

COVID-19 as a Weapon. The Crushing of the Disposable Working Class - by Design

By [Cory Morningstar](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#), [Science and Medicine](#)

This article was originally crossposted in April 2020.

The arrogance and brutality of the ruling class - is nothing less than breathtaking.

Let's begin.

[April 9 2020](#), Business Insider: "Many Americans will not have jobs to return to after the coronavirus pandemic ends, according to former US presidential candidate Andrew Yang":

"Many Americans will not have jobs to return to after the coronavirus pandemic ends..."

"We're going to see something like 10 years of change in 10 weeks..."

"The fact is right now this virus is the perfect environment for companies to get rid of people, bring in robots and machines, and figure out how they can operate more efficiently."

"Universal basic income is going to become the topic, not just here in the United States, but Spain's adopting a version of a minimum income. Legislatures around Europe are all very, very much focused on this."

"We're going to see the progressive Amazonification of our economy as Amazon's one of the only businesses out there that's hiring more and more. You're seeing more robots are in grocery store aisles cleaning after we all supposedly go home..."

"One thing I've been saying is that we're going to see something like 10 years of change in 10 weeks, because businesses are being put in a position where it makes sense to speed up a lot of the automation that they were considering investing in."

"The fact is right now this virus is the perfect environment for companies to get rid of people, bring in robots and machines, and figure out how they can operate more efficiently."

"My kids are at home just like everyone else's kids and they're getting taught online...they're going to be many, many families that actually make a different determination where they actually say, "Hey, this online thing is working well."

"If you can find a way to, frankly, make yourself useful from afar, that's going to be something that unfortunately we all have to think about more and more."

"I think at this point it's actually going to need to be a bit higher than that, because the \$1,000 a month is enough for baseline needs for at least most of us, but the economy is going to become even more inhuman and punishing, both during this crisis and afterwards."

"... I'd be looking at something higher than \$1,000 a month that would be more robust & helping people not just be able to meet their needs, but also have a real path forward."

"we're going to be dealing with the consequences of this crisis for years to come, and we need a Marshal Plan style initiative to rebuild the country... helping create that vision for what America in 2022, 2023, is going to look like after we have a vaccine in place."

RESTAURANT APOCALYPSE: More than 110,000 restaurants expect to close up forever in the coming weeks, with millions out of work and the industry's future uncertain

Kate Taylor Mar 31, 2020, 9:30 AM



Employees stand in the empty dining room of a Sacramento, California, restaurant on March 17, 2020. AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli

[March 31 2020](#), *Business Insider*: "RESTAURANT APOCALYPSE: More than 110,000 restaurants expect to close up forever in the coming weeks, with millions out of work and the industry's future uncertain."

And while the Amazonification of our economy ploughs full steam ahead, independent shops and services are pounded into dust, while public services are shut down, opening the door for further privatization. While prepping the citizenry for coming and required "certifications", the deliberate and violent contraction of the economy continues. The

decimation of small enterprise with monetary wealth directed, again, upward. McDonald's, Starbucks and Walmart ("essential services") remain open while small business is forced to remain closed. On [April 13 2020](#), Amazon announced they would hire Amazon will hire an additional 75,000 workers to keep up with its soaring volume of online sales.



Andrew Yang  
@AndrewYang

People get confused when the stock market goes up despite people losing their jobs. The truth is that many companies will be more profitable and efficient with fewer employees. Investors pay for returns not jobs.

6:48 PM · Apr 9, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

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Andrew Yang  
@AndrewYang

Wow. Pope Francis today: "This may be the time to consider a universal basic wage." Game-changing. 🙏. [@pontifex](#)

[americamagazine.org/politics-socie...](https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society)



The pope just proposed a universal basic income. Is the U...

"This may be the time," he said, "to consider a universal basic wage." This points unmistakably to what is usually known as [americamagazine.org](https://www.americamagazine.org)

♡ 23.1K 11:30 AM [Apr 12, 2020](#)



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A brilliant idea: We all live on \$1,000 a month – when Klaus Schwab, Andrew Yang, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk, Bezos, et al. – live on \$1,000 a month. The rich are dangerous, calculating, insane hypocrites.

[April 12 2020](#), Business Insider: “Pope Francis says it might be ‘time to consider a universal basic wage’ in Easter letter”:

“In an Easter letter to leaders of prominent social movements, Pope Francis suggested that it might be time for countries to consider a universal basic wage.

“This may be the time to consider a universal basic wage which would acknowledge and dignify the noble, essential tasks you carry out,” The Pope wrote in his letter.

Over a dozen countries are implementing or experimenting with some form of temporary or permanent universal basic income in response to the current economic devastation and massive unemployment.”

[Feb 28 2020](#), Business Insider:

“The pope has joined forces with Microsoft and IBM to create a doctrine for ethical AI and facial recognition. Here’s how the Vatican wants to shape AI.”

The Pope’s collaboration with corporate giant Microsoft and the Vatican Bank is deep into social impact investing. Citizens are on UBI [Universal Basic Income] will still require privatized public services – a massive impact market. [\[Source\]](#)

Impact investing is predicated on turning people into investments as human capital. [\[Further reading\]](#)

[Oct 18 2019](#), Slate MoneyBox, Andrew Yang Keeps Talking About the Fourth Industrial Revolution. What the Heck Is That?:

“Yang likes branding. He calls his marquee policy idea—a UBI of \$1,000 a month—a “freedom dividend.” ...And lately, he can’t stop talking about “the fourth industrial revolution.”

“The fourth industrial revolution is the shorthand Yang now uses to describe the wave of massive technological change that he believes has decimated manufacturing employment and will soon automate away millions of American jobs.”

“The fourth industrial revolution is now migrating from manufacturing workers to retail, call centers, transportation, as well as to white-collar workers like attorneys, pharmacists, and radiologists...”

“In a World Economic Forum video from 2016, experts offered up predictions such as ‘Our bodies will be so high-tech we won’t really be able to distinguish between what’s natural and what’s artificial...’”

“It’s self-serious, Star Trek-style sci-fi for people who wear expensive suits and maybe have an endowed lab at Harvard. These are the intellectual waters Yang swims in, and that’s disconcerting. Aside from the fact that these conferences tend to be pretty intellectually bankrupt”—even JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon has joked that “Davos is where billionaires tell millionaires about what the middle class feels”—they by definition reflect the interests and values of the global capitalist class.”

[June 20 2019](#), World Economic Forum: “Can UBI survive financialization?”:

“Following this pattern, by providing a stable income stream and thus a reliable form of collateral, paid by the state, UBI would strengthen and even create financial markets, particularly for consumer credit, mortgages, and pensions. Far from serving as a revolutionary route to freedom from the whip of the market, UBI may end up yoking all citizens to rentier capital through indebtedness.”

[Jan 31 2019](#), Wrench in the Gears, “Good Guy in Davos? Not So Fast”:

” This panel and the viral video clips flying around the internet are a brand-building exercise for Bergman’s neoliberal snake oil. If UBI is implemented in the current climate of austerity, economic precarity, and social entrepreneurship, you can be sure payments will be linked to digital identity to track “impact.” That \$1,000 a month distribution will be just enough to scrape by. But hey, you’ll be able to sell personal data if you want more than gruel for dinner. Check out the Netherlands’ foray into personal data curation via the DecodeProject.eu [here](#). It’s being run in partnership with [NESTA](#), the global impact innovation unit out of the UK.”

[March 26 2020](#), The London Freepress: “Keep it quiet, but universal basic income is coming”:

“You think that after six months or a year of this we will just go back tamely to the old economic rules? I rather doubt it.”

The rise of fascism & the 2nd World War required the creation of the full welfare state... The current emergency may be fostering the rise of ideas previously seen as too radical to contemplate...”

[July 31, 2017](#), World Economic Forum, “We should let the robots take our jobs – and then pay us all a basic income”:

“As developments in artificial intelligence and robotics advance, there is going to be a severe and swift disruption of many working classes.”

“UBI, an economic proposition in which a sum of money is regularly paid to a population, could be a vital bulwark against the unintended consequences of automation in the workforce.”

“Companies will profit significantly from workforce automation, so the private sector will be able to afford shouldering this burden, while at the same time still making greater profits.”

“After all, a full-time human has needs: 30 minutes for lunch each day, vacation and sick time, toilet breaks, and health benefits, to name a few. Meanwhile, an automated worker would only require an initial installation and the occasional repair or upgrade.”

“The BCG report stated that a human welder today is paid around \$25 an hour (including benefits) versus the equivalent operating cost of around \$8 for a robot.”

“In 15 years, that gap will widen even more dramatically,” the report states. “The operating cost per hour for a robot doing similar welding tasks could plunge to as little as \$2 when performance improvements are factored in.”

“This trend will only continue to accelerate. McDonald’s, an early pioneer of automation, is already replacing human workers with automated kiosks. They expect a 5% to 9% return on investment in just the first year; in 2019 they expect this return to balloon to double digits.”

“And this is only one sector: PricewaterhouseCoopers estimates that 38% of US jobs will be in danger of being replaced by automation by 2030.”

“Companies that automate their workforces should be taxed on these new massive profits, and some of the resulting capital given back to workers by the government in the form of UBI.”

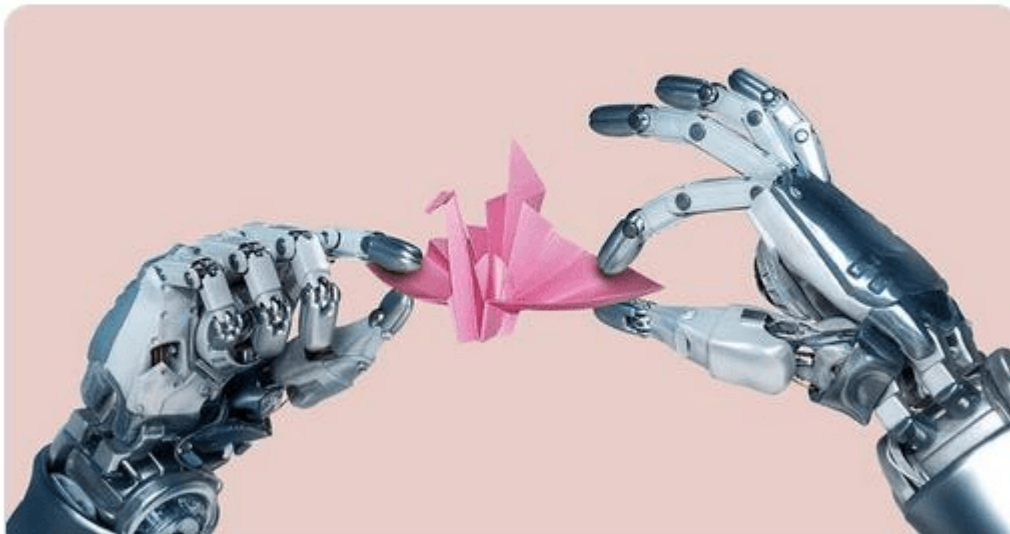
“While the idea of a UBI is popular—Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk, and Bill Gates have all championed it—how exactly would a universal basic income be engineered?

“Large swaths of laborers are going to lose their jobs, leading to unprecedented levels of unemployment.”

That moment has arrived.

[March 18 2020](#): Over 500 academics and public figures called on governments to implement universal basic income via an open letter: “It is time for governments to enact emergency universal basic income, ensuring that everyone in their jurisdiction has enough money to buy the food and other essentials they need to survive.”

A study from @forrester estimated that 10% of U.S. jobs would be automated this year, and another from @McKinsey estimates that close to half of all U.S. #jobs may be automated in the next decade. at.pysc.al/96121
#FutureofWork #Automation
#FourthIndustrialRevolution



Are You Developing Skills That Won't Be Automated?
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hbr.org

5:15 PM · Mar 10, 2020 · Sprout Social

McKinsey places the number of jobs to be replaced by automation at close to 50% by 2030. The COVID-19 virus provides an opportune moment to push the envelope of automation forward.

April 9 2020: "Global statistics reported by UNESCO reveal that since the last week of March roughly 1.7 billion students from pre-primary to tertiary education levels are out of school, affecting 91.3 percent of all enrolled learners and including every student in 188 countries that have mandated nationwide closures. With most schools set to remain closed through the rest of the current academic year, the scale of these closures is unprecedented in the history of world capitalism."

Platform for Shaping the Future of the New Economy and Society

Schools of the Future

Defining New Models of Education for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

January 2020



We must recognize we live in a capitalist economic system that serves capital first & foremost. Further, it is imperative to recognize that the UN & UN agencies, inclusive of the WHO (WEF/Gates), exist in name only. The WEF is at the helm of a consolidation of global power.

[January 2020](#), World Economic Forum: “The notion of an educator as the knowledge-holder who imparts wisdom to their pupils is no longer fit for the purpose of a 21st-century education.”

[March 2020](#), McKinsey & Co: “Beyond coronavirus: The path to the next normal”:

“The crisis will reveal not just vulnerabilities but opportunities to improve the performance of businesses. Leaders will need to reconsider which costs are truly fixed versus variable, as the shutting down of huge swaths of production sheds light on what is ultimately required versus nice to have. Decisions about how far to flex operations without loss of efficiency will likewise be informed by the experience of closing down much of global production. Opportunities to push the envelope of technology adoption will be accelerated by rapid learning about what it takes to drive productivity when labor is unavailable. The result: a stronger sense of what makes business more resilient to shocks, more productive, and better able to deliver to customers.”



April 4, 2020: “This pandemic has optimized the “testing” of robots and drones in broad daylight ...Zoom’s video conferencing platform has detonated in popularity as stay-at-home commands have cleared the globe and some of the credit for having the option to keep up with demand goes to automation...’We have automation set up so we can rapidly scale our foundation, the network as well as the compute infrastructure with next to no human intercession’... the organization is getting enthusiasm for purchasing robots to clean office spaces, production floors, retail locations, grocery stores, airports, lodgings and cafés.”
[\[Source\]](#)

[March 23 2020](#), CNBC, “Inside the hospital in China where coronavirus patients were treated by robots”

“The idea of humanoid robots taking jobs previously done by humans may feel dystopian, but in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, robots can free up human hospital medical staff and limit the possibility virus spread...

For a time in March, “a previously human-run field hospital located inside Hong Shan Sports Center located in Wuhan was converted ... into a robot-led field hospital staffed entirely by robots and other smart [Internet of Things]

devices,” CloudMinds CEO and founder Bill Huang tells CNBC Make It, in a statement...

Called HARIX (Human Augmented Robot Intelligence with eXtreme Reality), “this AI platform, synced with smart bracelets and rings worn by patients, was able to monitor patient vital signs (including temperature, heart rate, blood oxygen levels), allowing doctors and nurses outside the facility to monitor all patient vital information remotely on one interface...”

[April 7, 2020](#): Morningstar: “Spain to become first European country to introduce Universal Basic Income”.

[Jan 26 2018](#), World Economic Forum, “Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World Global Agenda”:

“... with some economists suggesting that automation could potentially replace over half of all jobs by 2055... the disruption to workers’ lives will be significant.”

[Sep 24 2019](#), António Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations:

“And we must look at the 2030 Agenda not through the prism of the economy of the last decade, but the economy of the next decade, seizing the potential of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and safeguarding against its dangers.”

Here it is important to note that also on March 11, 2020, the World Economic Forum announced a partnership with the WHO (a UN agency) to form the [COVID-19 Action Platform](#) – a task-force comprised of over 200 corporations at launch, which as has “[soared to 726](#)”, as of March 28, 2020. This is in addition to the World Economic Forum partnership with the United Nations on June 13, 2019. This is the consolidation of global power, happening in real time.



[April 7 2020](#), CNN: “Grocery stores turn to robots during the coronavirus”:

“Walmart, the country’s largest retailer & private employer, will have Brain Corp’s self-driving robots in 1,860 of its more than 4,700 US stores by the end of the year.”

“Workers manually picking, bagging and delivering is costly for grocers, and employees picking orders can clog up aisles.”

“Takeoff Technologies... has seen a double-digit increase in orders since the crisis began. “Robots handle a majority of the leg-work when fulfilling orders, meaning there is limited contact with grocery items... The process is “well suited” for social distancing.”

“In the retail industry, “margin pressure has made automation a requirement, not a choice,” according to McKinsey. ‘Automation will disproportionately disrupt retail.’”

[March 25 2020](#), CNN: “Robots could help us combat future pandemics. Here’s how experts wish they could help us now”:

“Experts agree that robots could take over the “dull, dirty and dangerous” jobs humans are currently fulfilling.

Countries such as China have already deployed robots to assist with certain tasks during the pandemic, like taking people’s temperatures...

Robots currently used for other applications could be repurposed to handle dangerous tasks that involve a risk of infection. And the coronavirus pandemic serves as a teachable moment...

“Robots have the potential to be deployed for disinfection, delivering medications and food, measuring vital signs, and assisting border controls,” ...

They can be used to take temperatures of people in public areas or at ports of entry, collect nasal and throat samples for testing, act as telemedicine assistants, handle contaminated waste and even monitor compliance with voluntary quarantines.

The editorial also addresses remote operations that allow work and socioeconomic functions to continue. The authors call for robotics that could assist with manufacturing or operating power and waste treatment plants, doing the hands-on work and allowing people to remotely operate them.

Remote presence robots could also stand in the place of someone in a meeting, basically providing their presence through a video screen.

“COVID-19 may become the tipping point of how future organizations operate,” the researchers wrote. “Rather than cancelling large international exhibitions and conferences, new forms of gathering — virtual rather than in-person attendance — may increase. Virtual attendees may become accustomed to remote engagement via a variety of local robotic avatars and controls.”

The pandemic is also highlighting a need for assistance and social robots to help those at home, especially the elderly.

Social robots can not only monitor patients and make sure they adhere to

treatments, but provide much-needed social interactions as well.”



In addition to the Fourth Industrial Revolution 2020 reset, we have the coming “New Deal For Nature” to be implemented at years end, or perhaps sooner under the pretext of emergency measures. The feigned concern for climate and biodiversity by those that serve them, is, to be blunt, complete bullshit. There is nothing to be found within the Fourth Industrial Revolution dystopia in regard to nature – other than her financialization and objectification. She too will be placed on the blockchain. Here, man’s arrogance is on full display – with plans to cover the Earth’s surface with artificial forests and drone bees, while cordoning off what they have not yet plundered – for their own personal leisure.

As noted, the shift to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy is only one—potentially small—part of a much broader economic transition that is under way, including the so-called ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution,’ characterised by increasing globalisation and the rise of automation.¹³⁵ Indeed, the growth of new technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) is having a profound effect on labour markets, with some economists suggesting that automation could potentially replace over half of all jobs by 2055.¹³⁶ Traditionally middle-skill jobs (such as machine operators or clerical workers) are already declining compared to high- and low-skill jobs: across 24 OECD countries, all but two experienced some degree of job polarisation between 1995 and 2015.¹³⁷ Some of this shift can be explained by globalisation and offshoring, but there is also an important element related to technological process and growing automation of middle-skill jobs in manufacturing.

Source: UNLOCKING THE INCLUSIVE GROWTH STORY OF THE 21ST CENTURY: ACCELERATING CLIMATE ACTION IN URGENT TIMES, August, 2018, New Climate Economy (World Resources Institute)

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, the monetization of nature, is being rolled out in lockstep with the deployment of central bank digital currency (CBDC). This is a global transformation of the economic system. Consider nature “valued” at 125 trillion vs. GDP at 85.9 trillion (2018). “Natural Capital” accounting will replace GDP.

“THIS IS PROBABLY THE MOST DIFFICULT TASK WE HAVE EVER GIVEN OURSELVES, WHICH IS TO INTENTIONALLY TRANSFORM THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MODEL, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HUMAN HISTORY.”

CHRISTIANA FIGUERES,
UNFCCC EXECUTIVE
SECRETARY

“WHO WILL BE THE BILL GATES OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES?”

JOHN ELKINGTON
FOUNDING PARTNER
AND EXECUTIVE
CHAIRMAN, VOLANS

“Coronavirus hysteria provides cover for introducing UBI, a grand theft from the working class.... Notorious fraudster Johann Hari is now touting the UBI scam as an “anti-depressant.”[@cordeliers on Twitter]

[April 10, 2020](#), Newsday: “Pandemic strengthens the case for universal basic income”:

“Subsidizing low-wage work depresses wages by essentially allowing employers to pay less than a livable wage, so EITC-type benefits are at least in part a transfer to employers, rather than workers.”

[April 3, 2020](#), The Wall Street Journal: “Henry Kissinger – The Coronavirus Pandemic Will Forever Alter the World Order”:

“Democracies need to sustain their Enlightenment values. Without balancing power with legitimacy, social contract will disintegrate. Yet the issue of legitimacy can’t be settled at same time as this “plague”....Priorities must be established.”



[Nov 15 2016](#), Socialist Project: “Ontario’s Austerity Government Sets Basic Income Trap”:

“While a progressive Basic Income is not on the cards, its free market evil twin is a real and very dangerous possibility. Under this neoliberal model, an inadequate and dwindling BI payment is provided that absolves low wage employers from the obligation of paying living wages and becomes the only element of social provision left in place. You become a customer shopping in a market place of privatized services. Who could really deny that this right wing version is much closer to presently unfolding reality than the hopes and dreams of left BI enthusiasts?”

[Jan 2 2017](#), Socialist Project: “Basic Income -Progressive Dreams Meet Neoliberal Realities”

“Basic Income, when all is said and done, is a vision for nothing more than the means to be a customer in an unjust society that decides what is for sale.”

“It’s really about the commodification of social provision. Your payment may actually be less conditional and somewhat larger but, as you shop through the privatized remains of the social infrastructure, with inadequate means and very few rights, you are dramatically worse off...”

... it is sometimes asserted that an adequate system of provision must be put in place simply because we are moving toward a “workless future.” In such a society, it is suggested, masses of people who have been displaced will have to be provided for and the capitalists will have to think like Elon Musk, of Tesla Motors and support BI because it is the only sensible and rational solution. To imagine such responsible provision for the future is to place undue faith in a system based on the making of profit. If they won’t stop building pipelines in

the face of environmental catastrophe, there's little reason to expect them to worry too much about sensible solutions to technological displacement. There simply is no post-capitalist capitalism and no social policy innovation that is going to bring it about...

I am suggesting that our movements need to challenge, rather than come to terms with, the neoliberal order and the capitalist system that has produced it. For all its claims to be a sweeping measure, the notion of progressive BI is a futile attempt to make peace with that system. In reality, even that compromise is not available. The model of BI that governments are working on in their social policy laboratories will not 'end the tyranny of the labour market' but render it more dreadful. The agenda of austerity and privatization requires a system of income support that renders people as powerless and desperate as possible in the face of exploitation and that won't change if it is relabelled as "Basic Income".

When we all start to literally starve ([some already have](#), and many more have been for decades), perhaps then – we will eat the rich.

The question is this? Do you still believe that these people actually give a flying fuck about [your health](#)?

The Fourth Industrial Revolution cannot come into fruition without the 5G infrastructure that will run the Internet of Things. "Smart" cities must be understood within the context of global policing and the military industrial complex. Cybersecurity will be the battle space of the twenty-first century.

This is class war.



In closing:

The future, is now on our doorstep: All "human capital" is to be controlled

"via [digital identity systems](#) tied to cashless benefit payments within the context of a militarized 5G / IoT [Internet of Things]/ AR [augmented reality] environment. The billionaire class has built & is rapidly putting the finishing

touches on infrastructure to run human capital social impact markets that will securitize the lives of most people as data streams. The tech that underlies this 4IR automation will hasten the death of the planet. World Economic Forum is advancing a technocratic system of control & domination of humanity & the planet... Why should we agree to this? It is a profound sickness of Western culture. Hubris. Sick. And totally ignoring the impact our actions have on the natural world around us." – Independent researcher Alison Hawver McDowell, [Wrench in the Gears](#)

*

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Cory Morningstar is an independent investigative journalist, writer and environmental activist, focusing on global ecological collapse and political analysis of the non-profit industrial complex. She resides in Canada. Her recent writings can be found on [Wrong Kind of Green](#), [The Art of Annihilation](#) and [Counterpunch](#). Her writing has also been published by [Bolivia Rising](#) and [Cambio](#), the official newspaper of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. You can support her independent journalism via [Patreon](#).

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