

# **ESCAPE**

**How We Can Fix Everything  
by Fixing Our Money**

**SAM GOLD**



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*To my good boy, Tyler*



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Our escape is possible thanks to the giants among us: those clear-headedly analyzing our situation here on the earth—Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich August von Hayek, Murray Rothbard, Jörg G. Hülsmann, Thomas Sowell, Tom Woods, Jr., Gertrude Margaret Coogan, Hans-Hermann Hoppe, Walter Block, Walter Williams, Leonard E. Read, Rudolph J. Rummel, David Bohm, and, of course, too many more to list here; the brilliant engineers and scientists finding ways to achieve scarcity in the inherently non-scarce world of computers, e.g., the designers of bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies—Satoshi Nakamoto, Evan Duffield, Daniel Diaz, Vitalik Buterin, and many more; the brilliant engineers and scientists discovering how to regrow human limbs—Ken Muneoka, Manjong Han, David M. Gardiner, and more; and those discovering how to measure plant respiration rates remotely—Gina H. Mohammed, Pablo J. Zarco-Tejada, John R. Miller, and again many more. Because of their contributions, we can finally escape to our science-fiction future (*Jetsons*, not *Bladerunner*).

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# CONTENTS

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Preface . . . . . **xiii**

Introduction: Fixing it All With Money . . . . . **xv**

## **Part I. Hell on Earth: Cheated with Money 1**

1. Poverty, Crime, Environmental Degradation . . . . . **3**

2. The Collective's Problematic Gold US Dollars . . . . . **9**

3. The Collective has a Spending Problem . . . . . **15**

4. Laundering Fraudulent Receipts for Gold . . . . . **19**

5. Cheated With an Inflation Tax . . . . . **25**

6. Cheated by Boom-Bust Business Cycles . . . . . **29**

7. Cheated: Death by a Thousand Cuts . . . . . **33**

8. Failed Mitigation Efforts . . . . . **37**

9. Trapped by Tax and Legal Tender Statutes . . . . . **47**

## **Part II. Paradise Planet: Cheating with Money51**

10. Bribing Parcel Owners . . . . . **53**

11. Bribing Parcel Owners with Entropy Money . . . . . **67**

12. Entropy Money Reduces Unholy Trinity . . . . . **81**

13. Free Entropy Money Mitigates Risk . . . . . 103

14. Free Entropy Money Opens the Door to Forever . . . . 107

15. Escape . . . . . 121

16. Final Destiny . . . . . 131

**Part III. Mechanizing Our Escape** 135

17. A Request For Proposal . . . . . 137

18. A Big Short Squeeze . . . . . 143

19. Funding, Measuring, Settling and Executing . . . . . 153

20. Mechanizing: Summary . . . . . 163

**Part IV. What Is to Be Done?** 171

21. Is it Possible to Unite to Do This? . . . . . 173

22. Political Jobs . . . . . 179

23. Technical and Business Jobs . . . . . 183

**Part V. Conclusion** 187

24. Near-Term Results . . . . . 189

25. This Escape Route is Real . . . . . 193

26. Further Reading . . . . . 205

27. Make It So . . . . . 207

<b>Part VI. Appendices</b>	<b>213</b>
A. Borrowing with Left Hand, Printing with Right . . . .	215
B. A Simplified History of Our US Dollars . . . . .	221
C. Request For Proposal . . . . .	239
D. Classical and Statistical Thermodynamics Entropy . .	251
E. Universal Basic Income . . . . .	257
Works Cited . . . . .	259



# PREFACE

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Dear Political Peer here in one of these fifty united<sup>1</sup> States of America:

I'm reaching out to you because we need to talk about money. And more than just talk about it, we need to do something about it. As you may know, our federal government is bankrupt, meaning we, as a group, are bankrupt. This crisis is far graver than it may first appear, fueling widespread poverty, crime, and environmental degradation. Compounding the problem, our U.S. dollars' status as the de facto reserve money of the world exports these issues globally, affecting all of humanity. Our situation is intolerable, yet, as you will soon discover, escape from those plagues is within reach. In the chapters ahead, we will learn our group has the power to transform our national money in such a way our situation becomes not just tolerable, but excellent. In this work, the claim is made, and defended, that our group has the power to fix everything, without any one of us knowing how. We'll show how a simple modification to our money will cause our high division of labor price discovery machine to produce wealth not poverty, morality not crime, and health not environmental degradation.

I'm a retired aerospace engineer who spent his career designing and testing automatic control systems. Thanks to this background, and some extra-curricular reading, it has become obvious to me we can use our US dollars as a feedback mechanism in an automatic control system that solves humanity's big problems. In my work, I used optimization techniques to search for the best possible control systems. Here, I believe we can use our federal government to implement an optimizer that automatically searches for the best version of this new control system.

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<sup>1</sup>A small u is used in deference to the title of the Declaration of Independence, which reads: "The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America." In this work, a capital U is used when conceptualizing our political group in a unitary fashion; e.g., "The United States warned Russia not to mess with NATO." A small u is used when conceptualizing our political group as a group of 50 political peers; e.g., "The thirteen states united to bring into existence a government to serve at their pleasure, eventually referred to as the federal government."

Ranger Rick from the National Wildlife Federation gets the credit for starting me down this path. He taught me the people from the big city were hurting the woods critters and made me want to help. Later, other authors taught me some of the people in the big city were hurting others in the big city, too, and much of the harm the city dwellers were causing was the unintended result of complex factors. Eventually, I discovered money was involved. As I learned more, the pieces of information began fitting together like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, forming a stunningly gorgeous picture. In this work, I'll paint the picture in words, holding it up for you to see, saying "Look! We can escape, right now! We have everything we need!"

In essence, I'm proposing the way we save the world is we don't. Instead, we build a machine to do it for us. After learning the details presented here, I sincerely hope you come to the same conclusion, and help us all escape to a new and greatly improved Spaceship Earth.<sup>2</sup>

In love and peace,  
Sam Gold  
13 December, 2025

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<sup>2</sup>R. Buckminster Fuller popularized the term "Spaceship Earth" to describe our planet. He felt we're all passengers on Spaceship Earth, and should work together to keep our world healthy [1]. The term was used at least as early as 1879 by Henry George, while George Orwell, Adlai Stevenson, Barbara Ward, and Fuller developed the concept further over the next century [2].

# INTRODUCTION: FIXING IT ALL WITH MONEY

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There's something each of us does every day without being aware of it: we earn and spend gold. We think we're earning and spending US dollars, and we are. However, as will be detailed throughout this work, dealing with dollars means dealing with gold. A US dollar is a fixed weight of gold, by statute, treaty, and custom, and is officially referred to as a gold US dollar, or gold dollar. This language is used in official federal government documents such as, for one example, the text of the 1934 Gold Reserve Act, which states in part: "Nor shall the weight of the gold dollar be fixed in any event at more than 60 per centum of its present weight" [SEC. 12 of 3]. Our US dollars are known as gold dollars partly because they each consist of a fixed weight of gold, and partly because they could consist of a fixed weight of something other than gold. For example, a US dollar could be a fixed weight of silver, as it was in the past, and could be called a silver US dollar if that were true today. A dollar is an unambiguous, fixed amount of something, but it doesn't have to be any particular thing, like gold or silver. It can be whatever We, the People, in our capacity as a collective, say it is. We're used to thinking of earning or spending US dollars, and few of us stop to think about what we're using as money. For good reasons, we tend to focus exclusively on how many of them we have or need rather than what they are.

There's something else we all do that rarely or never enters our consciousness: we spend and earn dollar *bills*<sup>1</sup> in our financial dealings, not dollars. We think we're dealing with dollars, which is true, but at the same time not true. When we spend or earn a dollar *bill*, we've spent or earned a *bill*, not a dollar. Each dollar *bill* is an IOU for a dollar, by the full faith and credit of We, the People, but the bank has closed. Dollars and dollar *bills* are no longer equivalent, and it is an important difference.

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<sup>1</sup>*Bill* is emphasized as a memory aid in the present work because the difference between a dollar and a dollar *bill* is central to our escape.

Our lack of awareness of these subtle and seemingly trivial details about our national money is a deep blind spot exploitable for our escape, from our present problem-filled world to a paradise planet. What we use as money has consequences, and this fact can be manipulated to our advantage.

We, the People, have the power to design and adopt new and improved US dollars, changing *what* we use as money and, therefore, changing its consequences. We also have the power to continue to use US dollar *bills*, making changes to our US dollars effectively invisible to their users, and to make those *bills* naturally electronic in form. Here, a business proposal is made to We, the People, of the United States of America, to exercise our powers and change our US dollars so they bring us the consequences we want. It is a business proposal because herein we'll defer to the "Official Story"<sup>2</sup> in which, through our federal government agents, We, the People, come together to take actions as if we were one. This Official Story is memorialized in the traditional motto of the United States: *E pluribus unum*—Latin for "Out of many, one." In an example relevant to this business proposal, when our U.S. Department of the Treasury borrows money, we are acting as one and borrowing money. In another relevant example, we're in the banking business together, banking our gold US dollars in our vault at Fort Knox.

Thinking of us as a collective, or perhaps more usefully as a fifty-strong committee of giant committees (one for each state), this proposal can be considered a motion to be put forward for a vote by the committee. Because this committee controls the production of the world reserve money, our US dollars, and because of the material reality of currently available data and software, this proposal will, if accepted, change our US dollars so they cause the lives of everyone on the planet to improve dramatically.

We have the power to make this happen due to how the committee fits into our worldwide systems of production. If we divide those systems into owners, managers, and workers, we are presented with the opportunity to keep focused on which group we are, and behave

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<sup>2</sup>It is understood the actual story isn't necessarily the same as the Official Story.

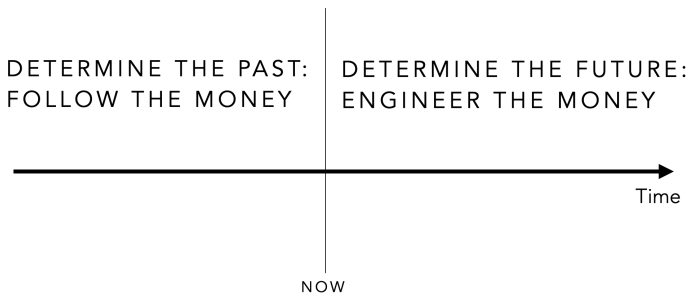
The Official Story is used here as a way of exercising our kung fu, bending like the willow and using the Story to our advantage. If we're told we're in business together, electing representatives and "voluntarily" paying taxes for them to spend, then so be it. "We" are in business together, and "we" will be making the decisions from now on. "We" will be the "deciders," as one of us reputedly said.

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that way. Specifically, this fifty-strong committee of committees owns the right to produce US dollars and dollar *bills*. It guards that right jealously, requiring its agents to deal swiftly and violently with individuals who manufacture their own. Owners hire managers, who hire workers. Workers do the work, and managers do the work of getting the work done by hiring workers. The committee is presented with an opportunity to make a decision about the production of our US dollars, and rely on its management team at the US Department of the Treasury to implement that decision by hiring the job out to the appropriate workers. Making this decision and thereby causing the desired change to our US dollars is something the committee really can accomplish—as is made clear in this work, the proposed decision is one we committee members all want it to make. As we’ll demonstrate, miracles can happen, and We, the People, can make them happen by thinking and acting like the owners we are.

To persuade us to make the proposed decision, we’ll follow the money in Part I to determine what *has happened*, and engineer the money in Part II to determine what *will happen*. Following the money, we’ll discover our US dollars have serious negative consequences, and those negative consequences can’t be eliminated without design changes either to human nature or the dollars themselves. Choosing design changes to the money rather than human nature, we’ll find those negative consequences can be transformed into positive by 1) designing a new kind of US dollars that inverts our current US dollars’ energy flow, implementing an automatic control system, 2) sizing the control system loop gain appropriately, freeing us from our federal government revenueurs, and 3) setting the money free, implementing an optimizer that searches for improved versions of the control system. Then, to change this from a theoretical to a real-world exercise, in Part III we’ll learn an easy administrative action we can take to manufacture and adopt the new and improved money, and in Part IV we’ll learn what each of us can do to make it happen. We can think of our group as a team for the purpose of creating these new US dollars, each doing his or her part to achieve the goal.

As we’re about to discover, We, the People, can engineer and adopt new and improved money that advances us swiftly and surely into our science-fiction future. Curiously, we’re also going to discover money can grow on trees, contrary to what our parents told us. So let’s follow the money, engineer it, and look forward to meeting up on the outside.



## **Part I.**

# **Hell on Earth: Cheated with Money**



# 1. POVERTY, CRIME, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

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**F**OLLOWING the money, we all sense we're being cheated as we watch prices run away, making us work harder and harder to pay our bills. Many keep sliding closer to the cliff edge of insolvency, with some falling over it—one of the most disastrous things that can happen to a person [4-20].

As prices rise and rise, then rise more, we watch helplessly, hoping to earn more money in a desperate race to keep up. We anxiously watch the homeless encampments grow, more springing up every month, and feel the chill wind on our necks as we hope we don't join them, or the sickening horror if it already happened. Every day more of us fall off the cliff from solvent to insolvent, and every day the rest of us dig our heels in more, knowing we're getting dragged closer to the edge regardless. We wonder how we'll feed our families as we watch the price of butter go up a little more, and the price of milk a little more. We get our daily mail in dread of the landlord raising our rent beyond what we can afford, or the county raising our property tax beyond what we can pay.

Yours truly recently got an earful from his automobile mechanic about his price woes. He said parts get more expensive every week, and it isn't feasible to simply pass the price increases on to customers—he has to eat part of them since he knows his customers, too, are suffering from general price increases. Every year his property taxes go up, and he's one of the lucky ones who owns his property. The mechanics who rent are in even bigger trouble as their rents go up. Every year his taxes increase; this year, he repaired 25 percent more cars than last year, but his net income went down 20 percent. His labor expenses have to increase every year because his employees' rent, grocery, and medical expenses keep going up. The oil recycler used to pay him \$1 per gallon for used oil but now charges \$1 per gallon, and his costs to recycle other

consumables, such as oil filters, air filters, brake fluid, and so on, are also increasing. It wasn't hard to feel the fear behind those words as the trend didn't start just this year or last. The mechanic, and all of us, can see which way prices are headed. We know the only difference between tent-people and roofs-over-their-heads-people is a relentlessly shrinking savings account.

We may even close our eyes and hope to open them in a sane world with sane prices, but we don't. We know this isn't just a bad dream—terrifyingly and implacably, it's really happening [21]. We know from our history books price runaways can and do ruin millions upon millions of people just like ourselves. According to a report from the CATO Institute, seventeen hyperinflationary runaways, each starting just like the price increases we're seeing now [22], happened in countries all around the world in the twentieth century alone [23]. Hyperinflationary price runaways have affected people even in the author's small circle of friends—his friend from the Ukraine got wiped out when she was only twenty five years old, with a new baby, and another friend's parents in Romania got wiped out twice.

A sense of where we're headed, absent a course correction, can be found in an example involving just one individual, from just one of those terrible hyperinflationary runaways. This example took place in the Weimar Republic of Germany after World War I, and remember to multiply it by millions for a real sense of the horror. From Hans Eicholz's discussion<sup>1</sup> of a tragic story from Frederick Taylor's *The Downfall of Money: Germany's Hyperinflation and the Destruction of the Middle Class* [25]:

One particularly arresting story is that of Maximilian Bern, a man of literary education exemplary of Germany's formerly middle class *Bildungsbürgertum*. In 1923, writes Taylor, he “withdrew all his savings—100,000 marks, formerly sufficient to support a modestly comfortable retirement—and purchased all it would buy by that time: a subway ticket. The old gentleman took a last ride around the city, then went back to his apartment and locked himself in.”

If you are like me, you probably assumed the next sentence would conclude with suicide. No. “There he died of hunger.”

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<sup>1</sup>Eicholz described the evil of an inflating money supply in his 2014 essay *The Currency of Destruction* [24].

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I had to linger over that sentence to fully grasp the reality: starvation in a society that had recently been among the most technologically and commercially advanced of any on Earth. [24]

This pervasive threat of running out of money, and resulting exposure to the desperate crimes of others also running out of money [19], is bad enough, but unfortunately, there's more. Our money problems incentivize us to harm our living world, upon which we depend completely to live. This threatens our lives as much as going broke, though we may not think much about harm to our living world when we're struggling to pay bills. Upon pausing and pondering the situation, however, the extent of our complete dependence on the fellow living beings with whom we share this small world becomes obvious—we're so dependent we don't even get to breathe without the oxygen produced by our helpful friends the plant people.<sup>2</sup>

The incentive to harm our living world results from the fact that, while a few manage to benefit in this rising price environment, most struggle to make their incomes meet ever-increasing expenditures.<sup>3</sup> One of the means utilized to increase income is of course to produce more, and thus earn more. Because to produce, consumers must participate in supply chains turning raw materials from the agriculture, timber, and mining sectors into retail products,<sup>4</sup> producing more causes us to consume more raw materials, leaving less for our living world. In short, our money problems are incentivizing us to harm our living world by incentivizing us to make our supply chains more productive, to produce more products to sell to get more money to pay our bills.

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<sup>2</sup>Here we use the animistic worldview held by our ancestors, who called the trees the tree people, the strawberries the strawberry people, and so on (this viewpoint is being adopted by an increasing number of modern biologists [26]). For example, Grandfather Stalking Wolf, an Apache scout who was the subject of the book *Grandfather* [27], by Tom Brown, Jr., spoke of the deer people, the pheasant people, and so on, and even the rock people and the water people. For him, as for many of our ancestors, the entire world is alive and sentient.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Hugh Smith explained that the purchasing power of wages here in the fifty states has declined over time [28]

<sup>4</sup>To earn a living, we all must participate in supply chains in one way or the other. One can participate directly, for instance, if you design integrated circuits for a living, or indirectly, for instance, if you train people at the gym who themselves participate directly. We're all part of the complex web of supply chains turning raw materials into retail products and services, as was brilliantly described by Leonard Read in his 1958 essay *I, Pencil* [29], later extended to interest rates by Tom Mullen in *I, Interest Rate* [30].

Increasing economic inequality, as the few beneficiaries of the rising prices get richer while the rest don't, also results in the wealthier and more powerful imposing environmental degradation costs on the less wealthy and less powerful [31–33]. The general biologically-impactful side effects of production activities and economic inequalities are depleting wildlife, depleting wildlife habitat, and pollution. Additionally, as described further in Chapter 8, our money problems incentivize us to consume rather than save, tending also to increase raw material consumption, wildlife loss, and pollution. Consistent with these dynamics, it looks like our living world is in real trouble [33–131, pp. 365 - 381 of 132]. Worse, it is now unambiguously obvious that in damaging our non-human living world we're hurting sensitive beings who feel pain, care about their children, and don't want to die [133–135].<sup>5</sup> The only silver lining to this cloud is we humans are not born to be, and don't have to be, planet wreckers. The situation instead is we're more or less compelled to harm our world to earn a living [120, 136].<sup>6</sup>

Worldwide, we're caught in a fatal dilemma: we have to work harder to pay our bills, but we have to stop working harder because it's killing our world. Many of us don't even have time to think about how to stop killing our world because we have to spend all our time killing it, so we can pay our bills while prices are running away. Though we don't always connect them, the two parts of the dilemma aren't a secret; many attempts have been made to fix each.

To fix the price runaways, we, through our government agents, have interfered with individuals' economic decisions. We've implemented price ceilings, price floors, subsidies, tariffs, public works, and any other intervention we could dream up [137]. But prices stubbornly continue to rise [138, 139]. Meanwhile, our growing pool of the poorest gets

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<sup>5</sup>In the Spring 2023 issue of *PETA Global* magazine, Lisa Jones-Engel reported, "The monkey jumped right onto my lap and grabbed my cheeks. I gasped, thinking she might tear off my face. But she just sat there, her face so close to mine, for the longest time. It was as if she were trying to make me *really* see her. . . . Each one of them [monkeys in primate research labs] was an individual with a mind and emotions like the monkey who grabbed my face and helped me see" [135].

<sup>6</sup>The September 27, 2023 proposal by the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to list Natural Asset Companies (NACs) states, "Although there is significant demand to deploy financial capital toward sustainability, stewards of natural landscapes have often had little choice other than extractive development to fund their budgets or garner a return on investment" [120].

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sicker and poorer [20, 140, 141], more victimized by crime, and even lonelier [142]. Stansberry reported in 2017 the bottom 60 percent of us struggle to raise even a few hundred dollars for an emergency, and have saved less than \$20,000 for retirement. Such poor financial situations correspond with deteriorating health, with a 20 percent increase in premature deaths since 2000 [p. 10 of 6]. Whatever the effects of these economic interferences, making the great mass of people healthier and wealthier doesn't appear to be among them.

To spare our living world from harm, various groups have been helping out. Conservation groups such as The Nature Conservancy have been using charitable contributions to buy land and protect it with conservation easements. Government departments, such as the US Forest Service, have been incentivizing some forested parcel owners to keep their land healthy with payments for certain ecosystem services [143]. Some hunting and fishing groups have been providing similar incentives with payments to landowners for the ecosystem services of game to hunt and fish to catch. Groups like the Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council have been lobbying our elected representatives to enact protective statutes<sup>7</sup> and suing those who violate the statutes. The Savory Institute manages grasslands to facilitate its large-scale regeneration [146, 147], groups like American Forests [148] and the Arbor Day Foundation [149] work to get more trees planted and fewer cut down, and many others are working various aspects of our environmental problems.

If what all these people have been doing is helping, it's not helping enough [121]. Australian journalist Caitlin Johnstone reports:

We are witnessing a mass extinction the likes of which we haven't seen since the end of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago, with some 200 species going extinct forever every single day. The very ecosystemic context in which we evolved is vanishing

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<sup>7</sup>Statutes are invented laws imposed on populations by princes, kings, parliaments, legislatures, etc. Statutory laws can be contrasted with discovered laws, such as our Anglo-Saxon customary law traditions, the Catholic Canon law, the Jewish Mosaic law, and the Xeer tradition of Somalia. Discovered laws can come in the form of, for example, the amount of damages awarded by an Anglo-Saxon jury for assault or battery if it finds one of those has occurred. Discovered laws are called discovered because our ancestors used an initially unwritten process of trial and error to discover ways to make their lives better with high quality dispute resolution [144, 145].

underneath us. More than half the world's wildlife has vanished in forty years, and the worldwide insect population has plummeted by as much as 90 percent. Fertile soil is vanishing, and so are forests. The oceans are choking to death, 90 percent of global fish stocks are either fully fished or overfished, the seas are full of microplastics, and phytoplankton, an indispensable foundation of Earth's food chain, have been killed off by 40 percent since 1950. [150]

Worse, some things being done to help may instead be hurting. In one example, many hope solar panels and wind turbines will reduce the chance of catastrophic global warming. However, dimming that hope, they rely heavily on taxpayer subsidies [151], may not be able to meet world economic demand for energy even in theory [152], and wildlife destruction, wildlife habitat destruction, water contamination, colonization, toxic and voluminous waste, slave labor, greenhouse gas emissions, and wars are unintended side effects of their manufacture, operation, and disposal [122, 152–171]. In another example, many of us diligently put our plastic refuse in the recycling bin, hoping to reduce pollution, but we now know much of it “is dumped into rivers, fields or oceans halfway around the Earth” [172]. Corroborating that story, former EPA administrator Judith Enck and Last Beach Cleanup founder Jan Dell have informed us, “Plastic recycling does not work and will never work” [173].

Similar to our poverty reduction attempts, our efforts to eliminate environmental degradation aren't working, and time isn't our friend.

## 2. THE COLLECTIVE'S PROBLEMATIC GOLD US DOLLARS

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PRICES are running away, causing poverty and therefore crime and environmental degradation, but why? Supply and demand changes can and do make prices change, but typically can't make them change too much, and not over substantial periods. This kind of price stability is caused by consumers purchasing lower-cost substitutes when prices rise. For example, they may purchase margarine if butter prices rise, or see medical doctors (MD) if doctors of osteopathy (DO) prices rise. Because of this substitution effect, supply and demand issues generally aren't known to cause the economy-encompassing price increases we've been observing over the years. If supply and demand issues aren't responsible for sustained price increases of seemingly everything, what could it be?

Upon observing all prices include the common numerator of money, such as dollars/apple or dollars/orange, the culprit becomes apparent: the one thing that can make prices of almost everything rise over time is increases in the quantity of money in circulation [174, 175].<sup>1</sup> It is a simple matter of more money chasing the goods and services. More dollars means more dollars/apple and dollars/orange, all other things being equal. The Weimar Republic hyperinflationary runaway of 1923 provides an infamous example of this dynamic; the quantity of money in circulation ran away, and so did prices.

Has the number of US dollars in circulation been increasing? No, but prices have been rising anyway. How could that be? Prices have been rising because we use dollar *bills* to complete transactions, not dollars, and the number of dollar *bills* in circulation has been increasing (Figure 2.1 [177]). But a dollar *bill* is a note worth a dollar, so how can

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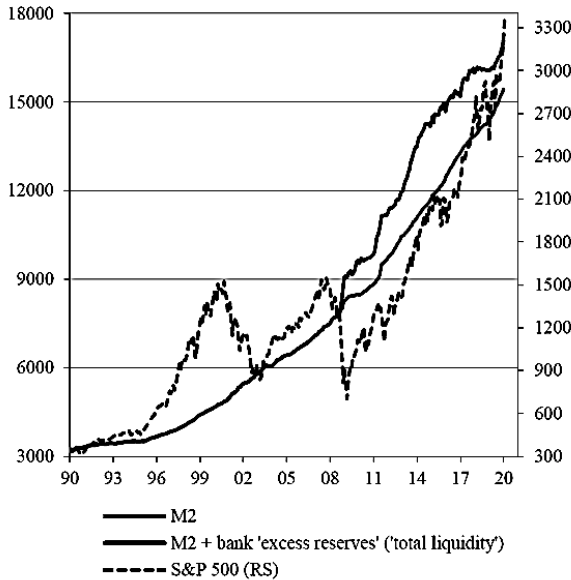
<sup>1</sup>Peter Bernholz found the highest price inflations, including all known cases of hyperinflation, occurred exclusively under fiat paper money regimes, in which governments greatly expanded the money supply [176].

## 2. The Collective's Problematic Gold US Dollars

the number of *bills* be increasing but not the number of dollars? The answer is it can't—a dollar *bill* is as good as a dollar, at least according to the Official Story. Unfortunately, however, that story is a fiction.<sup>2</sup>

### More money, higher stock prices

*US M2 and 'US total liquidity' (US\$ bn) and S&P 500*



Source: Thomson Financial; own calculation.

**Figure 2.1.** M2 (US dollar bills in circulation; left axis, US\$ bn), S&P500 (right axis, S&P500 index) vs. time. (Plot courtesy of Mises Institute, <https://www.mises.org>.)

A US dollar is defined as  $1/42\frac{2}{9}$  ( $\sim 1/42.2222$ ) of an ounce of gold<sup>3</sup> [180–184] and a dollar *bill* is a note communicating ownership of a dollar. A

<sup>2</sup>M2 in Figure 2.1 is a measure of the number of US dollar *bills* in circulation. It includes currency, coins, savings deposits, and money market funds. S&P500 in the figure is the Standard and Poor's 500 Index, a capitalization-weighted stock market index measuring the performance of 500 large publicly traded companies in these United States.

<sup>3</sup>The Bretton Woods Agreements Act of 1976 [SEC. 6 of 178] repealed section 2 of the 1972 Par Value Modification Act [SEC. 2 of 179], which had defined a gold US dollar as 1/38 of a fine troy ounce of gold. The 1973 reenactment of the 1972 Par Value Modification Act had subsequently defined a dollar as 1/42.2222 of an ounce of gold [180], but it too was effectively repealed by the 1976 Bretton Woods Agreements Act. However, the US Department of the Treasury records \$42.22 in

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dollar *bill* is to a dollar as the deed to your house is to the house. When we buy and sell dollar *bills*, we are theoretically buying and selling ownership of dollars, each of which is a fixed weight of gold. However, the reality doesn't match the theory as there are more dollar *bills* in circulation than there are dollars in the vault.

This situation has come about due to certain properties of gold, along with the natural desire of any energy-consuming being to get low-cost energy. This desire has led some to take advantage of a societal vulnerability to which the use of gold as money has exposed us. It is the fact our US dollars consist of gold,<sup>4</sup> along with this natural desire to minimize energy expenditures, that is at the root of our runaway prices and, therefore, many of our other problems.

The use of gold as money exposes us to many of our big problems due to a pair of shortcomings. First, it causes environmental degradation problems directly (and, unfortunately, crime problems in some cases [189]) because landowners can get paid by excavating their land and spending any recovered gold into circulation. Second, it exposes its users to price runaways, and therefore environmental degradation indirectly, as a side effect of its weight and bulk. Because it's heavy and bulky it's inconvenient to carry, and worse, dangerous—its bulk can make it visible, making the carrier a target for thieves.

In the long long ago, there was still a lot of healthy land, so the first problem, damaging the earth<sup>5</sup> to mine gold, wasn't considered a problem by the miners and others in their societies. But the second problem was different. Losing your gold and maybe even your life in a robbery was something to be avoided if you could. Possibly for around 3,000 years, starting in Babylon [p. 52 of 191], consumers have taken to solving gold's robbery problem with increasingly negotiable

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its books for each ounce of our gold [August 31, 2025 report from 181]. While it appears our elected representatives forgot to keep our documents up-to-date, the guardians of our treasure implicitly recognize every forty-two and two-ninths dollar *bills* as a claim on a fine troy ounce of gold.

<sup>4</sup>Starting with the Coinage Act of 1792, there was a bimetallic system in the United States [pp. 130 - 131 of 185, 186]. In this system, a US dollar was officially defined as both a fixed weight of silver and a fraction, 1/15 [p. 130 of 185, **CHAP. XVI**, Sec 9 of 187], and then later, with the US Coin Act of 1834, 1/16 of that weight of gold [p. 131 of 185, **CHAP. XCV**, Sec 1 of 188], and still later abandoned for a gold-only system.

<sup>5</sup>Other than quotations, in this work our world is referred to as "the earth," rather than "Earth," in honor of the fact it is special, our only home, not just one of the nine planets [190].

(can be transferred to a different party) paper instruments. The earliest such instruments could only be redeemed in money by a specific party, as described in the original creation of the paper or papyrus. Later instruments were made out to a specific party but could be signed over to another party who could redeem it instead. At the end of this evolutionary process, the paper notes were inherently bearer assets, with no one's name on them, freely negotiable and payable to the physical bearer of the note [ch. 6 of 192]. In other words, consumers solved the robbery problem by paying a third party to store their gold and carrying paper receipts for it instead of the gold itself. If the third party is known to be trustworthy, always redeeming receipts on demand, users of gold tend to trust the receipts and conduct business directly with them, instead of redeeming first and completing their transactions with gold [p. 38 of 185].

The problem is when users get habituated to the receipts, rarely redeeming them for gold, third parties always<sup>6</sup> end up cheating their customers by surreptitiously spending more paper receipts into circulation than there is gold in the vault [p. 53 of 191, 185, 193].<sup>7</sup> It works for everybody—vault owners can profit by loaning at interest gold they don't have, and vault owners issuing paper claims to gold are providing a legitimate service to society, at least to the extent they don't issue more receipts than they have gold. Paper claims to gold have greater divisibility and portability than gold, with similar durability, giving them important advantages over gold in regional and global commerce [ch. 8 of 192]. These advantages increase the economic demand for paper over gold—in other words, everyone likes easy money [194]. While the divisibility and portability of paper claims to gold have given them competitive advantages over gold, the paper claims are also burdened

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<sup>6</sup>“Always,” not “often” or “sometimes,” is indeed the correct term here. Hülsmann [185], Cantelon [191], and Griffin [193] informed us every bank in known history has eventually succumbed to the temptation to practice what is now euphemistically referred to as “fractional reserve” banking. As Hülsmann noted regarding this tendency, “A look at the history of institutions reveals this temptation was virtually impossible to resist. . .” [p. 40 of 185].

<sup>7</sup>When a vault owner promises to return an equal amount of gold on demand, but not necessarily the same gold deposited, the deposit is a *mutuum* [184]. Vault owners did this, and still do it, without notifying their depositors, who believe their gold, or paper claims to gold in the case of modern banks, remains in a situation of *depositum*. In a *depositum*, gold deposits remain the property of the depositor when in the vault, and the vault owner has promised to return not just the same weight of gold, but the same gold [184].

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with the competitive disadvantage of being easy to print. This causes the paper to be less scarce than gold, in turn causing monetary system instability [ch. 8 of 192]. Historically, every third party, or bank, that issued fraudulent receipts for its gold was eventually driven out of business [193, p. 212 of 185]. The business would end with an old-school style run in which holders of paper receipts (the gold depositors) realize their receipts might be fraudulent and “run” to the vault at the same time and empty it, with latecomers getting stiffed because the gold is gone.<sup>8</sup> In modern times, the problem has been compounded by the new version of third-party vault owners—banks. Instead of storing gold, banks store paper receipts for gold, also known as dollar *bills*, or “base money” [ch. 15 of 192], in their vaults. In the same way it’s easier to carry paper than gold, it is generally easier to carry and transact with a credit card or cell phone than with paper, especially remotely. Therefore, market participants have taken to transacting with electronic claims to paper claims to gold, and unsurprisingly, these modern third-party vault owners have taken advantage of the situation. Old times gold vault owners would issue more paper than there was gold in the vault, and modern banks issue more electronic claims to paper, also known as “broad money” [ch. 15 of 192], than there is paper in the vault. They accomplish this by crediting lenders’ accounts when a loan is taken out without debiting the accounts of the bank’s other customers [ch. 15 of 192]. This is done with the approval of our federal government banking statutes and rules and regulations, which only require banks to hold a fraction of their book claims in physical paper in the vault.

We the People, with 7,413 tonnes<sup>9</sup> of gold in Our vault at Fort Knox, are in this late-game situation—the collective of us has spent many more receipts into circulation than there is gold in the vault.<sup>10</sup> We’ve

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<sup>8</sup>See the movie *It’s A Wonderful Life* [195] for an uplifting story revolving around a barely averted bank run. In this story, the customers of Bailey Brothers Building and Loan, fearing for their money after hearing rumors of insolvency, “run” to the bank at the same time in hopes of rescuing their savings [196]. Unfortunately, deposit-destroying bank runs occur regularly here in the real world, ruining many thousands of fractional-reserve banks and their depositors [197].

<sup>9</sup>According to the US Department of the Treasury, our gold treasure consists of 261,498,926.241 troy ounces, or 7,413.37 tonnes [181] (a tonne is a metric ton, which is 1,000 kilograms, or 2,204.6 pounds, as opposed to a US, or short ton, which is 2,000 pounds).

<sup>10</sup>According to some accounts from people in the know, around half our gold is in the vault beneath the New York Federal Reserve building, and encumbered. In his 1973 book *The Day the Dollar Dies*, Cantelon reported there are over a hundred

## *2. The Collective's Problematic Gold US Dollars*

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been cheating our customers by printing excess paper claims on our gold and spending them into circulation. The same as for previous cheating vault owners, our day of reckoning looms.

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thousand gold bars in that vault, marked with the stamps of the central banks of over seventy foreign countries [p. 44 of 191]. Lips reported in 2002 the US gold reserve has not been audited independently since 1955. In September of 2000, more than 54 million ounces of gold were switched from the “Gold Bullion Reserve” category to the “Custodial Gold Bullion” category in the Treasury Report, with no explanation. Lips said subsequently, in the May 2001 Treasury Report, the “Reserve” and “Custodial” gold categories had been replaced with a “Deep Storage Gold” category, and then-Secretary of the Treasury Paul H. O’Neill had not yet responded to inquiries about the matter [p. 227 of 186]. For the purposes of settling our bankruptcy, as will be described later, the important part is to find out exactly how much gold We, the People, truly own, so We can give Our creditors the correct haircut (how much gold creditors will get in the bankruptcy settlement vs. how much we owe them).

### 3. THE COLLECTIVE HAS A SPENDING PROBLEM

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**G**OLD enables the price runaways because its weight, bulk, and limited divisibility incentivizes third-party vault storage, with receipts for gold instead of gold in circulation, but doesn't cause them. The vault owner still has to do the surreptitious fraudulent receipt deed. Back in the day, vault owners would do it on their own due to economic incentives—it was profitable, and if they didn't do it their competitors would, attracting gold deposits to the competitors' vaults [ch. 8 of 192]. In our highfalutin modern times, we do it by committee, for the common good, at least that's what we tell ourselves. In reality, we do the surreptitious deed for the less noble reason of attempting to get something for nothing.

Here in the States, the vault owner is the committee<sup>1</sup> known as We, the People, who have been facilitating the common good with our federal government system. In this system, the people of each of the states choose representatives who in turn choose how to spend the national treasure [198]. It sounds innocuous on a surface level, but the devil is in the details.

The dynamics of individuals working to control how the national treasure is spent get the collective caught in a debt trap because the collective has created a commons and, therefore, a tragedy of the commons.<sup>2</sup> The commons, in this case, is the huge pot of money resulting

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<sup>1</sup>The committee, or the fifty committees (one per state) forming the big committee of states that created our federal government, is merely a group or groups of people. The committees can take actions, and their individual members can take other actions. The odd part about our national situation is the big committee is stealing from the members of its fifty constituent committees.

<sup>2</sup>The classic example of a tragedy of the commons is when several families use a field not owned by any of them for grazing. If each family only uses their fair share of the field's grazing resources, everything is fine. The tragedy happens because, as explained by Hardin, building on Lloyd [p. 17 of 199], each family has an economic incentive to graze more than their fair share. Each family knows the other families know this, so they all end up competing to graze as much as possible before the field gets ruined, and sure enough, the field gets ruined.

### 3. *The Collective has a Spending Problem*

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from the collective spending a lot of money identifying and solving problems. As of the mid-2020s, this commons exists in the form of an approximately \$7 trillion yearly national budget.<sup>3</sup>

The same as for other commons, it is in the best interest of individuals, families, companies, and so on to get as much as they can from the collective's giant pot of money while contributing as little as they can. The mechanics of the tragedy in this case are a result of the fact that, all else being equal, the representative who votes to spend more of that giant pot of money on the people she represents than does her competition, and tax them less, has the better chance of being reelected [ch. 19 of 192]. Also, all else being equal, representatives who vote to spend more money on guns, tanks, bombs, and aircraft carriers to protect us have better chances of being reelected [201], especially if those weapons contracts are awarded to their constituents.

The result has been a tendency for our elected representatives to find more ways to spend our national treasure than replenish it,<sup>4</sup> making it difficult for our treasury to fund the national budget. Our Treasurers have closed the gap with borrowing,<sup>5</sup> which unfortunately has become a more or less permanent feature of our national budgets. Christopher Whalen makes this point in his book *Inflated*, noting, "The great un-

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<sup>3</sup>According to our federal government's Office of Management and Budget report, national yearly outlays are expected to be \$7 trillion in 2027 [p. 123 of 200].

<sup>4</sup>A representative example of the collective's spending problem is its \$1.25 trillion as of 2019 [202], and steadily growing, up to \$1.5 trillion as of 2023 [203], yearly military budget. According to some estimates, more than half of everyone's federal government taxes are spent on our military institutions [204].

<sup>5</sup>Sadly, the new nation, thirteen states initially, has never *not* been entangled in a debt trap. The entanglement began when speculators, including James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and others, purchased so-called Continentals from the heroes of the revolution against King George. They only paid pennies on the dollar because too many of the notes were in circulation. When issued by the Continental Congress and the Continental Army between 1775 and 1779, recipients were promised the notes were redeemable at face value in specie, meaning gold or silver. But they were issued in great excess of the available specie, causing their market value to crash. From 1775 to 1779 the supply of Continentals increased by 5,000 percent, and their market exchange rate crashed from \$1 in 1775 to less than a penny by the end of 1779 [193, 205]. After scoring the notes for cheap, Madison, Hamilton, and others cooperated to create a national government with the power to tax, borrow, and spend. Finally, in the conclusion of their scheme, they had the new government borrow money to pay them face value for their Continentals, for a many thousands of percent profit [ch. 11 of 206, 207].

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spoken secret in American life is the refusal to maintain anything like fiscal balance in the national government [p. 255 of 208].”

The problem with borrowing is finding lenders.<sup>6</sup> As the collective’s national debt and deficits have grown, lenders have become less interested in helping it. As with any irresponsible borrower, at some point the credit risk becomes too great. The prospective lender knows if the debt gets too big the collective will eventually be unable to pay. This causes a conflict. We keep voting for representatives who promise more money and lower taxes, and the only way they can deliver is to complete the budget shortfalls with borrowing. But we, operating in our capacities as individuals, families, or companies, aren’t willing to lend more to the reckless spender.

Our growing individual reluctance to lend to the collective manifests as lowered demand for its debt notes, or bonds, which tends to lower their sale prices. Lower bond prices effectively means the collective must pay higher interest rates<sup>7</sup> to borrow money. For example, if individuals and companies are more willing to lend, bond prices will rise, and a \$1 bond may sell for \$0.99. If the bond matures in one year, the collective will have paid an interest rate of about 1 percent per annum. But if those individuals and families become less willing to lend, the going price for a \$1 bond may drop to, say, \$0.90, for an effective annual interest rate of about 11 percent. The more market prices for treasury bonds drop, the more bonds our treasury is forced to sell to make the budget, driving their prices down and effective interest rates up even more.

This dynamic should be sufficient to decrease funding for the collectively irresponsible borrower known as “We, the People,” and in a peaceful world would force it to be fiscally responsible. But the rules are different for this collective. It maintains a monopoly on violence within the geographic combined territory of our fifty states<sup>8</sup> and has taken advantage of this monopoly to violate the rules of civil engagement. This collective enforces tax and legal tender statutes, causing an artificial demand for its fraudulent gold receipts (the mechanics of this demand

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<sup>6</sup>Anyone can lend to the national treasury by purchasing its IOU notes, known as treasury bonds or bills.

<sup>7</sup>The interest rate is the price, in money, of borrowed money [30].

<sup>8</sup>The national-level collective shares the monopoly on violence with the collectives of each of these fifty states through the federation power-sharing structure, but the point remains.

### *3. The Collective has a Spending Problem*

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are described in Chapter 9). By effectively forcing us individuals to use its fraudulent receipts, this third-party vault owner has enabled itself to succumb fully to the temptation to print more receipts than there is gold.

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