

In the case of people v capital's power the people will...

Published: January 13, 2026, 12:51 pm

The [FT published an article yesterday](#) that included this paragraph:

The central reason why Western democracy is in decline is that its capitalist bedfellow can no longer afford the financial demands that full-blown democracy is placing upon it. History has shown that capitalism can adapt, consorting with a variety of political systems in the past 5,000 years. Looking ahead, it will probably find another political host to aid its survival. Democracy - capitalism's host over the past century - is far more brittle.

The central argument of the piece, written by Michael Power, who is described as a strategist at Investec Asset Management, is that democracy has outlived its stay. Capitalism is no longer willing to afford the subsidies that it demands. Or, to unpack that just a little, the rich will not pay any more.

The argument is absurd. First, we have not had capitalism for 5,000 years. We have undoubtedly had markets that long. But they're not the same as capitalism. It's a basic error. Capitalism is a much newer phenomenon that was only really invented in the post-enlightenment era. And second, we have had forms of democracy for longer than that. So the premise is wrong.

But, so too is the idea that if the political system doesn't suit capitalism then we dispense with the political system. That's what the appropriately named Mr Power seems to be saying, but he does not correctly identify the locus of control in modern society. I know capital tries its best to be in charge. But I doubt it is. And even attempts to control the web - which is where the next class war will be fought - will not ultimately change this. I think the means for people to communicate are going to be exceptionally hard to control now, and in that case in the case of people v capital's power the people will win.

Mr Power is wrong.

But the FT needs to also do some thinking about those causes it might support. This

one is very dangerous indeed.