut out?

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

You were just about to say...what was his last words? You kind of had your finger up in the air, kind of looked like you're flipping me the bird, your face froze. And then you were gone.

### **Charles Hugh Smith:**

Yeah, and we didn't get anything of your last commentary.

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**Jesse Hirsh:**

Oh – you did not? Ugh.

**Charles Hugh Smith:**

Yeah.

**Mark Jeftovic:**

You mean you were ranting the whole time? You were like screaming at the camera and probably like top shelf material?? You have to do it all over again. Three, two, one, go.

**Jesse Hirsh:**

So you're saying nothing I said about Antifa lasted.

**Mark Jeftovic:**

No.

**Charles Hugh Smith:**

It was all censored by the internet.

**Mark Jeftovic:**

Yes.

**Jesse Hirsh:**

My God.

**Mark Jeftovic:**

Anti what?

**Jesse Hugh Smith:**

Antifa.



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### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Ah, Go, go. Say it again.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

I was just trying to take issue with your characterization of Antifa.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Okay. Stop, stop. Get him off.

No I'm kidding.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

Antifa. It's like 4Chan. It's like 8Chan. It's like, anonymous. It doesn't exist. It is just a decentralized phenomenon. And the president of the United States trying to declare Antifa as a terrorist organization is the equivalent of declaring mosquitoes as a terrorist organization, which they are, I might add; but mosquitoes are a manifestation of nature. The same way that Antifa is a manifestation of nature. It is in no way an organization. It happens. And you don't have to support it. You don't have to like it. But to think that anyone is responsible for it is ludicrous. And that's where I think it's worth acknowledging. That if we embrace decentralization, there may be elements of decentralization we don't like, and that may be tough luck for all of us.

### **Charles Hugh Smith:**

Yeah.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Well, it goes to –

Sorry, Charles.

It goes to the free speech argument. Free speech means people are going to say things that hurt your feelings, or you just find plain – like unpalatable.



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Do you want free speech or not? Decentralization? Same thing. The book *Spider and the Starfish* talked about that a lot. That the decentralized organizational structure was really kind of where terrorist organizations came from.

Anyhow, Charles, go ahead.

### **Charles Hugh Smith:**

No, no. I was just going to say that speaking of this, of Antifa, and the whole revolt manifestation, if you're sitting at home and you're sick of Facebook, it's actually pretty exciting to get out onto the street because there's uncertainty, there's risk. Something bad could happen, something exciting. And so there's a certain bread and circuses feel to the whole thing. And I don't mean that necessarily negatively. I'm simply kind of bringing up the idea that the governments around the world are quickly issuing as much bread in the form of unemployment and so on. Bail bailouts as much as possible to keep people placated, but they're not giving them anything positive to do. There's no positive social role to go with that. So you get out on the street and you go, well, any action is better than no action. And this system deserves to be dented or in some fashion. So it's actually quite exciting. It's entertaining. So whether that's good or bad, to me it's like –

The circus in the coliseum was really exciting too. Now that was really bloody and deadly, but you know, the crowds roared for more. And so we may be entering that stage of, of devolution.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

You've been saying for a long time that UBI wasn't going to work because you can't just send people checks and they're not going to just sit at home and write poetry and create art and write, you know. They're going to fall into despair. And now we actually, with the Corona virus and paycheck per – you know – there's all kinds of stimulus and checks going out, you're kind of showing proof to that point that at the first catalyst catalyzing event, it really did break out that way.

The bread and circuses thing, I don't know. Jesse, do you remember The Demics from London, Ontario? Like the mid eighties? London punk band, they had a song called, I Want To Go To New York City. I don't know if it was an official video, but someone did a video of a bike courier point of view behind a bike courier going through downtown Manhattan in like 1986. Great video, great song. The other day I saw this biker just went through downtown Philadelphia Center City during the riots and the looting. And it was so... I took that footage. It was exactly the same length as The Demic's bike courier video



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to the second. And I put them together in a split screen thing under The Demic song. And it's hypnotic. It's this – 20 years ago, this guy's scooting through all the traffic in New York city and on this side, it's modern day collapse of Western Civilization. And it was really, I don't know, maybe I'm overthinking it, but it just seemed oddly compelling.

The last thing I will say is Jesse, the same thing you said about Antifa doesn't exist. I mean, that reminds me of going all the way back to 2001 and declaring a war on terror. So no such thing as terrorist, it's not an entity. it's a tactic. So how can that war ever be over? And of course, people – the cynics, we say it, designed to never be over. So, here we are. And it's just one layer on top of the next layer on top of the next layer of unidentifiable enemies, unsolvable, intractable problems that just have to push everything. Like, we're not going to give you your freedom back until we win the war on terror, drive Antifa out of the country, and drive Coronavirus into the sea. Until then, you all have to just stay in your homes and do what we tell you to do.

### **Jesse Hirsh:**

And tune into the Access of Easy Salon every week because guaranteed, amidst this pandemic, amidst this lockdown, in your jail cell, we will get you all worked up and ready to go.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Yes. Okay. You guys want to add it there or what?

### **Charles Hugh Smith:**

That was a perfect ending.

### **Mark Jeftovic:**

Okay. Alright.