

# THE DAILY RECORD

## Are We Living In A Golden Age?

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*“We have fallen upon evil times, politics is corrupt and the social fabric is fraying.”*

Who said that? Donald Trump or Bernie Sanders? It’s difficult to keep track. They sound so alike, the populists of the left and the right. Everything is awful, so bring on the scapegoats and the knights on white horses.

If you think there has never been a better time to be alive — that humanity has never been safer, healthier, more prosperous or less unequal — then you’re in the minority. But that is what the evidence incontrovertibly shows. Poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, child labor and infant mortality are falling faster than at any other time in human history. The risk of being caught up in a war, subjected to a dictatorship or of dying in a natural disaster is smaller than ever. The golden age is now.

Global trade has led to an expansion of wealth on a magnitude which is hard to comprehend. Since the Cold War ended, extreme poverty has decreased from 37 percent to 9.6 percent — in single digits for the first time in history.

This has not happened through the destruction of the western middle class. Times have been rough since the financial crisis, yet for all the talk of Americans “left behind by globalization,” median income for low- and middle-income U.S. households has increased by more than 30 percent since 1970. And this excludes all the things you can’t put a price on, such as advances in medicine, an extra 10 years of life expectancy, the internet, mass entertainment, and cleaner air and water.

As we become richer, we have become cleaner and greener. The quantity of oil spilt in our oceans has decreased by 99 per cent since 1970. Forests are reappearing, even in emerging countries like India and China.

Parts of the world are falling to pieces but fewer parts than before. Conflicts always make the headlines, so we assume that our age is plagued by violence.

In almost every way human beings today lead more prosperous, safer and longer lives — and we have all the data we need to prove it. So why does everybody remain convinced that the world is going to the dogs? Because that is what we pay attention to.

Bad news now travels a lot faster.

So who did say those words at the start of this article, about how we have “fallen upon evil times?” A century ago, an American professor found them inscribed on a stone in a museum in Constantinople. He dated them from ancient Chaldea, 3,800 BC.

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