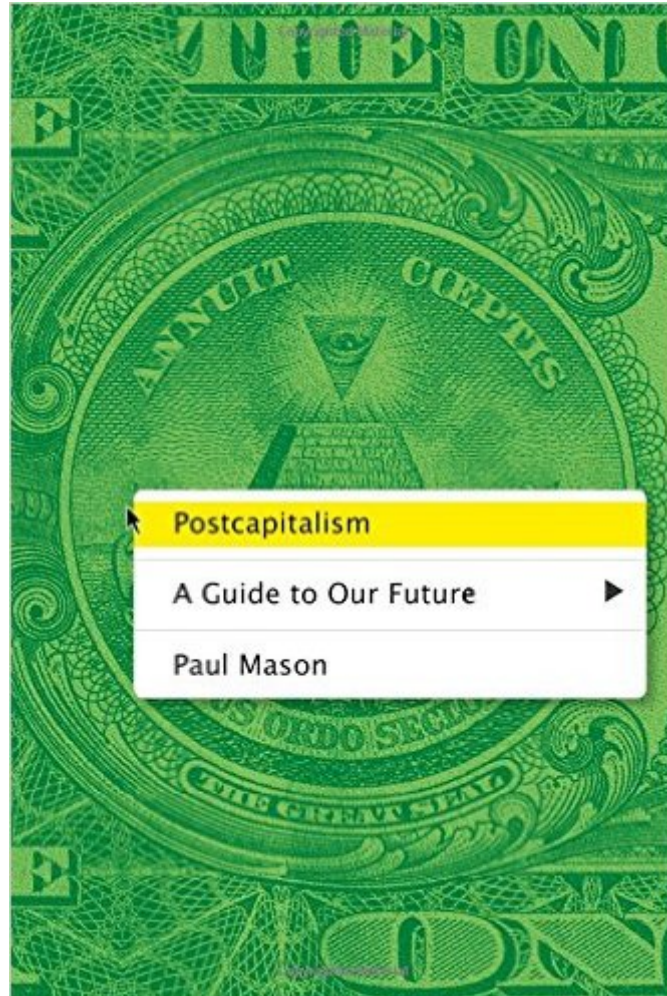


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# Postcapitalism: A Guide To Our Future



## Synopsis

We know that our world is undergoing seismic changeâ but how can we emerge from the crisis a fairer, more equal society? Over the past two centuries or so, capitalism has undergone profound changesâ economic cycles that veer from boom to bustâ from which it has always emerged transformed and strengthened. Surveying this turbulent history, Paul Masonâ TM's Postcapitalism argues that we are on the brink of a change so big and so profound that this time capitalism itself, the immensely complex system within which entire societies function, will mutate into something wholly new. At the heart of this change is information technology, a revolution that is driven by capitalism but, with its tendency to push the value of much of what we make toward zero, has the potential to destroy an economy based on markets, wages, and private ownership. Almost unnoticed, in the niches and hollows of the market system, swaths of economic life are beginning to move to a different rhythm. Vast numbers of people are changing how they behave and live, in ways contrary to the current system of state-backed corporate capitalism. And as the terrain changes, new paths open. In this bold and prophetic book, Mason shows how, from the ashes of the crisis, we have the chance to create a more socially just and sustainable economy. Although the dangers ahead are profound, he argues that there is cause for hope. This is the first time in human history in which, equipped with an understanding of what is happening around us, we can predict and shape the future.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It hooked me at the first page! Ripped from the headlines! I couldn't put it down! Hey wait a minute. Isn't this supposed to be a review of an economics book? It is, and for me all those exclamations are true. In spite of the fact that I usually think economics is opaque and boring, I found this book to be positively riveting. Like a lot of people, I'm worried about what's going on in today's world. The Arab Spring never bloomed; Occupy Wall Street petered out; the upcoming US election seems mired in chaos. We're supposed to have recovered from the 2008 recession, but most new jobs can't pay the bills. Every year breaks a record for world's hottest, but certain political and corporate leaders still deny the existence of man-made climate change. Our population is getting older, poorer, and deeper in debt. What to do about the rising number of immigrants threatens many nations. So when Diane Rehm interviewed Paul Mason about his book, I decided to buy it. I wanted to hear more about his take on why we're in this situation and what we can do about it. Mason begins by reviewing humankind's turbulent economic history: feudalism, industrial capitalism, the rise and destruction of the labor movement, the booms and busts of neoliberalism, the phenomenon of today's "precarariat." These are the stressed-out people forced to work two jobs, who have lost or will never get a pension, who are acutely aware of how monopolies, outsourcing, or their company moving overseas make his or her job extremely precarious. Many workers are expected to be "at work" on their smartphones even when traveling or at home, and "even worse" are forced to "live the dream of the firm they work for."

This valuable book has already become one of a handful to mark my view of the world with a "before" and "after," helping me connect some puzzling dots into a coherent cognitive map. Paul Mason, whose writing has impressed me in the past with its insight, has done a terrific job pulling together various strands of information and ideas to make sense of our present historical moment. But I'll warn you it is not a quick and breezy read. Some familiarity with history and economic philosophy (both classical and socialist) is almost a prerequisite. I say "almost" because Mason is such a good writer that a lay reader should be able to follow the argument with a little effort. His real achievement is not in coming up with an original idea, but in putting lots of old ideas together in an original way. A central question of the book is how to make sense of the economic crisis of 2008. Clearly the political world has been shaken off its axis by this question, in part by the unexpected rebirth of socialism as a live topic. Suddenly, a mere twenty years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, people began re-reading Karl Marx in earnest. The answer to the question implicates the main argument between old-line socialists and practically everyone else

across the political spectrum: does capitalism tend toward crisis and eventual collapse, or does it tend toward equilibrium? Or to put it another way, is capitalism the end result of humanity's economic development or is there a further stage? Mason's best move is his upgrade of the ideas of the socialist economist Nikolai Kondratieff, who was executed under Stalin in 1938.

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