

There are no disposable people

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I am sharing this from '[The World](#)' newsletter from the New York Times this morning. In it, the newsletter's editor, Katrina Bennhold (who seems like a very good journalist, to me) and NYT journalist Matthew Goldstein discuss the fallout from the Epstein case, and this exchange takes place:

But as you said, he was a publicly known and officially registered sex offender since 2008?

Yes, and in that way it's also revealing of how some people in elite society viewed women. There was very much a class aspect to this. A lot of the young girls came from broken homes and poor backgrounds. Some of them had been abused in their own families. And they were viewed, basically, as objects, if not to be sexually used, then to just be around, almost like furniture. They were viewed as disposable people.

There is nothing very new, in a sense, about anything said there, but the last line does stand out. Note it in isolation:

They were viewed as disposable people.

I have no doubt that is how those around Epstein viewed the young women they abused. But have no doubt that this is how many who are rich and powerful view many people.

This is how central banks view those they deliberately leave unemployed through policies that create that status for millions by using interest rates to reduce economic activity. Those who suffer as a result are considered disposable. They are the sacrifices made to keep central banking theory intact, even though it is very obviously wrong.

That is how politicians view those who claim benefits, whom they consider a cost the state must bear. Their actions show that they consider those in deep poverty who are making claims and living lives of incredible stress as disposable people.

And so too are those whose jobs will be lost to AI, boosting the productivity and GDP

figures that politicians crave in the process, considered disposable people, to whom not a thought will be given.

Other examples are, of course, available.

I do not say any of this to diminish what was done to Epstein's victims, or to justify how they were treated. I say it to point out that the belief that people are disposable, beneath consideration, and presumed to be unfeeling about the consequences of actions taken against them by a powerful elite extends beyond the particular type of abuse Epstein enabled. It is, in fact, normalised by far too many people in power across many fields. That explains how and why this abuse happened in plain sight, and no one took much notice: treating people as disposable is just what the rich and powerful do.

We live in a society where the abuse of people has become so commonplace that we hardly notice it, and that is why Epstein could carry on. The reality is that so many with power have lost sight of the fact that no one is disposable, everyone matters, and we are all equally human.

We need to bring the abusers Epstein enabled to account.

But we also need a fundamental change in the attitudes of those in power. There are no disposable people, anywhere.