

TRENDSJOURNAL

HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS®



MASK

MURDER



1 DECEMBER 2020

TRENDS ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT

U.S. MARKETS OVERVIEW



Go out at night. From Paris to Manhattan, from Podunk to Hick Town, cities big and small, the streets are empty. Buildings boarded up, curfews and restrictions.

By government decree: Close down at 10 PM. No dining, no dancing, no singing, no hugging. Get back in your house. No partying no playing permitted.

Check out the front page of today's *New York Times*.

Read their article: Without Crowds, Is It Times Square really Times Square?

Without Crowds, Is Times Square Really Times Square? Take a Look

The throngs of visitors have disappeared from New York City's famous neighborhood, and there is an eeriness to the emptiness.



Todd Heisler/The New York Times

Businesses are going bust, the homelessness and helpless are outnumbering the tourists. There are no neon lights shining bright on Broadway. The theater district is dead.

No entertainment, no trade shows and conventions, empty hotels and no business and out of business restaurants.

The list of businesses, lives, and livelihoods destroyed by the politicians and bureaucrats and enforced by their COVID Cop Calvary is economically and emotionally devastating.

In the year of the Great Reset, the disconnect between Wall Street and Main Street grows wider.

Déjà vu?

The headline economic news today was the Dow racking up its best November since 1928, and its best month since 1987.

Yes, bravo! As government lockdown mandates sink Main Street deeper into the "Greatest Depression," Wall Street money junkies ramped up their best month in November since 1987, the year of the great market crash.

And the market had its best November since 1928, which preceded the 1929 Stock Market Crash that ushered in the devastating Great Depression.

Today, the Dow closed up 185 points, while the S&P 500 and Nasdaq hit record highs.

According to *CNBC*, the reason they were boosted was because “Sentiment got a lift after *NBC News* reported that Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin will speak with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi about ‘keeping the government running,’ adding that ‘I’m sure we’ll also be mentioning COVID Relief.’ Meanwhile, a group of lawmakers unveiled a \$908 billion stimulus plan, which includes \$208 billion in Paycheck Protection Program small business loans.”

Got it? More monetary methadone pumped into the system by the Banksters to keep the Wall Street money junkies high and peanuts are thrown to the plantation workers of Slavelandia to keep the restless from rioting.

GOLD. After hitting a five-month low yesterday, gold jumped 2 percent today, and silver soared over 6 percent on the money pumping stimulus news. Thus, the more cheap money that is printed on nothing and backed by nothing, the lower the dollar falls and the higher safe-have precious metals rise.

With the U.S. dollar index hitting its lowest level in more than two years, gold also glows brighter to investors holding other currencies. Gold is dollar based. The lower the dollar falls, the cheaper it is to buy for investors holding currencies that are rising.

Today the euro – the currency of much of Europe where nations are sinking deeper into the “Greatest Depression” and where the IMF warned yesterday of a second wave threat to single currency block – hit a 2 1/2-year high vs. dollar.

The dollar also fell on expectations of more U.S. stimulus following remarks released on Monday, highlighting Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell fears of worsening economic climate.

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our precious metals forecast for gold to solidly break above \$2,000 per ounce and silver to spike well above \$50 per ounce in 2021.*

BITCOIN. It was another volatile Bitcoin day today, with the cryptocurrency falling 2.6 percent, backing off to \$19,151 as we go to press. Yesterday, it spiked 9 percent hitting \$19,860, a new all-time high.

On 30 November, Bitcoin's price touched that all-time high of \$19,860 in a run that saw its value rise more than 50 percent in 30 days and climb 380 percent since its March low for the year below \$4,000.

The run has reminded investors that when the cryptocurrency's value shot to a previous record of \$19,783 in December 2017, the buying frenzy gave way to a spectacular crash that left investors wary for more than two years.

The value of Bitcoin now in circulation is more than \$365 billion, according to *CNN Business*.

The currency's new record "...will leave the price screaming for a major correction," warned Joel Kruger, currency analyst at IMAX Exchange, in a *Financial Times* interview. "We would caution against buying at current [price] levels."

The digital currency's price has been driven up, in part, by a surge of interest from hedge-fund icons such as Paul Tudor Jones and Stanley Druckenmiller, who have poured money into cryptocurrencies.

Hedge funds that bet heavily on cryptocurrencies have reaped about an 89-percent return this year, compared to hedge funds focused on more conventional investments. Those funds have grown only about 3 percent so far in 2020, data firm Eureka-hedge has reported.

Druckenmiller, founder of hedge fund Duquesne Capital, sees Bitcoin as similar to gold but more limited in quantity, which heightens its volatility and makes it likely to outperform the precious metal. He called cryptocurrency a "great speculation" that could become a new asset class, he said in a November *CNBC* interview.

Hedge funds' confidence in digital currencies has drawn more sedate investors into the market as well. Fidelity is establishing a Bitcoin fund for its wealthy clients, and more individual investors are being drawn into the market as well.

In addition to institutional investors seeking higher returns that bonds can offer, the digital coin's value has also been pushed up by so-called "momentum investors" who spot a trend and jump on it without regard to underlying fundamentals.

The irrationally rising price lures even more speculators, driving prices even higher.

Even Gregg Giannotti, a New York radio sports personality, began devoting airtime to Bitcoin after investing \$10,000 of his own money.

Bitcoin was created in 2009 during the Great Recession as an alternative to money controlled by governments and central banks. It exists only online in a series of linked but independent computers that cannot be controlled by any central power.

Bitcoin was designed to have a limit on its supply, making it resistant to inflation.

Now, with central banks announcing they plan to allow inflation to rise, many investors seem to be storing value in Bitcoin.

“Paper money is being debased and Bitcoin is not,” Dan Morehead, CEO of Pantera Capital and a long-time Bitcoin investor, told the *Wall Street Journal*.

Also, Bitcoin is coin of the digital realm in a range of online venues.

Square’s CashApp has enabled users to trade Bitcoin since 2018. In this year’s third quarter, the app saw users buy \$1.6 billion worth of Bitcoin, compared to \$555 million a year earlier.

In November, PayPal allowed U.S. users to begin trading Bitcoin inside their accounts. PayPal’s Venmo mobile payment app will open itself to the digital money next year when PayPal will take the service international.

However, Bitcoin’s market is still miniscule compared to other investment vehicles, a fact that sharpens the unpredictability of its price because a few investors buying or selling can have a sudden, drastic impact on the price.

Still, mainstream investors’ eagerness to go crypto “is at its very highest and shows no signs of abating,” Jan Stromme, managing partner at the Alphaplate cryptocurrency trading firm, told the *Times*.

However, last Thursday, there was eagerness to get out of crypto. Bitcoin suffered a price crash falling some \$3,000... down from over \$19,300, according to CoinDesk 20 data.

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our 27 June 2020 forecast, when Bitcoin was trading at \$8,974, that for younger and more speculative investors, Bitcoin will*

remain their alternative to precious metals, thus pushing that price higher as well when it solidly breaks above the \$10,000 mark.

Also, as forecast, Bitcoin prices will continue to rise as governments, particularly China, go digital. And, unlike older generations who view gold and silver as safe-haven assets, the going-digital trend will prove bullish for cryptocurrencies, particularly for younger generations who live in a digital world and are fearful of an economic future of worthless money.

We also maintain our 27 October forecast:

Bitcoin will continue to rise, surpassing its all-time high. As the “Greatest Depression” worsens, more cheap money will be pumped into failing economies, thus pushing the value of currencies down... and inflation higher.

The lower currencies fall and the higher inflation rises, the greater the demand for safer-haven assets such as precious metals and Bitcoin.

OIL. On 23 November, benchmark Brent crude oil’s price shot to \$48.03 a barrel on hopes that the arrival of COVID vaccines will reopen the global economy, spurring resumption of normal airline schedules, shipping, leisure travel, and manufacturing.

Traders see the advent of a vaccine as a “game changer,” according to a statement from analysts at PVM, a London oil trading firm.

Largely due to reports of successful vaccine trials, Brent’s price rose more than 25 percent during November.

Prices also have been buoyed by expectations that OPEC and its allies, including Russia, will extend existing production curbs when they meet this week.

Share prices of BP and Royal Dutch Shell sank about 60 percent from January through October, but have strengthened in November, due in large measure to vaccine news.

Brent’s price remains far below the \$70 range in which it traded before the economic shutdown.

The price has averaged \$42 this year, compared to \$64 in 2019 and \$71 in 2018.

Global oil demand has decreased about 10 percent this year because the shutdown grounded air travel, ended commutes for millions of office workers, and idled factories around the world for weeks, some for months.

TRENDPOST: Today, West Texas Intermediate and Brent Crude fell 1.76 and 1.15 percent respectively on the news that the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its other allies, known as OPEC+, postponed talks on next year's output policy to Thursday from Tuesday, as three of the most influential members have failed to agree on how best to proceed with production to cut in 2021.

TREND FORECAST: OPEC and its allies will haggle their way to continued production cuts that are soft enough to appease producers desperate for cash who might otherwise go rogue and pump more than their assigned quotas.

Renewed demand, however, will not be strong enough to raise the average price much beyond its current range, especially with new restrictions and shutdowns crimping the global economic recovery.

Barring a Middle East shooting war or other unexpected disruption, we see oil holding in the \$40 to \$50 range at least through April 2021.

JOB LOSSES GROW IN LATE NOVEMBER



After sinking to their lowest level in early November since last spring, claims for state unemployment benefits rose during the last two weeks of November and added more than 100,000 new claims during the month, the U.S. Labor Department reported.

About 828,000 claims were filed in November's third week, roughly 78,000 more than during the week before, department figures showed.

During that previous week, the number of new claims rose by only about 18,000.

The rising tide of joblessness stems from the COVID virus's resurgence, which has led to new restrictions on businesses and social gatherings and to consumers sheltering at home.

Chicago has issued a new shelter-at-home order; Philadelphia has banned most indoor private get-togethers, and Los Angeles has banned indoor and outdoor dining at restaurants.

In October, U.S. personal income declined 0.7 percent and some government support programs ended, with that loss outweighing gains in wages, the U.S. commerce department reported.

During that month, consumer spending edged up 0.5 percent, the smallest gain since the economic recovery began last spring.

Consumer confidence fell in November, according to *The New York Times*, which also cited unspecified private sources of real-time data showing the labor market continuing to shrink.

Adding to the worries: federal bans on evictions and programs that allow borrowers to suspend mortgage and student loan payments will end on 31 December unless the Trump administration moves to extend them, which has not yet happened.

When those bans end, millions more people could face crushing financial distress.

However, not all news is bad.

Orders for high-cost items such as factory machinery rose in October, as did housing sales riding on near-record-low interest rates.

Households also have \$1 trillion more in savings than they did a year ago, enabling more of them to survive potholes that might lie ahead in the economy recovery.

VACCINE HIGH, DOLLAR LOW



COVID vaccines' global availability next year is likely to stabilize the world's economy and send investors in search of riskier bets that would bring a bigger return than the U.S. dollar, currency analysts are forecasting.

In that scenario, investors will lose interest in the dollar's safe shelter and the buck's value will shrink as demand for dollar-denominated investments falls, the banks say. (See related topic, "FOREIGN INVESTORS RUSH INTO CHINA" in this issue's "GLOBAL ECONOMIC TRENDS" article.)

The dollar's value has shrunk more than 4 percent this year against a collection of six other currencies as the U.S. Federal Reserve slashed interest rates to revive the shutdown-shocked economy.

The euro has climbed 6 percent against the dollar during that time; the Australian dollar has gained 4 percent on the greenback.

"Vaccine distribution will check off all of our bear market signposts," Citi analyst Calvin Tse wrote in a recent research note. "Can the dollar decline 20 percent next year alone? We think yes."

A 20-percent slide in the dollar's value happened most recently in the first decade of this century, but it took seven years, beginning in 2001 and lasting into 2008 as investors sought out more rapidly growing countries with currencies rising in value.

Any precipitous fall in the dollar's value would be a result, in part, of its past strength: it gained 16 percent in value in 2014 and 9 percent in 2015, for example, as the Fed kept U.S. interest rates high while other Western economies held rates closer to zero to foster growth.

“We are in the perfect environment for a rally in risky assets, a weaker dollar, and stronger growth-sensitive currencies through the end of the year,” George Saravelos, global head of Deutsche Bank’s currency research, told the *Financial Times*.

Goldman Sachs thinks the dollar will lose 6 percent of its value in 2021, the bank’s research analysts have told investors. Investors collectively expect the dollar to shed about 3 percent of its value next year, according to a consensus of forecasts compiled by *Bloomberg*.

The dollar is likely to fall 4 percent in the short term, with currencies of Australia, New Zealand, Norway, and Sweden likely to rise on a global vaccination campaign, according to Morgan Stanley analyst Andrew Sheets, the *Times* reported.

The currencies of Brazil, Russia, and South Africa also are likely to gain value, Sheets said in a research report.

He expects the euro to trade at \$1.25 by the end of next year; the median forecast for that time is \$1.21, according to the *Bloomberg* report. The euro’s value in mid-November was \$1.18.

The dollar is likely to weaken even as the U.S. economy regains its strength, noted Zach Pandl, co-head of global foreign exchange and emerging market strategy at Goldman Sachs.

The dollar often serves as a gauge of global economic health, losing value during times when investors have more safe choices and prospects for good returns.

TREND FORECAST: *While other currencies are rising against the dollar, it should be noted that considering the increasing amounts of cheap monetary methadone and fiscal stimulus that will be flooded into sagging economies, it is anathema that they too are not sinking.*

Thus, while currencies are rising while their economies are sinking, we forecast investors will continue to abandon many of them and instead place their bets on rising precious metals and cryptocurrencies.

BANKSTERS HIJACK U.S TREASURY



Janet Yellen, former chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve and Joe Biden's pick for treasury secretary, will in essence put the Federal Reserve in full control of the United States money machine.

Yet, this is not mentioned by the media, which instead highlights that Ms. Yellen will be the first woman to occupy the position as Treasury head... ignoring the fact that money junkies are not sexists, considering that the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank are led by women.

Yellen will be tasked to re-engage with economic partners who were repelled by the Trump administration's "America First" policy and liberal use of tariffs. She also will have a strong voice in trade policy, *The New York Times* reported, including relations with China and sanctions on Iran and North Korea.

She is known to support free trade as a backer of the World Trade Organization and has criticized China's manipulative trade practices.

In public statements, Yellen has lauded open trade and globalization for raising living standards for millions in developing nations and bringing more countries to some level of prosperity.

In January, when she was president of the American Economic Association, she organized the group's annual conference to feature presentations on the benefits of free trade and immigration for national economies.

She has acknowledged the roles those policies have played in creating economic inequities and sparking populism, under which the U.S. pulled back from global leadership and engagement when Donald Trump came to the presidency.

As treasury secretary, Yellin also will steer tax policy, including Biden's vow to seek higher taxes on the wealthiest Americans. She will fine-tune regulations governing the 2017 tax cut enacted by Trump and Republican members of Congress.

Although Yellin's support for low interest rates is well-known, she also has called the current level of national debt "unsustainable," reflecting growing concern among Republicans in Congress about rising federal spending.

"If I had a magic wand, I would raise taxes and cut retirement spending," she told the Charles Schwab Impact conference in 2018.

The debt problem "will not be solved without some additional revenues," she said, "but I also find it hard to believe that it won't be solved without some changes to" Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security spending.

Yellin is a member of the board of directors of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a private, nonprofit group that calls for restrained federal spending.

HOTEL INDUSTRY FACING MASS CLOSURES



With seven in ten Americans not expecting to travel over the holiday season, 71 percent of hotel owners will not survive another six months without government aid and 77 percent will lay off more workers, hoteliers said in a November survey by the American Hotel & Lodging Association of 1,200 of its members.

Forty-seven percent said they would be forced to permanently close inns before next summer, and about 34 percent said they would be bankrupt or forced to sell their properties before the end of next March.

Also, 82 percent of survey respondents said they have not been able to extend any debt relief from their lenders beyond the end of the year; and 59 percent are now in danger of foreclosure as a result of the economic shutdown, 10 percent more than in September.

TRENDPOST: *Nationwide, hotel occupancy was 44.2 percent for the week ending 7 November, compared to 68.2 percent a year earlier, according to data firm STR. In urban centers, occupancy was a dismal 34.6, down more than half from 79.6 percent year on year.*

The industry does not expect business or group travel to return to peak 2019 levels until 2023.

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY: MORE SHUTDOWNS, MORE BANKRUPTCIES



Laboring under a gaggle of new state and local restrictions, restaurant owners from burger joints to five-star favorites are warning that the new strictures could send thousands more eateries into oblivion and add to the 2.1 million jobs the industry already has lost.

California, Illinois, and Washington have again ended indoor dining. Maryland and Wyoming have banned buffets. In Maine, dining establishments must close by 9 PM; in Vermont, they can seat only one household per table. Many states ban alcohol sales after 10 or 11 PM.

Los Angeles has forbidden indoor and outdoor dining, leaving restaurants with only take-out and delivery customers.

In Nova Scotia, restaurants and bars now are required to gather contact information for each patron and record the date and time of the visit in case contact tracing is needed.

The National Restaurant Association (NRA) is calling for the patchwork of restrictions to be eased and for Congress to bail out restaurateurs.

“We are too commonly labeled ‘superspreaders’ and have become a convenient scapegoat for reflexive shutdowns,” the NRA wrote in a November letter to the National Governors Association.

The association has “not found any systemic outbreaks of COVID-19 from the hundreds of thousands of restaurants around the country that operate within the Association’s guidance,” the letter said.

“Tens of thousands of additional restaurant bankruptcies – and millions of lost jobs – are now more likely, while the science remains inconclusive on whether health benefits will accrue,” the NRA’S letter warned.

About 17 percent of U.S. restaurants already have gone out of business, according to a November report by the Independent Restaurant Coalition, and a third could be gone by January.

Restaurants employed about 11.1 million Americans before the pandemic and account for 20 percent of the jobs lost to the shutdown, the coalition noted.

Last April, as shutdowns cratered the U.S. economy, eight million restaurant workers across the country lost their jobs, an NRA study found.

Six million have returned to work, the association said in a 20 November statement, but millions could again be sent home if the current spike in virus cases leads to another round of mandated business shutdowns.

The association has sent a letter to U.S. governors and mayors warning of any new shutdowns’ devastating effects on restaurant workers, especially as various federal and state support programs are ending.

It could take years for business lunches and tourist trade to return to pre-pandemic levels, David Chang, founder of Momofuku and other renowned eateries, has said in several public statements.

The RESTAURANTS Act – short for the “Real Economic Support That Acknowledges Unique Restaurant Assistance Needed To Survive” Act – would provide \$120 billion in grants to the industry. It has passed the U.S. House and gained support from 50 senators but Senate leader Mitch McConnell has refused to put it to a vote.

Meanwhile, news of COVID vaccines’ effectiveness means “real hope is on the horizon,” chef Danny Meyer, who owns New York’s Union Square Café and other dining spots, told the *Financial Times*.

TRENDPOST: *In a recent Los Angeles board of supervisors’ meeting, officials of the county’s health department admitted they had no hard evidence proving that shutting down outdoor dining would reduce the COVID virus’s spread.*

Yet, this fact is continually ignored as politicians across the globe instead institute more draconian restaurant lockdown rules... which, if not followed, will cost operators their licenses.

Yet, the lockdowns continue unabated targeting restaurants and bars that are mostly small businesses operations, millions of which will not re-open.

OCTOBER HOMES SALES FALL UNEXPECTEDLY



Pending home sales in October dipped 1.1 percent below September’s level but still were 20 percent above October 2019’s volume.

The year-on-year leap shows continued strong demand among buyers, but slackening pending sales reflects both the lack of enough homes up for sale and steep price increases that increasingly shape today’s market, analysts say.

“We may be starting to see rising home prices hurting affordability,” Lawrence Yun, chief economist for the National Association of Realtors (NAR), said in a press release announcing October’s numbers.

Also, the number of homes for sale on 31 October was 20 percent fewer than a year before and reflects a 2.7-month supply of inventory. The industry considers a six-month supply to represent the comfortable balance between supply and demand.

Supply and demand are particularly tight in lower price ranges, the NAR reported.

The tight supply has continued to foster bidding wars and pushed up the median price of a U.S. single-family home to a record \$313,000, a 16-percent rise compared to a year earlier.

The scarcity of existing homes has led people to buy new ones, driving October’s new home sales up 40 percent year over year.

“The combination of scarce housing and low [interest] rates, plus very strong demand, has pushed home prices to levels that are making it difficult to save for a down payment, particularly among first-time buyers, who don’t have the luxury of using housing equity from a sale to use as a down payment,” said Yun.

CONSTRUCTION JOBS REMAIN FAR BELOW PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS



Construction jobs remain below pre-pandemic levels in 37 states, even though 36 states added building jobs in October, the Associated General Contractors of America reported in a 20 November press announcement.

Twelve states lost construction jobs from September through October. Maryland lost the most at 2,600 and Georgia placed second, shedding 1,800.

California added the most during the one-month span, at 26,300, followed by Texas with 9,400.

Since February, New York has lost the most building jobs, dropping 41,600, with Texas close behind at 41,500.

Only 13 states and the District of Columbia have grown net employment in the building trades this year. Virginia brought on 7,100 net new workers since the pandemic struck. Kentucky booked 4,300 additional jobs and Alabama 4,300.

The near future looks no brighter, according to Stephen E. Sandherr, the association's CEO.

“With the pandemic raging again in most parts of the country, countless construction jobs are at risk as owners cancel or delay construction projects amid uncertainty about the future,” he noted in the press statement. “Enacting needed new recovery measures now will help protect many good-paying construction careers during what will likely be a difficult winter for the economy.”

Today, the Associated General Contractors of America reported that nonresidential construction and commercial project spending remained flat in October while residential construction expanded.

MALLS BIZ UPTICK AHEAD OF BLACK FRIDAY



Shoppers flocked to malls on the weekend of 21 and 22 November, telling journalists they wanted to buy holiday gifts ahead of the anticipated Black Friday mobs or before stores were once again shut down amid the surging pandemic.

The shoppers may have been prescient: on 16 November, New Mexico governor Michelle Lujan Grisham ordered non-essential stores to shutter for two weeks to stem the COVID virus's spread.

The new shutdown extended through the Black Friday shopping weekend.

Other states may impose their own new wide-ranging lockdowns.

Still, malls may continue to see stronger-than-expected traffic during December.

"Mall visits are rebounding and the pace is picking up heading into a critical holiday period," according to a report by Placer, a research firm that uses cell phone data to gauge mall traffic.

As an example, the report cited Albany's Crossgates Mall, where August visits were 46 percent fewer than the year before; in October, traffic was down only 29 percent year-on-year, a gain of 17 percentage points in two months.

However, foot traffic in brick-and-mortar stores was still down 31 percent year on year during November's third week, according to RetailNext, an analytics firm.

Holiday sales this year are likely to rise 3.6 to 5.2 percent above 2019's, the National Retail Federation has forecast, with online sales swelling 20 to 30 percent from last year's.

In 2019, the season's overall sales rose 4 percent from 2018 to \$729.1 billion.

TREND FORECAST: Again, we have long forecast the "Pall on the Malls." Clearly, even when (and if) the COVID War ends and restrictions are lifted, as the "Greatest Depression" worsens and unemployment rises, more malls, large and small, will go bust.

And, as the data shows, plans to reconfigure them for other purposes have, and will be, economically negligible. Thus, bankruptcies will continue to escalate, as will retail real estate values, as mall traffic, which already was in long steady decline, slumps lower.

Beyond the malls, with prime city streets such as those in NYC having been plastered with “For Rent” signs before the COVID lockdowns, both rental prices and real estate values will continue to drop much lower.

BLACK FRIDAY IN-STORE SALES CRASH, ONLINE SALES SOAR



Store traffic on Black Friday plunged 52.1 percent below 2019's number, while online sales rose 21.6 percent above last year's dollar volume, according to data firm Sensormatic Solutions.

During the six weeks of the holiday shopping season, visits to stores will be 22 to 25 percent fewer than in 2019, the company predicts.

“We knew Black Friday [traffic] was going to be down. We just didn't know how much it was going to be down,” Brian Field, retail consultant with Sensormatic Solutions, told *CNBC*. “Shoppers are spreading out their shopping throughout the holiday season because of concerns about social distancing and the pandemic.”

“Black Friday this year, from a traffic impact perspective, looked a lot like a typical Saturday after a Black Friday,” he said.

Many stores were taking customers' temperatures as they entered and taking contact information in case infections needed to be traced. Shops in Chicago, Los Angeles, and some other large cities were limited to 25 percent of capacity.

A large number of consumers seemed to heed the CDC's advice to shop online instead of in stores on Black Friday.

About 9 percent of web shoppers were first-time buyers, many of whom were older and live in rural areas, according to Adobe Digital Insights

The 21.6-percent growth spurt in web-based buying meant a \$9-billion day for e-retailers, following a \$5.1-billion Thanksgiving e-commerce day, with more than 40 percent of the holiday orders placed over smartphones, Adobe Analytics reported.

Amazon, Target, and Walmart reaped some of the greatest sales compared to sellers forced onto the Internet by the economic shutdown and who had less experience and fewer offerings than veteran online suppliers.

In the week preceding Black Friday, Amazon's sales rose 65 percent from the same week in 2019. Sales at Target and Walmart for the week jumped 80 and 67 percent, respectively, according to consulting firm Edison Trends.

This year's Black Friday was the second-largest online spending day on record in the U.S., trailing only 2019's Cyber Monday, Adobe noted.

Cyber Monday this year, which fell on November 30, was forecast to be the richest online sales day yet, grossing \$10.8 billion to \$12.7 billion, Adobe said, representing growth of 15 to 35 percent year on year.

ALMOST A THIRD OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN NY, NJ REMAIN SHUT



In New York State, 27.8 percent of small businesses have been closed since the economic shutdown began; in New Jersey, the percentage is 31.2 percent, according to figures compiled on 16 November by Harvard University's TrackTheRecovery.org, a database tracking damage wrought by the pandemic and economic shutdown.

The New Jersey number exceeds an estimate from the state's Business and Industry Association, which reported that 28 percent of the Garden State's small businesses were shuttered on 31 October, the *Star Ledger* newspaper reported.

The proportion of businesses still shut is an improvement over the mid-April height of the shutdown's damage, when 52.5 percent of New York's small businesses

More than half of small businesses in both states were forced to shut their doors in the spring at the height of the pandemic, with both hitting highs in mid-April – 52.5 percent of New York businesses and 53.9 percent in the Garden States, government estimates say.

TREND FORECAST: As we have written in the ***Trends Journal*** since politicians launched the COVID War, large multinationals across the globe were allowed to proceed on a business-as-usual basis while small operators throughout the retail and service sector were deemed too-small-to-do business.

And now, as we had forecast, there are rising protests and demonstrations, particularly in western nations, against politician's draconian lockdown COVID mandates that favor the Bigs over the smalls. This in turn will serve as another platform in newly forming "populist," "nationalist" "freedom" parties that will challenge establishment parties.

LABOR DEPT'S JOBLESS FIGURES CONSISTENTLY FLAWED



In its weekly report of new and existing jobless claims, the U.S. Labor Department has made "flawed estimates of the number of individuals receiving benefits each week throughout the pandemic," the Government Accountability Office (GAO) said in a new report.

The inaccurate data fails to reflect the true extent of joblessness and has led to unemployed persons receiving smaller benefit payments than they should have, the report stated.

The inaccuracies also could hamper policymakers in creating initiatives that respond effectively to the damage left by the economic shutdown, according to the GAO.

The weekly data has included overestimates and underestimates at various times, the GAO said, and admitted it was unable to track the full extent of the mistakes.

In addition, the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program (PUA) that pays stipends to gig workers and others not eligible for conventional unemployment insurance has underpaid recipients in most states, the GAO said.

“The majority of states have been paying [these] claimants the minimum allowable benefit instead of the amount they are eligible for based on prior earnings,” the GAO noted. It estimated that millions of people have been short-changed.

The mistakes in the PUA and conventional unemployment programs probably stem from the differing ways in which states calculate and report their jobless numbers, as well as states’ struggles to process an overwhelming number of claims quickly, the GAO report speculated.

As of 16 September, for example, California’s state unemployment office reported a backlog of almost 600,000 claims that went unprocessed for more than three weeks, delaying an accurate count of the state’s jobless to the federal labor department.

Also, the PUA has been rife with fraud, the GAO alleged.

About 9.1 million people were collecting benefits through the PUA in the week ended 7 November, compared to 6.1 million receiving payments through conventional state unemployment insurance programs, according to labor department figures.

TRENDPOST: *For decades, the U.S. unemployment numbers have been inaccurate.*

For unbiased and more accurate U.S. job numbers and government statistics, we go to <http://www.shadowstats.com>.

GLOBAL ECONOMIC TRENDS



GLOBAL ECONOMY FACES “DEBT TSUNAMI.” Government and corporate debt has grown by \$15 trillion this year and will reach \$277 trillion by 2021, which is about 365 percent of the world’s GDP, according to a study by the nonprofit International Institute of Finance (IIF).

The red ink is a “debt tsunami” threatening to limit economic growth for years into the future, the *Financial Times* commented.

Global debt stood at 320 percent of the world’s GDP at the end of 2019, the study noted.

From 2012 through 2015, global debt rose by \$6 trillion, then added \$52 trillion from 2016 through September 2020, driven in large part by attempts this year to rescue the world’s economy from the impact of pandemic-inspired shutdowns.

Among emerging economies, debt has risen 26 percentage points this year to 250 percent of their collective GDP, forcing increases in the amount these struggling countries must pay to service their loans.

Even though central banks have cut interest rates and made cheap loans since the pandemic and shutdowns began, emerging markets have seen their export markets collapse and internal tax collections shrink, making it even harder for them to repay loans.

Last week, Zambia became the sixth emerging economy to restructure or default on its sovereign debt this year, following Argentina, Belize, Ecuador, Lebanon, and Suriname.

Emerging markets are contracted to repay about \$7 trillion in debt before 2022, the IIF estimates. Roughly 15 percent of that debt is denominated in dollars, exposing the countries to the risks that the dollar's value might rise, making debts even more costly to repay.

TREND FORECAST: *As debt levels rise and more countries default, precious metals and Bitcoin prices will rise as people seek safe-haven assets.*

And, as economic conditions deteriorate in these failing nations, social unrest will escalate as people take to the streets to protest against rising crime, increased poverty, lower wages, government corruption, crime, and violence.

NEW LOCKDOWNS HAMMER EUROPE'S SERVICE SECTOR. Although Europe's new wave of economic shutdowns that began last month is less severe than those last spring, they have hit the continent's service economy almost as hard while sparing other sectors, analysts say.

IHS Markit's Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) for Europe's service sector fell in November from 46.9 to 41.3, compared to manufacturing's PMI, which fell from 58.4 to 55.5.

Scores below 50 signal contraction; numbers above 50 indicate economic expansion, meaning that the continent's manufacturing sector still sees growth ahead, although at a slower rate of increase.

Still smarting from the devastation of last spring's shutdowns, service businesses cut more workers faster than manufacturing companies, which also are still shedding jobs, the indices showed.

The PMI for Europe's economy overall slid from 50.0 in October to 45.1 in November, indicating the service sector's slump could pull the continent back into an economic contraction.

Europe's economy will contract 2.6 percent this quarter, Oxford Economics has predicted. The region's productivity gained 12.6 percent in the third quarter, following an 11.8-percent crash in the second quarter.

TREND FORECAST: *According to statista in 2018, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the European Union employed over 94 million people, or approximately 66 percent of the workforce. They estimate that approximately 25.1*

million SMEs in the European Union, with the vast majority micro-sized firms which only employed fewer than nine people.

For the European Union, the average value that SMEs contribute to the economy is around 56 percent.

Thus, we forecast there will be a steep winter economic decline followed by a spring/summer rebound that will appear relatively strong, but will prove temporary. The implications of the COVID War lockdowns on small businesses which dominate much of the European economy will prove devastating.

The dire evidence keeps mounting. According to a survey by Britain's Office of National Statistics, one in seven had "little or no confidence" they would survive the next three months.

GERMAN BUSINESS LEADERS LOSE CONFIDENCE. Despite strong third-quarter growth, German business leaders are feeling less hopeful now about the German economy's next six months.

The ifo Institute's business climate index dipped from 92.5 in October to 90.7 in November, on trend with analysts' expectations, even though the country's third-quarter growth spurt was upgraded from 8.2 percent to 8.5 on 23 November.

Confidence shrank due to the renewed COVID pandemic across Europe, spurring politicians to impose new restrictions and lockdowns.

"A double-dip [recession] looks inevitable," said ING economist Carsten Brzeski to the *Financial Times*. "The only upside is that more news about a vaccine and the timetable to roll it out should soon help bring back this optimism."

Germany has lived under a one-month "lockdown lite" since 2 November, closing bars, gyms, theaters, and restaurants and shutting down domestic tourism. The shutdown will remain in place until December 20, when the government will determine whether to lift the strictures over the Christmas and New Year holidays.

CHINA CLAIMS TO HAVE ELIMINATED "EXTREME POVERTY." With the certification of nine counties in remote, rural Guizhou province, China's government claims to have eliminated "extreme poverty" everywhere inside its borders, a goal the Communist Party had set to achieve before 2021, the 100th anniversary of the party's founding.

“Extreme poverty” was gauged against standards of education, health, income, shelter, and other basic human needs.

Since the early 1980s, a wave of capitalism in China has worsened inequalities, with urbanites gaining wealth while rural areas languished; often, the main source of income in rural villages has been to send family members to a city to find jobs and send money home.

Xi saw the inequities as a threat to the party’s rule and directed massive spending on clinics, housing projects, schools, and even giving cash grants in poor regions.

Reducing poverty has been the greatest achievement of the market-oriented reforms China adopted in the late 1970s, the Communist Party has long said. The party claims that 70 percent of global poverty reduction in recent decades has been in China, where 700 million people are no longer desperately poor.

The average annual net income for residents of Guizhou is now about \$1,750, the government’s announcement boasted.

International organizations have credited the Chinese government for making major strides in improving living standards for much of its population.

A World Bank report earlier this year said that if an annual income of \$5.50 a day, or about \$2,000 a year, is applied as a uniform global benchmark, 27 percent of the world’s population is still mired in poverty.

Under that standard, “poverty in China is still sizeable and merits renewed effort,” the report said.

Hundreds of millions of Chinese have lived in dire poverty for thousands of years, so eradicating it marked “a Chinese miracle in human history,” the *People’s Daily* newspaper declared.

TREND FORECAST: While there is no way to independently verify the Chinese government’s claims, as per their new “dual circulation” policy whereby the nation will rely less on exports and more on building a self-sustaining economy, their “China First” policy will in turn benefit all sectors of the population.

FOREIGN INVESTORS RUSH INTO CHINA. Foreign direct investment in China rose in October for the seventh consecutive month, climbing 18 percent this year

to the equivalent of \$11.8 billion, according to a statement by China's finance ministry.

China's rapid recovery from the pandemic and economic shutdown amid a world still mired in the two crises has made China a "safe harbor," commerce ministry official Zong Changqing said in a separate statement last month.

The influx of foreign money will support China's "dual circulation" economic plan of building its domestic consumer economy while also powering its industrial expansion to sustain and expand its international trade.

Most of the investment from abroad was made in real estate, information technology, e-commerce, and manufacturers of consumer goods, according to an analysis by the French investment bank Nataxis.

"When you look at urbanization, the explosion of the Chinese middle class, the consumption spending that has evolved in China – foreign investors have consistently tried to find a way to invest in that mega theme," George Agethen, senior vice-president of Canadian real estate firm Ivanhoe Cambridge, told the *Financial Times*.

In June, Agethen's company added \$400 million to the \$2 billion it already had invested in China in recent years.

However, as foreign money flows in, China is ensuring that an abundance of its own money does not flow out – another facet of its dual circulation strategy.

In 2019, China's outbound foreign investment totaled about \$77 billion, less than half as much as in 2014, as it cut investments in its Belt and Road global development plan.

TREND FORECAST: *Despite the coronavirus reportedly first breaking out in China – a nation of 1.4 billion people where some 1.25 million deaths are attributed to air pollution – to date, only 4,684 are listed by the government as virus victims.*

Thus, as we have reported, the Chinese economy is fully opened with its manufacturing rebounding and while the nation continues to expand its market share in products and presence in regions around the world... making it difficult for the U.S. and other western countries to catch up.

As Gerald Celente has said, "The 20th century was the American century, the 21st century will belong to China. The business of America is War, the Business of China is Business."

CHINESE CURRENCY CONTINUES SURGE AGAINST THE DOLLAR. Since June, China's renminbi, the country's internal currency, has gained 8.4 percent against the dollar and is poised to post its best-ever six-month record against the buck.

Barring a reversal, by the end of November the currency is likely to best its record 7.1-percent six-month challenge to the greenback set in March 2008.

The renminbi has attracted investors because China dealt with the COVID virus quickly and its economic recovery has been swift, analysts agree.

"There is an appetite for China assets all over the world and I think that will continue," a technical analyst at BNP Paribas Asset Management said in a *Financial Times* interview.

Any country not needing a vaccine to resurrect its economy has a competitive advantage, he said, which leaves China virtually alone among major economies.

China's current bond yields are comfortably above 3 percent, while returns on European, Japanese, and U.S. securities are less than 1 percent. The U.S. and European central banks have pledged to not raise interest rates for at least another year.

In contrast, China's economy needs no stimulus so interest rates there can rise.

Also, China's roaring stock markets have lured foreign investors, who need to convert their currencies to renminbi in order to play.

TRENDPOST: *Joe Biden's looming presidency also bodes well for China's economy, analysts say, as a Biden administration is not likely to pursue putting more tariffs on Chinese goods and other elements of the trade war that Donald Trump had imposed.*

In additions, with the Chinese currency rising against the dollar, there is silence from Washington that they were purposely lowing the value of the yuan to increase exports, since their products could be bought more cheaply by countries with stronger currencies.

CHINA-AFRICA TRADE GROWS TWENTY-FOLD UNDER PACT. The Forum for China-Africa Cooperation is marking its 20th anniversary this year by celebrating the expansion of trade between the two entities from \$10.8 billion in 2000 to \$208.7 billion in 2019.

China has built about 3,600 miles of road and railways in Africa, more than 16 ports, 45 large-scale electric generating stations, 130 medical centers, and 170 schools.

China's non-direct investments in Africa also have grown a hundred-fold during the period, reaching \$49.1 billion.

Although China has scaled back its African investments since 2017 as its own economy began to slow, many of its building projects there are continuing.

Under the pact, China imports more than 5,000 products from the continent either duty-free or under other favorable terms and is negotiating additional deals.

TRENDPOST: *By building Africa's economic and social infrastructure, China expects to cultivate economies on the continent that eventually will become profitable trading partners. In the new decade, the value of trade between China and African nations could exceed that of trade between China and the U.S.*

Also, while we do not know what is going on behind the scenes, China has not overtly interposed itself into African nations' internal political affairs or development plans.

By leaving countries to chart their own political and economic paths, China is ingratiating itself with those countries' leaderships and giving the population no reason to resent it. Instead, China will be identified in these countries as a generous friend, not a heavy hand.

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT PROPOSES \$100 BILLION STIMULUS. Canada's governing Liberal Party has proposed \$20 billion in stimulus spending in each of its next five fiscal years to jump-start the country's economy, which is still mired in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic and national economic shutdown.

The new plan will take effect after a vaccine is distributed and "when the virus is under control and our economy is ready for new growth," economics minister Chrystia Freeland said in a 30 November statement in the House of Commons.

“Spending roughly three to four per cent of GDP, over three years, our government will make carefully judged, targeted and meaningful investments to create jobs and boost growth,” she said.

The recovery plan is intended to make Canada’s economy more green, inclusive, innovative, and competitive, she noted, highlighting initiatives in childcare, early childhood education, job training, and renewable energy programs.

The government is also proposing a grant of up to \$1,200 for each child under six for low and middle-income families.

Although Canada has rung up a \$381-billion deficit so far this year, the additional \$100 billion is highly affordable now because interest rates are low and Canada has a record of strong economic performance, Freeland contended.

The risks of not spurring the economy outweigh those of adding more debt, she argued.

Freeland said the government will track factors such as the employment rate and total hours worked to determine when the stimulus spending can be ended.

“We are all tired,” she added. “But we also know vaccines, and a better day, are coming. To get to that day, we must first help each other get through the winter.”

Opposition Conservative Party members denounced the plan, saying it focuses on spending money and driving up debt rather than creating an economic and tax structure that would foster growth.

Canada’s national debt will reach \$1 trillion within a few weeks, noted Aaron Wudrick, director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. He called on the government to present a credible plan to control federal spending as part of next year’s budget.

TREND FORECAST: Stimulus plans will temporarily, but only artificially boost economic growth. And, the higher the debt level of the nation rises, the deeper the value of the nation’s currency will sink.

INDIA SINKS INTO RECESSION. India’s economy contracted 7.4 percent in this year’s third quarter, following a 24-percent implosion in the second quarter.

Two consecutive quarters of negative growth is the technical definition of a recession.

Although many in India saw the third quarter's lesser loss as an indication of progress, others found little hope in it.

The third quarter's number is "a body blow to India's economy" and "sets back progress, especially in poverty reduction, that has been achieved in previous years through high growth," Cornell University economist Eswar Prasad told the *Financial Times*.

"India's inability to control the virus has taken a severe toll on growth that will set the economy back for years to come," he said.

India slammed its economy shut for 21 days on 24 March when the COVID virus numbered only a few hundred cases there, then extended the lockdown into June as the virus raged, infecting an estimated 25 to 50 percent of the population.

The shutdown erased as many as 100 million jobs and dropped tens of millions of the country's 1.4 billion people into dire poverty, according to various analysts.

Although the virus was uncontrolled, India's low rate of fatalities – roughly 140,000 as of last week, about half that of the U.S., which has a quarter of India's population – persuaded the government to reopen the economy.

Since then, rail freight traffic and sales of consumer durable goods, such as electronics and appliances, have risen sharply. Manufacturing eked out a 0.6-percent gain in the third quarter.

However, the government's financial straits will limit its ability to help the private sector recover.

TREND FORECAST: *As we go to press, an estimated 300,000 Indian farmers are marching from the states of Punjab and Haryana to Delhi, setting up camps that block entry to the city... in what they say is a "decisive battle" in their fight against agriculture laws they say will destroy livelihoods.*

As we reported in early January, with the Indian economy in its seventh consecutive quarter of contraction, protests were mounting against the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi were escalating.

Also, in January we reported on the demonstrations spreading throughout India as millions of Indian citizens continued the two months-long protests against the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act, spearheaded by Mr. Modi's ruling Hindu nationalist party, which grants citizenship to religious minorities – except Muslims – from neighboring countries.

In response, these demonstrations were suddenly halted when the Prime Minister suddenly locked down the entire nation in March in his fight to win the COVID War.

As economic conditions continue to decline, demonstrations will escalate and India's military/police forces will violently clamp down on protesters.

GOING DOWN, GOING BUST, GOING OUT



U.S. MEDIA WILL LOG RECORD LAYOFFS THIS YEAR. U.S. media outlets have cut an estimated 28,637 jobs through late October, according to data compiled by outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas and cited by *The Hill*.

The number is just shy of the record 28,803 workers lopped from media companies in all of 2008.

In contrast, industry firings numbered just over 10,000 in 2019 and 15,474 in 2018, due significantly to newspaper readers browsing news online.

AMC Networks shed about 10 percent of its workforce in late November; NBCUniversal laid off 5 percent of workers in its television and streaming business and plans to cut one of every 10 workers, according to the trade paper *Variety*.

ViacomCBS turfed out 450 people in May, citing “economic conditions” brought on by the economic shutdown. However, prior to the pandemic, ViacomCBS had chopped 117 people because of consolidation within the company.

Still, media companies are hiring more workers than they did last year.

The industry has listed 1,586 open positions so far in 2020 thus far, far above 622 offered during the first 11 months of 2019.

Also, despite record job losses, the media industry is back in the pack of economic sectors shedding workers. The leisure industry has cut the most workers, at 845,945, retail 179,520, and transportation 159,674.

DISNEY WILL LAY OFF 4,000 MORE WORKERS. The entertainment giant will cut 4,000 U.S. workers by March, in addition to the 28,000 it had announced in September.

Most of the layoffs will come from the company’s theme parks and resorts, the new announcement said. The 32,000 laid-off workers represent about 14 percent of Disney’s pre-pandemic U.S. workforce of about 223,000.

Among Disney’s catalog of leisure and entertainment businesses, the pandemic and economic shutdown has struck its resorts and theme parks hardest. The division had about 100,000 employees last January.

Theaters’ closure across the globe also has forced Disney to postpone the release of the movie “Black Widow,” expected to earn major box-office returns.

Disney may scale back spending on film and television production, cut or stop contributions to pension and retirement medical benefit funds, and shrink or suspend its stock dividend, the company said in a filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission warning of the layoffs.

“Some of these measures may have an adverse impact on our businesses,” the filing noted.

Disney’s 12 theme parks around the world all were shut down from March through May. The parks in Shanghai and Florida have reopened, Disneyland Paris went dark again in October in France’s recent shutdown but is taking reservations for December 19 through January 3 in hopes of celebrating the Christmas holiday.

The original Disneyland in California, along with the rest of the state's theme parks, will remain closed until a time when COVID cases fall below one per 100,000 of population in the counties in which the parks are located, as ordered by state guidelines.

As of 28 November, California's infection rate was 35 per 100,000 and rising, according to COVID ActNow, a private, nonprofit organization.

Disney reported a second consecutive quarterly loss in October. The company had lost \$2.8 billion this year as of 1 October, compared to a \$10.4 billion profit for the same period last year.

The bright spot has been the Disney+ streaming service, which registered 73.7 million subscribers as of 3 October, up from 60 million in August.

The company will launch a general entertainment streaming service outside the U.S. in 2021 under the Star brand, Disney said in reporting its third-quarter results.

G.E. CUTS MORE JOBS IN JET ENGINE DIVISION. The company did not specify the number of additional jobs to be cut in addition to the two rounds of layoffs earlier this year that shrank the division's 52,000-person workforce by about 25 percent.

"The revenue and profit projections not only for this year but also next year and the year after are fundamentally lower than what we budgeted or expected," John Slattery, chief of G.E.'s aviation division, told workers in an internal company video seen by the *Wall Street Journal*.

"Overall, particularly in our commercial sector, we'll be a smaller business and our cost structure must align," he said.

The division's revenue fell 32 percent during 2020's first nine months; 2019's full-year sales totaled \$32 billion.

Overall, G.E.'s third-quarter loss was less than the second quarter's and the company showed positive cash flow for the period.

The news boosted G.E.'s share price 32 percent during November to \$10.07, a high not touched since early March.

NORWEGIAN AIRLINES GO BUST. Two of Norwegian Air Shuttle's subsidiaries will file for examinership in Ireland, the equivalent of Chapter 11 bankruptcy in the U.S., the airline announced on 17 November.

The carrier made the decision after Norway's government refused the company's request for a second bailout this year.

Government ministers judged another bailout to be a poor use of taxpayers' money to rescue an airline that entered the global financial crisis already laden with debt that was used to expand long-haul routes, the ministers said in a statement.

Norwegian expanded first to low-cost routes in Europe and then to servicing the U.S. and Asia.

The airline will continue to operate its current routes, which now are limited to a few domestic flights in Norway, it said in a statement announcing the filing.

Seeking examinership "will secure the future of Norwegian for our employees, customers, and investors," CEO Jacob Schramm said in the statement.

SALES OF LUXURY GOODS WILL SHRINK 22 PERCENT THIS YEAR. Despite a strong rebound in China and reviving markets in the U.S. and elsewhere, sales of luxury items will fall 22 percent this year from 2019's total, according to a forecast from Altagamma, an Italian luxury trade group, and consulting firm Bain & Co.

The €271 billion in sales predicted for 2020 would shrink the market back to its 2014 level and will not fully recover until some time in 2022 at the earliest, the study predicted.

The global shutdown revealed the sector's reliance on China's rising affluent class and forced purveyors of high-ticket goods to innovate, cut costs, and speed their adoption of e-commerce.

Two-thirds of the luxury market's operating profit will "disappear in 2020," with companies that quickly figured out how to cut costs faring better than those that did not, said Claudia D'Arpizio, a Bain partner, in a statement quoted by the *Financial Times*.

“This year will be the biggest drop ever for the industry,” she said. “Some trends, such on-line commerce and reducing reliance on tourists, are fast-forwarding” because of the pandemic and shutdown.

The sector’s recovery will be led by the growing number of affluent Chinese spenders, who will account for almost half the sector’s global sales by 2025, compared to a third in 2019, the Bain-Altagamma study expects.

As a result, brands such as LVMH and Kering are expanding their bevy of stores in China to satisfy consumers currently unable to visit New York’s Park Avenue or the Champs-Élysées in Paris.

Companies also are expanding their on-line presence in China through venues such as Alibaba’s T-Mall Luxury Pavilion.

Recently, Alibaba and Richemont, which owns a catalog of luxury brands including Cartier and Piaget, agreed to jointly invest \$1.1 billion to create Farfetch, an on-line luxury marketplace for Chinese followers of high fashion.

CALERES TO CLOSE STORES, GO DIGITAL. Caleres, the St. Louis-based shoe retailer, will close 133 stores across the U.S. and Canada by February as the company shifts to a digital sales strategy, according to a company statement.

A growing share of company sales come from the web, Caleres said in a statement announcing the changes.

The strategic shift also will restructure the company’s management approach.

Caleres will take \$20 million to \$25 million in pre-tax charges because of the change and realize \$10 million to \$12 million a year in pre-tax gains, the announcement said.

This calendar year through September, the company’s revenues were \$1.55 billion, compared to \$2.22 billion during the same period in 2019.

TWO DOWN IN U.K. Today, Britain’s biggest department store chain, Debenhams, announced it is closing down its 124 U.K. stores and letting go of some 12,000 of its employees.

And yesterday, Topshop owner Arcadia filed for bankruptcy protection, thus putting some 13,000 of its U.K. employees at risk.

TRENDS IN THE MARKETS *by Gregory Mannarino*



MARKETS & CRYPTO: GOING HIGHER

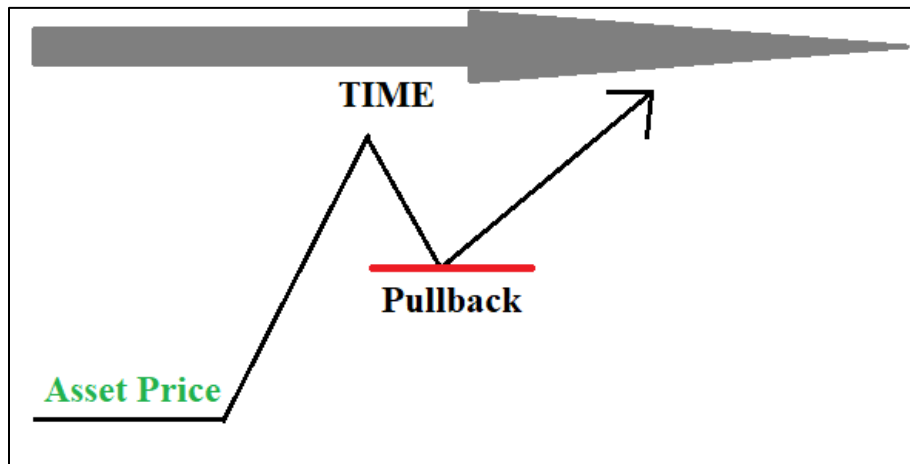
Last week, the stock market hit a new record high, a milestone. “DOW 30,000” has become a reality.

In several recent articles, I’ve explained that this market would indeed continue higher, and new record highs are still coming. Moreover, the distortions that exist within the market continue to get much larger. And, as I have warned, these distortions will, at one point in time, correct themselves.

This past Thursday, on Thanksgiving Day, cryptocurrencies suffered a major correction, one I believe needed to occur because no asset can go straight up without a corrective process. Cryptocurrencies have made a large, rapid move higher as of late... a drop in price had to occur.

In aggregate, the cryptocurrency market is thinly traded relative to the stock market, and, as such, very sharp and rapid shifts in the price action of any thinly-traded asset must be expected from time to time. When an asset makes a large move higher within a short period of time, a corrective phase will occur that creates a floor for yet another leg higher.

SEE BELOW. Typical price action of an asset that has made a significant move higher in a short period of time.



Understanding the mechanism of price action presents opportunity. (See [my daily MarketReport](#) for further info.)

Cryptocurrencies needed to “pull back” in order to make a new leg higher. Now, with the recent drop in the price of these assets, I would be on the lookout for that new leg higher.

The stock market is due for a corrective phase as well, but with the promise of more easy money from the Fed and the prospect that under a Biden administration former Fed Chairwoman Janet Yellen will get nominated for Treasury Secretary, the market nonetheless is euphoric.

I remain a major Bull regarding cryptocurrencies and the stock market. With cryptocurrencies, the number of people worldwide who want to hold/own it instead of dollars or other central bank-issued currency continues to grow. Regarding the stock market, the promise of multiple trillions in more debt and suppressed rates will continue to drive stocks higher.

by Gregory Mannarino, TradersChoice.net

TRENDS IN SURVIVALISM *by Bradley J. Steiner*

EYES, THROAT & KNEES



I was extremely fortunate to have been able to train under Charles (“Charlie”) Nelson when he was in his prime and teaching incredibly effective and valuable skills at his small but marvelous *School of Self-Defense* in Manhattan.

Charlie’s original approach was rooted in his WWII hand-to-hand combat and ju-jutsu training under Anthony Biddle and his experiences as a boxer, an official USMC “combat judo” (i.e. ju-jutsu) trainer, and a student of a variety of other approaches to personal mayhem.

May he rest in peace and, in some way, may I be successful in carrying on his “all-in” defense attitude with my [American Combato](#) system and Charlie’s devotion to practical realism.

Among the many things I learned from Charlie was the “O’Neill System.” Pat (Dermot) O’Neill was the hand-to-hand combat instructor for that amazing group of men who were often referred to as “supercommandos” – the soldiers of the *First Special Service Force*, otherwise known as the Devil’s Brigade. Charlie knew of Pat O’Neill but never knew him personally. O’Neill was, however, a legend whose name became almost as well-known and revered as Fairbairn’s or Applegate’s. His WWII System was no longer taught after the war; Charlie had acquired it from a personal wartime student of O’Neill’s.

Among the virtues of O’Neill’s System, as is the case of every wartime and post-war system of full merit, is **simplicity** and **brutality**. Like it or not, this is a requirement for dealing with dangerous foes who attack you in the real world. Fancy stuff doesn’t work, and neither do minimal force methods.

Around 1970, years after my training with Charlie and when the Bruce Lee fad was in vogue, I was struck by something. What amazed me was that Bruce Lee assiduously practiced and advocated actions that Pat O'Neill had emphasized in his System!

I do not, in any sense, intend to imply that Lee copied O'Neill. I am only aware of the incredible *similarity* in the thinking of two well-established "martial arts" masters. I mention it here in part to provide verification that what I am presenting is not merely *my* tactical thinking – it reflects the combative judgement and tactical thinking of both Pat O'Neill and Bruce Lee.

Both O'Neill and Lee taught an almost identical action:

Thrust your lead hand's extended fingers into your adversary's eyes or throat; follow up with a whipping low side kick to his knee. (Note: It is acceptable to kick first and *then* use the eye or throat thrust with the extended fingers.) This is a great combination to develop!

In American Combato, one of our established attack combinations is – from a non-telegraphing Relaxed-Ready Stance – to drive a straight "fingertips thrust" to the opponent's eyes with your lead hand and follow up with a knee-breaking side stomping kick using your lead leg.

And no, I didn't "copy" O'Neill's method any more than Lee did. (I teach the kick in a somewhat different manner than O'Neill taught.) The combination just suggested itself to me naturally when I was formulating American Combato's curriculum.

There you have it. Three teachers (O'Neill, Lee, and yours truly) thinking along very similar lines about how to deal with an opponent. Please note that I include myself with no presumptuous comparison in stature with the other two men; I am simply pointing out that what I teach is effective and valid not only in *my opinion*.

The eyes, the throat, and the knees are foremost targets for self-defense when you must deal with unprovoked criminal violence.

"What about the testicles?" you might ask. An excellent and indispensable target to include in all-round training to be sure, but nowhere near as accessible as the eyes, throat, and knees. So, make the most of this fact!

The Eyes

The blink reflex protects the eyes from dust, but it won't protect them from being gouged with the thumbs or stabbed hard with the fingertips. And that's exactly how you want to attack those vital points in a crisis if you're unarmed.

If, perchance, you have an umbrella or stick or pen/pencil, key, or rolled up magazine handy, jab powerfully into the attacker's eyes. Coins or gravel thrown into the eyes always distracts.

The Throat

The throat is highly susceptible to impact. The windpipe can be crushed by a blow with the little finger edge of your hand, and any jab made with the fingers or knuckles into the throat will at least *distract* the strongest man. Violently *seizing* the windpipe (high, up under and near the jaw, where there is no protection to the thyroid cartilage) with a pincher-like grip of the fingers and then *locking* on to the windpipe and *yanking out*, will kill a man.

Obviously, this is to be used only to save your life... that's all I'm talking about. (Ladies: forcible rape justifies using deadly force in defense, so never hesitate to go 100% all-out and use every ounce of your will and strength against a would-be rapist's most vulnerable target areas.)

Attacking the throat with an object is feasible and effective. Again, as is the case with the eyes, a stick's end, violently jabbed into the throat, is a good technique. A pointed umbrella-tip might penetrate the throat, as might a sharpened pencil, a pen, or even a fork.

The Knees

Finally, we have the knees. Two targets. At least *one* of them *must* be advanced as an attacker moves on you. A powerful stomping kick will break the knee. Although the strongest joint in the body, the knee can easily be broken with 80 pounds of force directed *counter* to the joint.

The sides of the knees are also excellent targets, and when stomped will break apart the knee joint. If you kick low and hit the shinbone, that, too, will prove a good target. *Just kick hard and fast, and do so as your assailant moves in on you.*

The knee/shin target area is excellent for attacking with a walking stick or other stout stick. Once struck, the individual will drop his hands toward the point of pain... and then smashing him across the head with your stick is a logical follow up.

Clearly, it is impossible in one or even 20 articles to convey anything resembling a comprehensive course in self-defense. If you're really serious, you may consider ordering my complete DVD course. If you're after serious expertise, then you'll need to train, and it will take at least five to eight months.

My purpose in these Survivalism articles is to provide valuable and **authentic** instruction in very basic and reliable yet simple form you can use immediately. Enough to give you a good chance of surviving and escaping a dangerous predator's attack. That's quite a bit when you think about it. A lot more than the average person has.

Best of luck to you!

by Bradley J. Steiner

2020 COVID-19 TREND REPORT

U.S. SUPREME COURT: RELIGIONS RISE ABOVE BUSINESSES



In America, where there is a separation of church and state as required by the First Amendment of the Constitution, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled last week that government must no longer maintain an attitude of neutrality toward religion.

Indeed, while governors, mayors, and their legions of bureaucrats have declared draconian lockdown rules to fight the COVID War, which have destroyed millions of businesses and tens of millions of lives and livelihoods, the judges Supreme declared that religions are of a higher order, and they are not obliged to live by everyone else's rules.

Last Wednesday night, the Supreme Court ruled to exempt religions from capacity regulations imposed on businesses... especially inside seating capacity and social distancing rules that have destroyed much of the restaurant business.

The Court, in their report, said the majority that granted the injunction wrote in the ruling, "Even in a pandemic, the Constitution cannot be put away and forgotten. The restrictions at issue here, by effectively barring many from attending religious services, strike at the very heart of the First Amendment's guarantee of religious liberty."

The suit was brought by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn and Orthodox Jewish synagogues. Both claimed the restrictions infringed on their First Amendment rights. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo ordered on 6 October that these restrictions would be enforced in different color zones in the state during an uptick in cases at the time.

The New York Times reported that Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, who is from Brooklyn, NY, said he believed Governor Cuomo's restrictions were an "overreach that did not take into account the size of our churches or the safety protocols that have kept parishioners safe."

Christopher Ferrara, a special counsel for the Thomas More Society, reportedly said the Supreme Court decided that "governors can no longer use a public health emergency as a pretext for dictates shutting or severely restricting the use of houses of worships while secular businesses and activities they deem 'essential' – and even certain favored 'non-essential' secular businesses and activities – are not subjected to the same draconian restrictions."

TRENDPOST: *That the United States Supreme Court granted special rights to religions and not to the general public, in violation of America's Constitution, has been ignored by the mainstream media and is barely addressed by the alternative media.*

Instead, they have focused on the composition of the Court and how the votes represent a split along political party lines and belief systems.

TRENDPOST: *Beyond America, religious leaders around the world are unwilling to abide by new coronavirus restrictions, which they say infringe on their right to worship.*

Last week, the Wall Street Journal reported that from church pews in Brooklyn to cathedrals in Europe, religious leaders say places of worship have been unfairly singled out, and the science does not back up the policy.

The WSJ pointed to a study that showed those who visited a house of worship three or more times per week were 16 times more likely to come down with the virus. But there was an important caveat to the study: it was unclear if those infected were attending services or there to receive a meal, which would indicate additional outside risk factors.

Religious leaders have called many of the virus guidelines arbitrary at best, prejudicial at worst. France, for example, barred all worship inside churches in late October except for funerals, where up to 30 people would be able to attend.

YOUNG VS. OLD: FIGHTING THE COVID WAR



Last week, the *Financial Times* reported the results of a study they conducted that identified a growing resentment among young workers toward older adults as the virus outbreak has led to various economic challenges that have hit younger generations the hardest.

FT asked more than 800 individuals between the ages of 16 and 30 about their current job prospects and found that the stagnant job market and low wages have led to anger toward older adults who appear to be more financially stable and hold far more political sway.

Burdened with heavy loads of student debt, out of work or working at jobs that pay low wages, the number of 18-to 29-year-olds in the United States living at home has hit a record high.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), about half in that age bracket got their wages cut, with young women and those in lower paying jobs being hit the hardest.

Getting Worse

Yahoo Finance reported a recent study showing 63 percent of those polled (aged 16-25 in the U.K.) said their educational plans were directly impacted by the coronavirus. The report said more than 500,000 young people are unemployed in Britain, and many are looking for new ways to enter the job market. On-the-job training in the tech field seems to be an attractive option during the outbreak.

The Economic Policy Institute reported in October that the unemployment rate for young workers (16-24 years old) jumped 8.4 percent to 24.4 percent. The unemployment rate for those 25 and over only rose 2.8 percent to 11.3 percent.

“Unless the economy returns to pre-pandemic condition soon, which is unlikely given current health conditions and lack of additional federal relief and stimulus, the effects on young people of starting their careers during the current recession are likely to have long term negative implications, such as repeated unemployment spells,” the report said.

TREND FORECAST: *We forecast there will be strong anti-lockdown, go-out-and-play, speakeasy movements launched by 14-to 28-year-olds who rightfully view COVID as an “old person’s disease.”*

*Indeed, according to the scientific data, which is continually published in the **Trends Journal**, the recovery rate among 1- to-20-year-olds is 99.997 percent and, on average, the virus recovery rates is 99.7 percent. Those aged 65 and over suffering from pre-existing chronic health conditions are most vulnerable to die from the virus.*

For OnTrendpreneur advertisers and fashion, entertainment, and product developers wishing to maximize sales to Generation Z and the younger millennial demographic, a new message, sound, and style to appeal to this target audience will reap generous rewards.

GOV'T STUPIDITY PROMPTS AUSSIE LOCKDOWN



In pure comic book fashion, several days ago, over fears that a man contracted COVID while buying a pizza, South Australian Premier Steven Marshall ordered widespread closures and stay-home orders for 1.7 million citizens.

The misery inflicted on businesses and the population by the lockdown demand turned out to be all for naught because the man intentionally misled authorities.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported last week that the infected person worked at the pizza shop and likely contracted the virus from another employee. The report said health officials indicated they were misled by the man and sent into a frenzy to protect the public. They also tried to determine how many people could have been in contact with him.

The theory was if a person contracted the virus by simply buying a pizza at the shop in Adelaide, the virus could have become more contagious, even though there were only 22 confirmed cases from local transmission in the entire region. The swift action by health officials was criticized by business owners who were forced into lockdown.

There were new concerns on Sunday in the region after a man in his 30s, who tested positive for the virus, reportedly broke quarantine orders and visited a few locations, including the Intensive English Language Institute at Flinders University earlier this month.

“We want you to get tested immediately even if you have no symptoms,” Professor Nicola Spurrier, South Australia’s Chief Health Officer, said, according to *The Guardian*.

TRENDPOST: *That an entire area of a nation was locked down because, as noted by the WSJ, "... a customer contracting Covid-19 simply by purchasing a pizza was an indication the virus could be spreading widely," and people "being infected through contact with surfaces such as cardboard pizza boxes" illustrates the levels of how authoritarian powers rule over common sense and scientific data.*

In addition, that there were just 22 cases (and, as we have been reporting, scientifically, PCR tests are inaccurate) and 1.7 million people's lives are disrupted by the declaration of a politician and bureaucrats... clearly exemplifies the loss of personal freedom and disrespect for common sense.

PA GOVERNOR BLAMES VIRUS, NOT HIMSELF, FOR MORE LOCKDOWN RULES



Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced new COVID restrictions last week that banned the sale of alcohol on the evening before Thanksgiving and defended his administration's actions by blaming the virus and not his dictatorial ruling.

"The virus is what's doing this," he said, according to *The New York Times*. "It's not me, and it's not the administration, it's not the government."

November was considered the Keystone State's worst month for COVID infections with 143,640 new cases as of late last week. Lehigh Valley Live reported the number is higher than the previous five months together.

However, as the media keeps pumping up case rates, always ignoring the fact that tens of millions more are getting tested and the PCR tests are inaccurate, the number of deaths in the state has not kept up with the infections and are lower

than the springtime high. (See our 29 September article, “[COVID GOLD TEST PROVES TO BE ‘WORTHLESS.’](#)”)

COVID Cops

The *Times*’ pointed out that some governors have met resistance from local police forces over which guidelines are enforceable. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo was told by a sheriff in an area of the state, Madison County, that his deputies would not waste resources to seek out gatherings of more than ten people.

“We are not going to exhaust our limited resources obtaining search warrants and counting the Turkey eaters in your house,” Sheriff Todd Hood told the paper. He said he hoped people would use common sense during the holiday.

New York City announced last week it would enforce Cuomo’s 14-day travel quarantines and will have vehicle checkpoints to conduct spot checks for when buses drop off passengers. The COVID Cops will force some passengers to get tested and be provided with an “education on quarantine.”

“Do not travel. Stay local. Keep it small. If you love people, if you love your extended family, help them stay alive so we can all celebrate together in person next year. It won’t be a traditional Thanksgiving but we just have to get through this once,” New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said in a *CNN* interview prior to the holiday.

TREND FORECAST: *We continue to note how instantly and arbitrarily new rules are imposed on citizens by politicians despite the lack of scientific data to support their dictates... and by their complete disregard of democratic rights, economic damage, and personal hardships, “We the People” will suffer.*

Indeed, a precedent has now been set. Be it a virus, disease, terror threat, response to a mass murder – any excuse to declare an Executive Order – both the Constitution and Bill of Rights have been, and will continue to be, violated.

In response to the continuing abrogation of Freedom, new political parties will be formed across the nation. The mainstream media, which has displayed its partisanship with Presstitutes who belong to one of the two major political parties and banning those of dissenting voices, will label these new movements as right wing and populist.

In fact, they will be neither, since the growing opposition from businesses that are being destroyed and young people who want to live life span narrow belief systems far beyond a narrow ideology.

TRENDPOST: *States from Kentucky, Vermont, and Utah called on residents to limit the size of gatherings inside their home in order to help stop the spread of COVID.*

We note these to illustrate the draconian and unconstitutional nature these impositions will, and are, inflicting on the general population. Again, politicians and their bureaucrats have all returned to the familiar pitch that comes along with the mandates: You must destroy your economic future and mental health in order to protect the population's most vulnerable.

That is the only way. Anything short, even entertaining the thought of not wearing a mask outside, is sinful despite the data showing the scientifically proven ineffectiveness of mask wearing... and it making no sense to mask up when you are in your car alone with the windows rolled up or walking down an empty street.

We understand there is a risk of virus transmission while indoors. But if you give a politician an inch, they'll take your freedom. Now they are getting bolder, sending COVID Cops into your home to make sure you're in compliance with their virus protocols, with states such as Pennsylvania telling people wear masks in their homes.

*This cannot stand, and, hopefully, the U.S. Supreme Court will continue to rule on the side of the Constitution when it comes to power-mad governors. Gerald Celente, the publisher of the **Trends Journal**, said "Justice" now means the laws only apply to "just us" – the citizenry.*

FINNISH LEADER: BEWARE OF "POPULISTS"



Finland's Prime Minister Sanna Marin said in an interview last week she has concern the coronavirus outbreak and subsequent lockdowns that cause financial hardships could lead to an increase in interest of populist parties across Europe.

Marin, who has championed her country's social policies, which have been admired by U.S. politicians such as Senator Bernie Sanders, told the *Financial Times* that lockdowns could create a "breeding ground for populist movements across Europe."

"When you're closing an economy and people's workplaces, it will cause political instability. Populists come with easy answers to difficult problems, but their solutions are rarely the right ones," she said.

Ms. Marin told the paper she has concerns the public will tire of lockdowns and begin to hold the party that is in power accountable. She said, "I think the situation might even get worse and people might get even more tired. The situation has gotten worse in the autumn. People often want to find someone to blame and often the easiest ones to blame other governments and politicians."

TRENDPOST: Again, we estimate a large segment of the public – 35 percent – will hold elected officials responsible for ordering economy-killing lockdown orders that are not grounded in hard science or facts.

To quell protests and "populism," politicians in many nations will throw small change to quiet rebellious subjects, such as measures recommended by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who recently said, "To get the virus under control, we need to pay people to stay home."

With claims for unemployment rising for the first time in five weeks, at a time when they should be declining during the holiday season, which once had sharp increases in retail, restaurants, tourism, hospitality, entertainment, etc., American incomes are decreasing as lockdown orders increase.

Indeed, what is holding up the U.S. economy, as well as many others', is the cheap money being pumped into the system by governments and central banks.

Julia Pollak, a labor economist at ZipRecruiter, told The New York Times that part of the reason that "the recovery has done so well is that there was so much assistance for affected businesses and workers."

TRENDPOST: *There is no organized dissent against politicians, who suck off the public tit and never worked a real job in their lives – who have forced their constituents (a.k.a. slaves) to stay home, don't go to work, close down their businesses... to take pay cuts.*

TRENDPOST: *Appearing on the CBS' "Face the Nation," Dee Margo, the mayor of El Paso, Texas, was their big "selling fear" Sunday guest.*

It should be noted that the city of nearly a million people has registered 1,000 virus deaths since March, or one tenth of one percent of the population. On a monthly basis, it equals 134 deaths per month for the eight months since COVID "hit" El Paso, or a death rate of 0.014 per month for the entire population.

Yet, despite these facts, the hysteria of "cases," not deaths, are promoted by the Presstitutes.

Face Mask Fraud

Margo said the city's contract tracing "found that 55 percent of the positives were coming from shopping at large retailers, what we'd term as the big box stores, which are considered essential under CISA guidelines under homeland security."

We note this because El Paso and the "big box stores" all require customers and staff to wear face masks.

The fact that masks were being worn, and, as the scientific evidence we have continually reported dissuades the use of masks to stop the virus, their obvious failure, as evidenced by the contact tracing showing masked masses contracted the disease in must-wear-mask-zones, has been completely ignored by the Mayor and the Presstitutes.

(See our 3 November articles ["FACING THE TRUTH, PART I: THE GREAT MASK-QUERADE"](#) and ["FACING THE TRUTH, PART II: MORE EVIDENCE MASKS ARE INEFFECTIVE."](#))

COVID TAKES TOLL ON POOR & MINORITY COMMUNITIES



A study published last week said poor and minority communities suffered the most from the coronavirus outbreak. While this is just making the news, we have reported the hard data of health, living, and working conditions that puts them at risk.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that from March through May in New York City, the fatality rate was 9.2 percent overall and 32.1 percent of those hospitalized. The report said deaths peaked in NYC during the week of 5 April. Most fatalities were patients over 75, and the incidence of the disease was highest among African-Americans and Latinos, the paper said.

Peter J. Fos, an epidemiologist in Louisiana, told the *Washington Post* that the flu is usually indiscriminate and sweeps through offices and rich and poor communities alike. But he told the paper that in the spring, he noticed the virus was ravaging the state's Black communities, and he said his colleagues in Mississippi noticed the same trend. (See our 9 June article, "[AFRICAN AMERICANS HIT HARD BY COVID](#).")

"We don't tend to think of infectious diseases as being a health disparity," he said, "but here it was in front of me."

TRENDPOST: Over and over, the data confirms who is dying from the virus and why, but it is ignored by the Presstitutes who keep selling "cases" and pandemic fear and hysteria. The Journal reported that of the Black and Latino patients who died from the disease, the majority suffered two or more underlying health issues. Indeed, we have long reported the CDC's findings that 94 percent of virus victims had 2.6 pre-existing chronic health conditions.

Yet, rather than design protocols to protect those most susceptible to the virus, they impose broad draconian lockdown rules on entire societies.

Dr. Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease specialist with Johns Hopkins University, told WPXI.com that the most vulnerable are those over the age of 60 and “have underlying conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, asthma, people who are immune-suppressed by cancer (and) chemotherapy.”

AD COUNCIL APPROVES VACCINE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN



COVID vaccines have not been rolled out yet, but the Ad Council has plans in play for the general public to buy their “It’s great to get vaccinated” sales pitch.

Lisa Sherman, the Ad Council’s chief executive, told *The New York Times*, “We’re working in advance so that once those vaccines are proven to be safe and approved by all the right people, we’re ready to go.”

PUBLISHER’S NOTE: *Who are “all the right people”? Big Pharma experts? Government bureaucrats? Surely, no one providing scientific data who questions the efficacy and/or dangers of the vaccine.*

The Hill reported that about half of American adults would receive the vaccine if it were available today, which is down from 70 percent in May. The website said only 40 percent of health care workers said they were likely to be vaccinated. The WHO has reportedly listed vaccine hesitancy as one of the top ten risks to global health.

The *Times*' report said the private sector is prepared to spend \$50 million on the ad campaign, which will be marketed in the form of public service announcements. One of the major hurdles the government will face is the lack of knowledge about vaccines in general.

The CDC found that only 47 percent of those over six months old in the U.S. received a flu shot during the 2014-2015 season, Healthline.com reported.

“Public education around the need for vaccination, as well as the rigorous process by which the vaccines have been developed, is critical,” Steve Danehy, a Pfizer spokesman told the *Times*.

TREND FORECAST: *It's no wonder the public is apprehensive about taking a vaccine that was created during a project named "Operation Warp Speed." If this was a race to land on the moon, the title might be appropriate, but this is a series of injections with painful side effects to stop a virus with a 99.7 percent recovery rate, which for most is entirely survivable.*

And, despite the 24/7 media fear of selling "exploding new cases," the COVID death rate has fallen across the U.S. by more than 80 percent, according to the Washington Post.

Both President Trump and Joe Biden, who the media has determined won the race to the White House, support mass vaccinations.

Therefore, as we have long forecast, there will be strong anti-vax movements in America and many Western nations.

SMALL GATHERINGS MAY NOT BE HIGH RISK FOR COVID TRANSMISSION



Once again changing their stance, now the media's top scientists are casting doubt on the widely held belief that small gatherings are a driving force on COVID transmission, which puts a new spotlight on elected officials and their recent restrictions on gatherings for Thanksgiving.

Facts Don't Matter

Commenting on the unscientific nature of the limits on the size of gatherings politicians invent, Julia Marcus, an infectious disease epidemiologist at Harvard University, told *The New York Times*, "Somebody says something and somebody else says it, and then it just becomes the truth... I worry about this narrative that doesn't seem to be data-based."

Ellie Murray, an epidemiologist at Boston University's School of Public Health, told *NPR* that small gatherings can be dangerous but should not be considered a main culprit in the disease's spread.

The *Times* reported it is inherently hard to quantify the numbers of those who are infected in small gatherings inside homes, but data suggests long-term care facilities, prisons, and restaurants are the most dangerous hot spots.

As we have long reported, and now the *Times* has noted, guidelines in states that allow indoor church services of up to 50 people and then ban households from allowing members of another household inside seems to some to be arbitrary.

The paper pointed out that Minnesota Governor Tim Walz banned people from different households from meeting both indoors and outdoors, even though the outdoor transmission rate is considered extremely low.

"If you're an average person looking at what's allowed and what's not allowed, it may not make a lot of sense," Ashleigh Tuite, an infectious disease modeler at the University of Toronto, told the paper. "I can get together with nine of my best friends and sit around a table at a restaurant. So why can't I do that in my house?"

TRENDPOST: *Despite the facts that the draconian rules and regulations being imposed lack scientific data to support the mandates, the vast majority of the population live in constant virus fear. The mainstream media keeps selling it, and government authorities, businesses, and industries keep making up "must obey even if they're useless" COVID dictates.*

CUOMO TO RECEIVE EMMY FOR HIS COVID TV SHOW



Despite totaling up more COVID deaths than any state in the union, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo will be honored with an Emmy award for his daily coronavirus briefings held earlier this year at the height of the outbreak.

Bruce Paisner, the CEO of the International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, said Cuomo's 111 briefings were a hit because he somehow managed to create "television shows, with characters, plot lines, and stories of success and failure. People around the world tuned in to find out what was going on, and New York tough became a symbol of the determination to fight back."

Cuomo won the Founders Award, which *NPR* said goes to the individual or group that "crosses cultural boundaries to touch our common humanity."

TRENDPOST: Since March, New York State, with a population of 19.5 million and 34,577 COVID deaths, is #1 in the nation with the most people killed from the virus. Texas, with 10 million more people and 12,000 less deaths, ranks #2 in virus deaths.

Thus, Cuomo's award depicts the shallowness and folly of American TV, which awards a person who puts on a good act by creating "television shows, with characters, plot lines, and stories of success and failure."

Cheap Script in a Make-Believe World

Ignored by Hollywood are Cuomo's murderous plot lines of taking sick, elderly people suffering from the virus out of hospitals and shipping them into nursing homes.

The New York State Department of Health reports that 6,326 COVID patients were admitted to nursing facilities shortly after Cuomo mandated that the homes readmit these patients.

*Ignored by the Emmy drama queens is Cuomo's refusal to provide data of how many elderly people from nursing homes actually died from the virus. His health officials counted those who were in nursing homes while sick with the virus and then sent to hospitals where they died as virus victims **not** from nursing homes. (See our 18 August article, "[N.Y. NURSING HOME COVID DEATHS: CUOMO CAN'T COUNT.](#)")*

In fact, considering the shallowness of the mainstream media and that their junk news channels have an unmatched track record of selling wars, hate, violence, lies and deception... Andrew Cuomo is the perfect TV star who emulates what they stand for.

SUICIDES IN JAPAN & S. KOREA SURGE AMID PANDEMIC



Although there are no published studies about the coronavirus outbreak and its effect on global suicide rates, Japan and South Korea have announced a troubling increase over the past few months, according to reports.

The *Washington Post* noted that in October, Japan reported the highest number of monthly suicides in five years, bringing the total to 2,153. The report said there was a 41 percent jump in suicides among women. The highest increase occurred in those under 29.

South Korea saw a decline in overall suicides but also experienced a 43 percent increase in suicides of women under 29.

Katsunobu Kato, the chief government spokesman in Japan, reportedly said the coronavirus is to blame for increasing anxiety among many. He pointed to school closures, joblessness, and overall isolation due to the virus.

“We need to seriously confront reality,” he said.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have forecast since the launching of the COVID War in February, there would be devastating social and economic fallout from the locking down of nations, states, and cities. And, as Gerald Celente has often said, “When people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it.”*

Sadly, they lose in many ways: The loss of self-confidence. The loss of education. The loss of jobs. The loss of businesses. The loss of joy and satisfaction. The loss of dreams, aspirations, and achievement.

Absent a massive movement to raise the human spirit to much higher levels, socioeconomic conditions will continue to deteriorate and suicides, drug overdoses, crime, and violence will escalate.

We at The Trends Research Institute are doing our best to help inspire and motivate a movement to counter the globalists’ “Great Reset” launched by the World Economic Forum with a “Greater Good/Rise to Your Highest Levels” movement for We The People.

U.K. POLICE ARREST ANTI-LOCKDOWN PROTESTERS



Authorities in central London clashed with anti-lockdown protesters on Saturday and made 155 arrests after Metropolitan police declared the demonstration unlawful, according to reports.

The *Guardian* newspaper described a chaotic scene that at one point involved a man dressed as Santa Claus who stopped traffic while chanting “Freedom!”

The protests broke out after new lockdown orders affected 20 million across England, according to *Reuters*. London was placed on the second-strictest order, which means no household mixing and bars can only sell alcohol with a substantial meal. The report said areas like Manchester and parts of Kent have the most restrictive orders.

“This will cause real hardship for people whose jobs will be affected and risk the loss of many businesses,” Andy Burnham, the mayor of Greater Manchester, told *Reuters*.

Police in London were criticized for their early intervention in the protest and faced shouts like, “Choose your Side,” the *Guardian* reported.

Silkie Carlo, the head of Big Brother Watch, told the paper the police approach to protests seems to be unusually aggressive.

“The incompetence and casual authoritarianism demonstrated by the Met Police here is breathtaking,” she said. “The right to protest is the bedrock of any democracy. It’s clear to me that there’s a deliberate attempt to chill that right and misrepresent the law.”

The paper reported the city’s police responded in a statement that these anti-lockdown protests are “not currently a permitted exemption to the prohibition on gatherings under the current coronavirus regulations.”

TREND FORECAST: *The clash between people and the state will continue to escalate across the globe as economies fall deeper into the “Greatest Depression” during the coming winter slowdown months. More draconian laws will be imposed by governments to stifle dissent, and more people will take to the streets in the fight for Freedom, Peace, and Justice. This will be a 2021 mega-trend.*

BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT BOLSONARO: NO VAX FOR ME



Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil's president, said in a live stream last Thursday that when the coronavirus vaccine is approved by his country's health department, he will make sure the vaccine is available for free for the public, but he said he has no interest in being inoculated.

"I'm telling you, I'm not going to take it. It's my right," he said, according to the *New York Post*.

The paper pointed out that Bolsonaro, who came down with the virus in July, is a supporter of President Trump and was criticized for saying earlier this month, "We're all going to die someday. There's no use fleeing reality. We have to stop being a country of f--gs... We have to face up to it and fight."

Like Trump, he is seen as a politician who clashes with health officials in his country. The *Associated Press* spoke to Miguel Lago, the executive director of Brazil's Institute for Health Policy Studies, who said Bolsonaro's statements are a "horrible sign."

"If he were a less popular president, this might have little effect. But he is a hero to a lot of people. His hardcore supporters might not get a shot and that will generate more political dispute on the right not to get vaccinated. That will make it harder for Brazil to get above the maximum level of 70 to 75% of the populations vaccinated, which is key for life to go back to some kind of normal," Lago said.

The country of 209.5 million people absorbed 171,000 coronavirus deaths since the beginning of the year.

TREND FORECAST: As goes Bolsonaro, so, too, will a majority of Brazilians who will oppose getting vaccinated.

And his comment “We’re all going to die someday. There’s no use fleeing reality,” reflects the opposite of what prevails throughout most of society: The Denial of Death. A massive population who believes there is a pill for every ill and a vaccination to kill any disease.

LA ANNOUNCES “SAFER AT HOME” ORDER FOR THREE WEEKS



Los Angeles County announced last week it would implement a three-week-long “safer at home” order in its effort to stem the spread of the coronavirus in the county of 10.04 million.

Dr. Barbara Ferrer, the county’s health director, announced last Friday that there were an additional 19 deaths, 3,143 new cases, and 1,951 hospitalizations.

“If we really care about each other and we care about those essential workers taking risks everyday... we need to not gather with anyone outside our immediate household at least for the immediate future,” Dr. Ferrer said. She said those who disregard social-distancing guidelines need to understand that “dead people don’t get a second chance.”

The *Associated Press* reported the order calls on residents in the county to stay home as much as possible. If they have to venture outside, they must wear facial coverings.

The order is specific to how many people can be inside businesses deemed “essential” and “non-essential” by the government. For example, retail stores can operate at 20 percent capacity while essential stores – like grocery stores – are

allowed to operate at 35 percent capacity. Church services and protests, which are deemed “constitutionally protected rights,” are exempt.

TRENDPOST: *We have detailed in numerous issues of the **Trends Journal** the idiocy of rules and regulations with different limits being imposed by different nations, states, and cities on how many people can meet, what the proper social distance is, the number of people that can congregate, restaurant capacity limitations, etc.*

Several days before Thanksgiving, Richard Grenell, the former acting director of national intelligence under President Trump, took to Twitter to mock what he apparently viewed as arbitrary restrictions in California at the time.

He tweeted, “6 people are allowed for Thanksgiving, but 30 are allowed for a funeral. So I will be holding a funeral for my pet turkey that will pass away on November 26th. Refreshments provided.”

The most important decisions about our well-being are being made by lifetime bureaucrats, and we are supposed to just bow to their commands.

Global Make-Ups

With the earth-shattering news that there were 76 reported virus cases in a city of 7.5 million people, of which the grand total of 109 died of the virus in 9 months, Hong Kong issued new no-sense COVID rules yesterday.

According to the South China Morning Post, “Entertainment and leisure venues such as game centres, theme parks, karaoke lounges, mahjong parlours and swimming pools will be shut down.”

They quoted Hong Kong’s Chief Executive Carrie Lam, who said, “Law enforcement must achieve a preventative effect, and thus we must raise the penalty... The fixed penalty now is HK\$2,000 (US\$258); we need to raise this, hopefully multiple times over.”

Among them, restaurants will only allow only two diners per table, and they have to close indoor dining by 10 PM.

Only two people will be permitted to congregate outside, thus further clamping down on the protests that had rocked the city last year... and could not be stopped until Beijing imposed strict lockdown/no protesting security laws.

TRENDPOST: Joshua Wong, one of three other activists who pleaded guilty for ties to a protest last year that eventually led to the siege of a Hong Kong police building, has been held in solitary confinement in a room that has lights on for 24 hours, a report said last week.

The South China Morning Post reported that Wong, 24, was in custody at the Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre, which is located in the city. A post on his Facebook page said he was being held in a single cell in the center's medical ward after an X-ray found "a shadow" in his stomach.

"We do not know the situation well as the Correctional Service Department refused to show the images to Wong," the post read, according to the report. "The authority said the examination process could take three to five days. Until then, one needs to stay in the single cell."

The Wall Street Journal reported that Wong and the two others will be sentenced on 2 December. Wong told Die Welt, the German paper, that he is having difficulty sleeping due to the bright lights in his cell, and he does not believe he will experience a fair trial. The paper reported he faces up to three years in jail.

The protests last year were over the Hong Kong security law that came into effect in June, which included new provisions that – among other things – can allow for some in the city to be tried in mainland China for breaking the law.

"I have long since lost confidence in this legal system," he told the paper in a written response. He said he wants to tell the world that "the movement in Hong Kong will not come to a halt just because Agnes Chow, Ivan Lam, and I are in prison."

Chow and Lam are the two others who have been jailed. The Journal reported that Wong was accused by prosecutors of "playing leader role" in the protests at the time.

CHINESE MEDIA CAST DOUBT ON COVID ORIGINS



One of the main Chinese Communist party newspapers floated the theory last week that COVID did not start inside a wet market in Wuhan, where the disease was first identified.

The *Financial Times* reported that the *People's Daily* newspaper presented “fringe theories” that “all available evidence” indicates the virus was brought into the city, which is in the Hubei Province.

The *CCP* newspaper cited one of the top epidemiologists at China's Center for Disease Control, who said, “Clues all point to imported cold chain seafood being the outbreaks origin.” Wu Zunyou, the epidemiologist, told the *Beijing News* earlier this month that the initial outbreak seemed to be isolated to the market's frozen seafood section.

The WHO said it would investigate the origins of the outbreak and hopes to begin its research inside the wet market in Wuhan. *Nature* reported it is widely believed the virus started in bats, and it is unclear when the virus made its jump to humans.

Yanzhong Huang, a senior fellow for public health at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, told the *FT* it is still unclear how the virus spread from animal to human. He said, “Everything is still very fuzzy... very unclear.”

Angela Rasmussen, a virologist at Columbia University, told *Nature* that trying to find an animal with this particular strain of coronavirus is like attempting to find a “needle in the world's largest haystack.”

She continued, “It will be key for the investigators to establish a collaborative relationship with scientists and government officials in China.” The *Nature* report said it could take years before such information is available.

The report said a WHO team attempted to sample some of the frozen animals at the market but was unable to find any evidence of the virus except in samples from drains and sewers.

TREND FORECAST: *Regardless if facts and verifiable data of where or who launched the virus become available, among the general population of most nations, the blame for the virus will be placed on China. And, anti-Chinese sentiments will continue to grow as Western economies decline and China's continues to grow.*

As Gerald Celente has forecast: The business of China is business, the business of America is war. The 20th century was the American century, the 21st century will be the Chinese.

CALL TO SHUTTER SKI RESORTS IN EUROPE MEETS RESISTANCE



Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, tried to persuade other members of the European Union to close their ski resorts due to concerns about the coronavirus.

The *Financial Times* reported last Thursday that Merkel has faced resistance from countries such as Austria. Sebastian Kurz, the Austrian chancellor, indicated he has little intention to close these venues at the height of the Christmas holiday. Kurz, who, like Merkel, has faced protests in his country over virus lockdowns, told the paper he does not believe this is a matter “in which the EU should interfere.”

The European Commission also seemed to be at odds over Merkel's announcement and agreed with Kurz that this is "not a European competence." French Prime Minister Jean Castex said ski resorts could remain open in France but skiers would not be permitted to use ski lifts.

Anti-lockdown protests emerged last Saturday on Germany's border with Poland, which included about 2,000 demonstrators including Germans and Poles, according to *DW.com*. The protest broke out at German town Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, which is near the Polish town of Slubice, the report said.

TREND FORECAST: *Protests will continue to escalate in lockdown nations across the globe as economic conditions deteriorate. The confrontations will be between those marching for Freedom and Peace vs. the COVID Cop Command put in charge by politicians to stifle dissent.*

AUSTRALIA'S QANTAS TO DEMAND COVID VACCINE SHOT TO FLY



Qantas, Australia's national airline, said it will demand that all international travelers provide proof they have received a coronavirus vaccine before flying, according to reports.

Alan Joyce, the CEO, told *Nine News* last week that the move will go into effect after the vaccine is widely available.

"Whether you need that domestically, we will have to see what happens with COVID-19 in the market," he said, according to *CNN*. "But certainly for international visitors coming out and people leaving the country, we think that's a necessity."

The *Wall Street Journal* reported United Airlines started to position some of Pfizer's vaccine across the U.S., which is seen as the beginning of the massive undertaking to distribute the vaccine once it gets approval. Once the FDA approves the vaccine, there will be dozens of cargo flights around the world.

Airlines are beginning to roll out digital health passes for passengers that essentially assures carriers the passengers have been tested and are coronavirus free. The *Financial Times* reported that the CommonPass, which is backed by the World Economic Forum, will begin in December. Passengers will use an app for mobile phones. Paul Meyer, the head of the project, told the paper that the pass could eventually be used on cruise lines and hotel chains.

Tal Zaks, Moderna's chief medical officer, told *Axios* there is a risk the public will over-interpret vaccine trial results and assume their lives will immediately go back to normal once the vaccines are released. He said the trial results show the vaccine could prove effective in preventing severe sickness, but it is not yet proven the vaccine prevents infection.

"When we start the development of this vaccine we will not have sufficient concrete data to prove that this vaccine reduces transmission," he said.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *I question the wisdom of forcing the population to take an unproven vaccine when the disease is believed to be highly survivable. Many healthy people will be taking the vaccine, which has many unknowns about long-term side effects.*

Moreover, I question why anyone who has been vaccinated would want to force others to be vaccinated, since they are being told the vaccine will prevent them from getting the virus?

And the same with mask wearing. If a person believes that wearing a mask will protect them from contracting the virus, why would they care if someone does not wear one, since it would pose no threat to the mask wearer of getting the virus.

NEW ANALYSIS: CRITICAL ERRORS IN COVID DEATH TOLL



An analysis intending to get a more accurate reading of COVID's fatality rate by a Johns Hopkins University statistics expert was published, then removed by the university's student newspaper.

After reviewing death statistics from various diseases as compiled by the CDC, Dr. Genevieve Briand, assistant program director of the Applied Economics master's degree program at Johns Hopkins, stated her finding:

"All of this points to no evidence that COVID-19 created any excess deaths. Total death numbers are not above normal death numbers. We found no evidence to the contrary."

The Johns Hopkins News-Letter wrote the following:

"After retrieving data on the CDC website, Dr. Briand compiled a graph representing percentages of total deaths per age category... which includes the period from before COVID-19 was detected in the U.S. to after infection rates soared. Surprisingly, the deaths of older people stayed the same before and after COVID-19. Since COVID-19 mainly affects the elderly, experts expected an increase in the percentage of deaths in older age groups. However, this increase is not seen from the CDC data. In fact, the percentages of deaths among all age groups remain relatively the same."

And yet, while the editors did not challenge the accuracy of the analysis, they decided to remove it, with this explanation:

"After The News-Letter published this article on 22 November, it was brought to our attention that our coverage of Genevieve Briand's presentation, "COVID-19 Deaths: A Look at U.S. Data," has been used to support dangerous inaccuracies that minimize the impact of the

pandemic...however, it is our responsibility as journalists to provide a historical record. We have chosen to take down the article from our website, but it is available here as a PDF.”

Key Stat: No “Excess Deaths”

Dr. Briand’s study was reviewed on 26 November by the American Institute for Economic Research (AIER), the group behind The Great Barrington Declaration (reported on in a number of **Trends Research** issues, including this one.)

According to the AIER article, the data known as “excess deaths” is crucial to understanding the overblown COVID-19 death count. It quotes the CDC:

“Estimates of excess deaths can provide information about the burden of mortality potentially related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including deaths that are directly or indirectly attributed to COVID-19. Excess deaths are typically defined as the difference between the observed numbers of deaths in specific time periods and expected numbers of deaths in the same time periods.”

As the AIEE article states, “Essentially, there is an average number of deaths every year due to a variety of causes that for the most part have remained constant through the years. This includes morbidities such as heart disease, which has long been the leading cause of death, and cancer, which has long plagued our existence. For Covid-19 to be a serious cause of alarm, it would need to significantly increase the number of average deaths.”

Here is the graph taken from the CDC website, used in Dr. Briand’s study. Note the decrease in comorbidities as COVID-19 spread last April. Except for the last one:

Change in Deaths over previous week	Week ending 4/11/2020	Week ending 4/18/2020	Week ending 4/25/2020
Heart Diseases	+ 824	- 1,190	- 727
Cancers	- 52	- 356	+ 160
Chronic Respiratory	- 96	- 249	- 211
Cerebrovascular	+ 35	+ 11	- 145
Alzheimer	+ 86	- 56	- 96
Diabetes	+ 52	- 90	-179
Flu & Pneumonia	- 236	- 381	- 97
Nephritis	+ 88	- 31	- 106
Other Respiratory	- 4	- 95	- 31
Septicemia	- 98	- 92	- 13
Not Classified	- 44	+ 13	+ 48
TOTAL DECREASE	- 530	- 2,540	- 1,605
COVID – Heart Diseases	+ 486	+ 2,561	+ 1,651

In the interview with the Johns Hopkins News-Letter, which was later removed, Dr. Briand made clear why COVID-19 death rates were overstated:

“If the COVID-19 death toll was not misleading at all, what we should have observed is an increased number of heart attacks and increased COVID-19 numbers. But a decreased number of heart attacks and all the other death causes doesn’t give us a choice but to point to some misclassification.”

The article describing the study on the AIEE website states,

“This new study notes some critical accounting errors done at the national level. The study – which is still being vetted – simply examines the raw data that should have been questioned months ago. The overall conclusion is that COVID-19, at least according to collected data, is not the killer disease that it is currently hyped up to be. AIER is not endorsing the study as is without further study, but we are interested in the argument being examined and discussed.”

TRENDPOST: To be clear, the CDC stats above show a decrease from the average number of deaths from heart diseases, but an increase in COVID heart diseases. Why would the average rate of heart diseases go down during the

spread of COVID? According to Dr. Briand, likely because of “misclassification,” i.e., being incorrectly counted as being caused by COVID.

LEGAL RULING IN PORTUGAL: PCR TEST FOR COVID IS FLAWED



As the **Trends Journal** has been reporting, the most common test used for determining whether someone has COVID and is a danger to infect others has been proven unreliable. The PCR test is based on how many times the DNA of the coronavirus needs to be “amplified” through a heating process to determine a level of infection.

The problem now identified is that while in most American and European labs an amplified result of 35-40 cycles is considered “infectious,” many bona fide medical and scientific experts have stated that a much more reasonable number for determining someone is infectious would only be up to 30 cycles.

This is a crucial difference. As science journalist Peter Andrews, who has a degree in genetics, wrote on 3 September:

“Data from three US states – New York, Nevada and Massachusetts – shows that when the amount of the virus found in a person is taken into account, up to 90 percent of people who have tested positive could actually have been negative, as they may be carrying only tiny amounts of the virus. If so, these people would likely not be contagious, pose a risk to others, or have any need to isolate.”

Now journalist Andrews writes in *Russia Today* that a Portuguese appeals court has used the evidence of the flawed PCR test to order the release of four German tourists who were forcibly quarantined after one of them tested positive.

“The verdict, delivered on November 11, followed an appeal against a writ of habeas corpus filed by four Germans against the Azores Regional Health Authority. This body had been appealing a ruling from a lower court which had found in favor of the tourists, who claimed that they were illegally confined to a hotel without their consent. The tourists were ordered to stay in the hotel over the summer after one of them tested positive for coronavirus in a PCR test - the other three were labelled close contacts and therefore made to quarantine as well.”

Mr. Andrews writes that the Portuguese judges referred to a study published by Oxford University Press on 28 September that found if someone tested positive for COVID at a cycle threshold of 35 or higher, the chances of that person actually being infected is less than three percent, and “*the probability of receiving a false positive is 97% or higher.*”

According to the transcript of the ruling by the Lisbon Appeal Court:

“In view of current scientific evidence, this test shows itself to be unable to determine beyond reasonable doubt that such positivity corresponds, in fact, to the infection of a person by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. RT-PCR tests (standing for polymerase chain reaction tests) are performed by amplifying samples through repetitive cycles. The number of cycles of such amplification results in a greater or lesser reliability of such tests. And the problem is that this reliability shows itself, in terms of scientific evidence, as more than debatable.”

This ruling is not an isolated case. The *Portugal News* reports:

“On 14 August the Azorean District Court ordered the release of two citizens who filed a ‘habeas corpus’ after they were quarantined for having travelled near a Covid-19 infected person.

Also, on 27 July, the court decided to declare a ‘habeas corpus’ filed by three citizens ‘deprived of their liberty’ since 24 July in a hotel unit on the island of Graciosa.

On 16 May, the Ponta Delgada court granted a petition for immediate release ('habeas corpus') made by a plaintiff against the Azores government's imposition of quarantine in hotels."

TRENDPOST: *In addition to the PCR test being misused to the point where a Portuguese appeals court states results based on it can't be "reliable," the mainstream media virtually ignores the fact that the reason rising infection rates are being reported is because of increased testing.*

As the Boston Globe wrote last Friday, "At many sites, particularly the appointment-free locations meant to offer convenience, test-seekers are greeted by long lines that wind around buildings and blocks, through parking lots and playgrounds."

The same day a USA Today headline read, "Long lines for COVID testing not going away anytime soon."

Thus, the more fear that is spread, the more people will line up, waiting hours to get tested.

MORE SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS SIGN ON: END THE LOCKDOWNS NOW



As the **Trends Journal** has reported, The Great Barrington Declaration, first released on 4 October, is a call by medical and scientific experts to end the global lockdowns and start initiating a policy of "Focused Protection."

Every week since first posting online, thousands of additional scientists, physicians and public health officials have signed on. To date, there are over 37,000 signatures.

One of the recent medical professionals signing on is Boris Kotchoubey, Professor of Medical Psychology at the University of Tübingen in Germany, wrote:

“The German government forbids theaters and restaurants, although there is not the slightest evidence that anybody has been infected in such places, because all of them had highly developed sanitary concepts (since May all seats in theaters are at least 2 meters from each other, the same in restaurants).

We know more or less where the infection is spread. Big events like sports and rock concerts, crowded parties, activities in closed rooms, public transportation, particularly in big cities, last, but not least invasion of the infection in retirement homes.

Efficient measures should be directed to the prevention of infection in THESE situations.”

Professor Kotchoubey told a journalist from *Just the News*,

“Anti-Corona measures in all countries that I know (mostly, West Europe) are non-directed, imprecise and, therefore, yield more damage than the disease itself.”

Hard Data & Bona Fide Statistics Tell the Story

Rodney Sturdivant, Associate Professor of Statistical Science at Baylor University who signed the Great Barrington Declaration recently said,

“An important public health principle is to not ignore the totality of public health with fixation on a single aspect. The consequences of doing so is catastrophic. We are already seeing the impacts: mental health issues, missed cancer treatments, missed immunizations, hunger, drug overdose, domestic abuse, incredible harm to children... the list is tragically long and preventable.”

Professor Sturdivant, along with Andrew Glen, professor of statistics at the U.S. Military Academy and Mark Arvidson, mathematics professor at Azusa Pacific University wrote an article published in the Dallas Morning Star on 18 October:

“We have watched, with surprise and dismay, as mandates and policies designed to contain the spread of COVID-19 increasingly depart from the

actual data and science. As a result, those most vulnerable to the disease continue to die, while the least vulnerable continue to suffer the mental, emotional and financial impacts of the lockdown.

Sadly, the fear produced by misreporting of the data and the way we count 'cases' and 'deaths' is problematic, while the actual risk of death from COVID-19 is much lower than first thought.

Those with no comorbidities have a negligible risk of death. The risk for people over 70 is well over 1,000 times as great as for those under age 70. Thus, it is clear that those over age 70 require focused protection."

TRENDPOST: Despite being signed by nearly 40,000 doctors, scientists, and public health officials, The Great Barrington Declaration is ignored by the mainstream media, and when mentioned dismissed as unscientific and/or signed by conspiracy theorists. Instead, the 24/7 blast from the Presstitutes is "Beware, Stay Safe... the coronavirus is out to kill you. (See our 13 October article, "[THE GREAT BARRINGTON DECLARATION: NO COVID FEAR.](#)")"

UPDATED DATA REVEALS: NO SYMPTOMS, NO SPREAD



Remember the spooky term "stealth virus?"

This was the term broadly promoted in mainstream media last spring and summer to heighten fear of the coronavirus. "Stealth virus" refers to the accepted truth of public health experts that what makes the coronavirus so dangerous is that those without symptoms, who don't know they have the virus, can easily spread it.

Examples:

On 26 February, *Politico* posted the headline: “U.S. isn’t Ready to Detect Stealth Coronavirus Spread”

On 5 June, *Time* stated in bold type: “Nearly Half of Coronavirus Spread My Be Traced to People Without Any Symptoms”

On 6 August, *The New York Times* wrote an article titled: “They Were Infected with the Coronavirus. They Never Showed Signs.” Followed by the sub-headline: “Even asymptomatic people who are infected may be able to spread the virus. But people without symptoms are rarely tested.”

But now a new report that analyzed the results of the post-lockdown/COVID-19 effort in Wuhan, the city in China where the coronavirus first appeared, has shown, “*No evidence that the identified asymptomatic positive cases were infectious.*”

The study, published in the journal Nature on 20 November states:

“Here, we describe a city-wide SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid screening program between May 14 and June 1, 2020 in Wuhan. All city residents aged six years or older were eligible and 9,899,828 (92.9%) participated. No new symptomatic cases and 300 asymptomatic cases were identified. There were no positive tests amongst 1,174 close contacts of asymptomatic cases.”

The study also showed that while the vast majority of people do not get infected from those without symptoms, the small percentage which do are “mainly domestic and unemployed residents (24.3%) and retired older adults (21.3%).”

Overall, “Among the 7,280 residential communities in Wuhan, asymptomatic positive cases were identified in 265 (3.6%) communities (only one case detected in 246 communities), while no asymptomatic positive cases were found in other 96.4% communities.”

The study concludes:

“In summary, the detection rate of asymptomatic positive cases in the post-lockdown Wuhan was very low and there was no evidence that the identified asymptomatic positive cases were infectious. These findings

enabled decision makers to adjust prevention and control strategies in the post-lockdown period.”

TRENDPOST: *Instead of the mainstream media reporting on these findings, they continue sell the fear and hysteria each day of “rising cases” while “authorities” impose strict lock down rules across continents.*

“UNFOUNDED PUBLIC HYSTERIA”



On 13 November, Dr. Roger Hodkinson, who was certified in medicine by the Royal College of Physicians of Canada in 1976, was a prominent speaker at the Edmonton City Council meeting regarding the city’s extension of its face-mask orders.

Dr. Hodkinson began his speech by stating his credentials:

“I’m a medical specialist in pathology which includes virology. I trained at Cambridge University in the UK. I was previously an assistant professor in the Faculty of Medicine doing a lot of teaching. But more to the point I’m currently the chairman of a biotechnology company in North Carolina selling the COVID-19 test.”

His opening remarks regarding the ongoing lockdown strategies included:

“The bottom line is simply this: There is utterly unfounded public hysteria driven by the media and politicians. It’s outrageous. This is the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on an unsuspecting public. There is absolutely nothing that can be done to contain this virus. Other than protecting older, more vulnerable people. It should be thought of as nothing more than a bad

flu season. This is not Ebola. It's not SARS. It's politics playing medicine and that's a very dangerous game."

Among the key points made by Dr. Hodgkinson:

- "A word on testing: I do want to emphasize that I'm in the business of testing for COVID. I do want to emphasize that positive test results do not mean a clinical infection. It's simply driving public hysteria and all testing should stop. Unless you're presenting to the hospital with some respiratory problem."
- "Masks are utterly useless. There is no evidence base for their effectiveness whatsoever. Paper masks and fabric masks are simply virtue-signaling. They're not even worn effectively most of the time. It's utterly ridiculous. Seeing these unfortunate, uneducated people – I'm not saying that in a pejorative sense – seeing these people walking around like lemmings, obeying without any knowledge base, to put the mask on their face."
- "Social distancing is also useless because COVID is spread by aerosols which travel 30 meters or so before landing. Enclosures have had such terrible unintended consequences. Everywhere should be opened tomorrow as well as was stated in The Great Barrington Declaration that I circulated prior to this meeting."
- "All that should be done is to protect the vulnerable and to give them all in the nursing homes that are under your control, give them all 3,000 to 5,000 international units of vitamin D every day which has been shown to radically reduce the likelihood of Infection."
- "And I would remind you all that using the province's own statistics, the risk of death under 65 in this province is one in 300,000. One in 300,000. You've got to get a grip on this."

Dr. Hodgkinson concluded by telling the public officials at the meeting:

"The scale of the response that you are undertaking with no evidence for it is utterly ridiculous given the consequences of acting in a way that you're proposing. All kinds of suicides, business closures... It's simply outrageous."

TRENDPOST: Again, and again, over and over, just as we have detailed in the **Trends Journal** over the decades how the mainstream media only presents “guests” that support the establishment lies and propaganda, i.e., “Saddam Hussain has weapons of mass destruction,” when they are selling wars, so, too, with the COVID War.

Those providing counter evidence are ignored, banned, and/or belittled by the Presstitutes who get paid to put out what their corporate pimps and government whoremasters tell them to.

Despite the vast array of data that does not support the draconian lockdown mandates that have, and continue to, destroy millions of businesses, lives, and livelihoods, the media and the vast majority of politicians continue to promote the “patriotism” of fighting the COVID War, as Joe Biden has. (See our article in this issue, [“BIDEN SAYS IT’S “PATRIOTIC” TO WEAR MASK & PLAYS COVID WAR CARD.”](#))

U.N. DIRECTORS: CLOSING SCHOOLS IS CREATING A “LOST GENERATION”



As reported in the **Trends Journal** since April, the executive director of the U.N. World Food Program, David Beasley, warned the U.N. Security Council that as a result of global lockdowns in reaction to the coronavirus, an additional 135 million people could suffer “crisis levels of hunger or worse.” As recently as 14 November, Mr. Beasley now confirms that next year could even be worse.

On 15 September, Henrietta Fore, the executive director of another important U.N. agency, UNICEF, made clear at a press conference the widespread damage to children as a result of school closings:

“At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools closed their doors in 192 countries, sending 1.6 billion students home. Today, almost nine months since the coronavirus outbreak started, 872 million students – or half the world’s student population – in 51 countries are still unable to head back to their classrooms.

Millions of these children were fortunate enough to learn remotely – online, through radio or TV broadcasts, or otherwise. However, UNICEF data shows that, for at least 463 million children whose schools closed due to COVID-19, there was no such thing as remote learning.”

Most recently, on 19 November, UNICEF issued a report warning of dire consequences to young children if schools are reopened. The report, titled “Averting a Lost COVID Generation,” *strongly advocates that children be allowed to go back to school:*

“While children can transmit the virus to each other and to older age groups, there is strong evidence that, with basic safety measures in place, the net benefits of keeping schools open outweigh the costs of closing them... Schools are not a main driver of community transmission, and children are more likely to get the virus outside of school settings.”

Citing hard data, the UNICEF report makes it clear that keeping schools closed is having a devastating effect on nutrition and overall health of hundreds of millions of children worldwide:

- *“There is a 40 percent decline in the coverage of nutrition services for women and children across 135 countries. As of October, 265 million children were still missing out on school meals globally. More than 250 million children under 5 could miss the life-protecting benefits of vitamin A supplementation programs;*
- *As of November, 572 million students are affected across 30 country-wide school closures – 33 percent of the enrolled students worldwide;*
- *An estimated 2 million additional child deaths and 200,000 additional still-births could occur over a 12-month period with severe interruptions to services and rising malnutrition;*
- *An estimated 6–7 million children under the age of 5 will suffer from wasting or acute malnutrition, a 14 percent rise that will translate into more than*

10,000 additional child deaths per month – mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and South America;

- *Globally, the number of children living in multidimensional poverty – without access to education, health, housing, nutrition, sanitation or water – is estimated to have soared by 15 percent, or an additional 150 million children in 2020.”*

In conclusion, the UNICEF report calls for avoiding what it describes as a “lost generation” of children as a consequence of continued economic lockdowns and forced absence of school imposed on millions of children worldwide: “A severe global economic recession is impoverishing children and compounding deep pre-existing inequalities and exclusion.”

COVID VACCINATION: JUST ANOTHER SHOT IN THE ARM?



On 16 November, the Children’s Health Defense, founded and chaired by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., published an article on its website stating that both the U.K. and the U.S. “are preparing to silence independent journalists who raise legitimate concerns over pharmaceutical industry corruption or the extreme secrecy surrounding state-sponsored COVID-19 vaccination efforts.”

The article is titled, “Cyber War Declared in U.S. and U.K. to Quash Vaccine Hesitancy as Nations Prepare for Mass Inoculations.” It cites action initiated on 16 November by the U.K.’s Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) to seek out and label as “propaganda” any website that questions the country’s vaccine program or criticizes the multinational pharmaceutical corporations whose vaccines are being approved.

Also cited is the secret U.S. military program in the U.S., led by officials who were involved with the occupation of Iraq, who are planning to identify websites suspected of spreading anti-vaccination opinions and those revealing the secrecy behind the vaccination effort and pharmaceutical industry corruption.

The article cites how the mainstream media, while cheerleading the vaccination effort, has been virtually silent about the known prior corruption of Pfizer whose vaccine is set to be approved by the FDA.

On 2 September 2009, Pfizer was forced to pay \$2.3 billion due to the U.S. Department of Justice finding of criminal and civil violations around the company's illegal promotion of four of its drugs. It was the largest health care fraud settlement in history. *USA Today* reported at the time that a former Pfizer sales rep, a West Point graduate, filed a whistle-blower lawsuit after he was told by the drug company to offer misleading samples to physicians.

Government Seeks to Silence Critics

The Children Defense Fund article points to a report published by the U.K. newspaper *The Times* on 9 November that revealed "the government regards tackling false information about inoculation as a rising priority as the prospect of a reliable vaccine against the coronavirus draws closer."

While stating the military cyber-attack program is only intended for anti-vaccination websites created by foreign adversaries and would not be targeting its own citizens, "the effort would rely on the U.S. government for determining whether or not a site is part of a 'foreign disinformation' operation."

The Children's Defense Fund notes, "This is highly troubling given that the U.S. recently seized the domains of many sites, including the American Herald Tribune, which it erroneously labeled as 'Iranian propaganda,' despite its editor in chief, Anthony Hall, being based in Canada."

The article adds,

"It is worth pointing out that many so-called 'anti-vaxxers' are actually critics of the pharmaceutical industry and are not necessarily opposed to vaccines in and of themselves, making the labels 'anti-vaxxer' and 'anti-vaccine' misleading. Given that many pharmaceutical giants involved in making COVID-19 vaccines donate heavily to politicians in both countries and have been involved in numerous safety scandals, using state

intelligence agencies to wage cyber war against sites that investigate such concerns is not only troubling for the future of journalism but it suggests that the U.K. is taking a dangerous leap toward becoming a country that uses its state powers to treat the enemies of corporations as enemies of the state.”

In the U.S., the Children’s Defense Fund article reveals the announcement on 1 October that the U.S. Air Force had awarded a multi-million-dollar contract to Primer, a U.S.-based AI company: “Primer will develop the first-ever machine learning platform to automatically identify and assess *suspected disinformation*.” (Note the use of the word “*suspected*.”)

Primer’s founder is Sean Gourley whose previous role was creating AI programs for the U.S. military to track insurgencies in Iraq. He wrote last April that the effort to create cyber warfare to counter suspected disinformation will allow the military to “begin to weaponize the truth.”

Now, in November, Primer has made it clear that the goal to “weaponize the truth” will be directed at those who challenge the COVID-19 vaccination program. At the 9 November press conference, the company’s director of science, John Bohannon, stated,

“Primer will be integrating bot detection, synthetic text detection and unstructured textual claims analysis capabilities into our existing artificial intelligence platform currently in use with DOD (Department of Defense)... This will create the first unified mission-ready platform to effectively counter COVID-19-related disinformation in near-real time.”

Among high level military figures who are Primer’s Executives and on its Board of Directors:

- Brian Raymond, former CIA intelligence officer who served as Director for Iraq on the U.S. National Security Council
- Retired General Raymond Thomas, who led command of all U.S. and NATO Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan
- Retired Lt. General VerLinn Jamieson, former deputy chief of staff for Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance

- Bret McGurk, former senior director for Iraq & Afghanistan during the Bush Administration

Mainstream Media Will Continue to Cheerlead the Military Operation

Operation Warp Speed, initiated by the U.S. government last April to facilitate and accelerate the development, manufacture, and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, named four-star General Gustave F. Perna as COO.

General Perna recently served as the head of the Army Material Command, and he previously led the Joint Munitions and Lethality Lifecycle Management Command, responsible for overseeing \$40 billion of conventional ammunition.

On 28 September, *Stat News* reported,

“Roughly 60 military officials – including at least four generals – are involved in the leadership of Operation Warp Speed, many of whom have never worked in health care or vaccine development. Just 29 of the roughly 90 leaders on the chart aren’t employed by the Department of Defense.”

As for the government’s plans to use the media to promote the vaccine, CDC reported on 29 October that Operation Warp Speed will “engage and use a wide range of partners, collaborations, and communication and news media channels to achieve communication goals” and will “focus its efforts on ‘traditional media channels’ (print, radio, and TV) as well as ‘digital media’ (internet, social media, and text messaging).”

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. tweeted on 16 November:

“Those who raise legitimate concerns about Operation Warp Speed will be de-platformed to make for the required saturation of pro-vaccine messaging across the English-speaking media.”

TRENDPOST: “*Deplatforming,*” according to Wikipedia is “a form of political activism or prior restraint by an individual, group, or organization with the goal of shutting down controversial speakers or speech, or denying them access to a venue in which to express their opinion.”

*As we have noted in this **Trends Journal**, tens of millions of dollars are being pumped into the Ad Council to sell the public into getting a COVID vaccination.*

(See our article in this issue, “[AD COUNCIL APPROVES VACCINE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN.](#)”)

DENMARK: PROTESTS SUCCESSFUL, NO FORCED VACCINATIONS



The below tweets by two Danish citizens tells the story:

“GOOD NEWS! After 9 days of banging pots and pans outside parliament the epidemic law is SCAPPED. PROTESTING WORKS: DO IT!”

“In Denmark, the national government proposed a new epidemic law which includes the right to conduct forced physical exams, mandate isolation, and allows police-directed physically coerced vaccination. The people resisted. The proposal was dropped. Well done, Denmark.”

The Danish government was set to enact a new law that would have given it power to not only enforce mandatory quarantines but forcibly inject citizens with vaccines for COVID-19.

After nine straight days of loud protests, the law has been scrapped.

According to the European digital news service *The Local*, the proposed law was to include:

- “People infected with dangerous diseases can be forcibly given medical examination, hospitalized, treated and placed in isolation.”
- “The Danish Health Authority would be able to define groups of people who must be vaccinated in order to contain and eliminate a dangerous disease.”

- “People who refuse the above can – in some situations – be coerced through physical detainment, with police allowed to assist.”

In addition to citizen outrage, the proposed law caused concern among Danish physicians and medical personnel. Camilia Rathcke, President of the Danish Medical Association, stated, “We think these are regulations that go too far and ought to be changed” and added that the government was clearly “overstepping boundaries for individual patients.”

Other medical experts questioned the aspect of the proposed law, which would give decision-making power on what is referred to as a “principle of caution,” which does not require conclusive scientific evidence.

Louise Holck, Director of the Danish Institute for Human Rights, told *The Local* that “the larger the intervention in public rights, the larger certainty there should be over the effect of it.”

The law also would have made it mandatory that individual businesses and organizations provide government authorities with information about the movements of individuals.

U.K. Won’t Rule Out Forced Vaccinations

As reported by *The Telegraph*, on 16 November, the U.K.’s Health Secretary Matt Hancock stated that while there are no current plans to require that everyone get vaccinated, he “refused to rule out mandatory inoculation” and that the government would “have to watch what happens and make judgements accordingly.”

Also on 16 November, the *Huffington Post* reported that Tom Tugendhat, former Lt. Colonel who is a member of Parliament currently serving as Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, said in an interview he “certainly sees the day” when people are banned from their work places as well as from entering pubs and restaurants unless they have been vaccinated.

Fauci: “COVID-19 Vaccine Won’t be Mandatory in U.S.”

At a 19 August video talk produced by George Washington University, Dr. Anthony Fauci, lead member of the White House coronavirus task force, stated, “You don’t want to mandate and try and force anyone to take a vaccine. We’ve never done that.”

Dr. Fauci added, however, “You can mandate for certain groups of people like health workers, but for the general population you can’t... It would be unenforceable and not appropriate.”

As an example of a group that will be required to take the vaccine, he cited the National Institutes of Health, where health workers can’t treat patients without a flu shot.

As reported by the website Medical Xpress, “This however doesn’t prevent states from making a vaccine mandatory for children to attend school, as is already the case for certain diseases such as measles, though some are exempt for medical or religious reasons.”

TRENDPOST: *Despite Dr. Fauci’s statement last August that a COVID-19 vaccination won’t be mandatory in the U.S., there is already a movement in New York towards forced injections.*

As we reported, on 7 November, the state bar of N.Y. passed a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination recommendation. While there are limiting conditions mentioned, such as the state should only consider making taking the shot a requirement if voluntary vaccinations fall short of satisfying population immunity, who decides what a safe level of immunity is?

*And as routinely detailed in the **Trends Journal**, autocratic, power-thirsty governors like Andrew Cuomo have shown no holding back when it comes to sowing fear and anxiety among their citizens and imposing harsh lockdowns that rob us of our freedoms.*

However, as demonstrated in Denmark where the people over ruled the government, and as with the protests in France that we note in this Trends Journal, which forced its leader to backtrack on a law that would have robbed the people of more of their rights, what governments fear the most, and which, as evidenced, they cannot defeat, is the true power of the people.

As Samuel Adams said, “It does not take a majority to prevail, but rather and irate, tireless minority, keen on stetting brushfires of freedom in the minds of men.

One of our Top Trends for 2021 is “Freedom, Peace & Justice.” We forecast that as economic conditions deteriorate and governments attempt to impose more freedom-robbing legislation to quiet the masses, anti-establishment protests will erupt across the globe.

“VACCINE DEVELOPMENT DILEMMA”



On 23 November, the science journal *Nature* published the article, “Why Emergency COVID-Vaccine Approvals a Dilemma for Scientists.”

The article points to the concerns of a number of scientists due to potential safety factors being overlooked in the mad rush to get a COVID-19 vaccine out to the public. On 9 November, drug makers Pfizer (based in New York and New Jersey) and BioNTech (based in Germany) reported successful phase III trials of their vaccines and are now seeking “emergency-use rules” to speed up the release.

As the article points out,

“Once a vaccine is granted emergency approval, there is pressure on developers to offer the immunization to trial participants who received a placebo. But if too many people cross over to the vaccine group, the companies might not have enough data to establish long-term outcomes, such as safety, how long vaccine protection lasts.”

Klaus Stohr, who was previously head of vaccine design at the pharmaceutical company Novartis in Massachusetts, called the sped-up process “a real vaccine-development dilemma.”

This potential safety issue was anticipated back on 22 June in an article published by *Scientific American* magazine: “The Risks of Rushing a COVID-19 Vaccine.” The article states,

“Telescoping testing timelines and approvals may expose all of us to unnecessary dangers related to the vaccine. While preclinical trials to evaluate the potential safety and efficacy of vaccine candidates are likely to include tens of thousands of patients, it is still unclear whether that number

will be large enough and a trial will last long enough to evaluate safety for a drug that would be administered to so many.”

The FDA has announced its vaccine advisory committee will meet on 10 December to decide whether to approve the two current vaccines showing successful results. The *Nature* article points out most every researcher interviewed expects the FDA to grant approval.

But as the website Drugwatch, which reports information from peer-reviewed medical journals, reports,

“Contrary to what most people think, just because a drug or device is FDA-approved, it does not mean the product is guaranteed to be safe. In fact, manufacturers recall about 4,500 drugs and medical devices annually. While the FDA has efforts in place to minimize these safety risks, there are still occurrences where drugs or devices may come to market quickly and lead to safety concerns.”

The FDA was already being criticized for fast approvals of drugs that proved ineffective and, in some cases, deadly. In June 2018, *PBS New Hour* published an expose titled, “FDA increasingly approves drugs without conclusive proof they work.”

The article stated,

“The FDA is increasingly green-lighting expensive drugs despite dangerous or little-known side effects and inconclusive evidence that they curb or cure disease. Once widely assailed for moving slowly, today the FDA reviews and approves drugs faster than any other regulatory agency in the world.”

The article quoted Dr. Michael Carome, director of the health research group for the nonprofit organization Public Citizen and former U.S. Department of Health and Human Services official. Dr. Carome said, “Instead of a regulator and a regulated industry, we now have a partnership. That relationship has tilted the agency away from a public health perspective to an industry friendly perspective.”

TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS

IRANIAN NEWSPAPER CALLS FOR ATTACK ON ISRAELI CITY



A small newspaper in Iran – which is edited by a person believed to have been an adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei – ran an opinion article on Sunday that called for an attack on the Israeli city of Haifa if it turns out Israel played a role in the killing of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, the scientist who has been referred to as the father of Iran’s nuclear weapons program.

Sadollah Zarei, an analyst in Iran, penned the column that said Tehran’s response should be bolder than the U.S. strike on Qasem Soleimani, the military leader killed near Baghdad International Airport in January, according to the *Associated Press*. Zarei said Americans and Israel are “by no means ready to take part in a war,” even if the strike killed a large number of people.

Fakhrizadeh was killed last Friday near Tehran, *The New York Times* reported. He was credited with leading the country’s nuclear weapons program and was a physics professor, the report said. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that Fakhrizadeh was widely respected in the country and had the “full trust” of its supreme leader.

His expertise involved not only technical and programmatic issues but also how to run a budding nuclear power and the mechanics of building the personnel base and infrastructure of a nuclear-weapons program in an “atmosphere of extreme secrecy,” a former U.S. intelligence official told the *WSJ*.

No country claimed responsibility for the killing. The *Journal* reported that Iran has long denied maintaining a nuclear weapons program and any effort to enrich uranium is for peaceful purposes.

The *Guardian* ran an editorial shortly after the killing stating Benjamin Netanyahu would first clear the assassination with the U.S. before taking such a bold action. The paper said President Trump, who failed to score a final diplomatic victory in Iran, could be creating a crisis prior to Joe Biden's inauguration.

TREND FORECAST: *Tensions continue to escalate between Israel and Iran. It was reported yesterday that a drone strike killed one of its senior Revolutionary Guard commanders in Syria and three other members of the Guard.*

But, today, Saeed Khatibzadeh, a spokesman for Iran's foreign ministry, told Iranian media, "We have not received any report in this regard, and it seems more like media propaganda."

There have also been reports that President Trump wants to escalate tensions between the U.S. and Iran, which in turn would make it difficult for a Biden administration to renegotiate the The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which President Trump unilaterally withdrew from in May 2018.

Should tensions sharply escalate in the Middle East, and oil prices, which have been moving higher over the past two weeks, move toward the \$80 per barrel range as a result of military confrontations, the world equity markets and economies will crash.

ETHIOPIAN FORCES DECLARE VICTORY AFTER OVERTAKING TIGRAY



We have been reporting in the **Trends Journal** on the escalating civil war in Ethiopia that was launched by its Nobel Peace prize-winning Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed against the leaders of the Tigray Region. (See our 10 November article, [“ANOTHER NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER GOES TO WAR”](#) and our 17

November article, “[ETHIOPIA/TIGRAY CONFLICT INTENSIFIES, ROCKETS HIT ERITREA.](#)”)

Ethiopia said they have now seized control of Mekelle, Tigray’s regional capital, after weeks of clashes with the Tigray People’s Liberation Front.

While Ahmed warned the capital to be prepared for the onslaught and celebrated the victory in a statement that forces entered the city “without innocent civilians being targets,” the Tigray government said the city was “heavily bombarded,” according to the *Associated Press*.

Before the offensive, Ahmed said his forces would show “no mercy” when moving to take over the city. But he now claims the “overall safety and well-being of the people of Tigray” was his top priority.

Colonel Dejene Tsegaye, a spokesman for the military, told a local station that the attack on Mekelle, a city with 500,000, will be a “decisive part of the operation.” He said forces will encircle the city with tanks.

News agencies have reported it has been difficult to receive updates from the Tigray People’s Liberation Front because phone and internet connectivity has been affected during the conflict.

It is also reported that some 40,000 people in the war-torn region have left the country and are seeking shelter in neighboring Sudan.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have forecast, the heavily armed Tigray forces will not surrender to Ethiopian forces, thus military tensions will persist.*

With its economy sinking deeper into the “Greatest Depression,” social unrest, violence, and poverty will escalate, which in turn will ramp up a refugee crisis, many of whom will want to escape to Europe and safer havens.

VIOLENT PROTESTS BREAK OUT ACROSS UGANDA



Not far from Ethiopia, where civil war tensions are rising, Uganda has seen its worst unrest in years. It was reported that at least 45 people were killed by security forces who opened fire on protesters supporting Bobi Wine, the musician who is challenging President Yoweri Museveni, who has held office for 36 years.

The uprising was seen by outside observers as another example of the young population in a country turning their back on the entrenched political class. The protests were sparked by the arrest of Wine for holding rallies that disregarded the country's virus guidelines, the *Associated Press* reported.

The *Wall Street Journal* described a chaotic scene in Kampala, the country's capital, where security forces fired live rounds into the protests. Anyone who was caught wearing red – the color of Wine's opposition party, called the "National Unity Platform" – was arrested. A police spokesman laid the blame squarely on the protesters and said it is "unfortunate that some lives have been lost as a result of his supporter's violent conduct."

Many protests in the country have been violent and have led to attendees being beaten, tear-gassed, arrested, and put in solitary confinement, *The New York Times* reported.

The election is on 14 January, and 17.6 million are expected to vote. Wine is joined by nine other hopefuls.

Wine, 38, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi, was released from jail after being charged with breaching the country's coronavirus rules. Wine posted a video from the courtroom on his Facebook page, according to the *Times*, where he struck a defiant tone.

“It’s been tough. It’s been hell. We shall be free or we shall die while trying to be free. We are not slaves,” he said.

The *Times* pointed out that leaders in East Africa have used COVID to advance their agenda in the region and put in place restrictive laws to snuff out dissent. The paper said that outside countries, like the U.S., would normally try to intervene, but protesters in Kampala have watched the U.S.’s response to its own protests and likened the actions to human rights abuses.

The unrest is not limited to Uganda. The paper pointed out that opposition movements are gaining steam and facing increased challenges in countries like Ethiopia and Tanzania. These movements are squaring off against entrenched and powerful leaders.

“I know they want me dead as soon as yesterday,” Wine said. “We are campaigning every day as if it’s the last.”

TREND FORECAST: *As we had forecast when the COVID War was launched early this year, throughout developing nations, as economic conditions continue to deteriorate, civil war will erupt as masses move to overthrow entrenched political systems. And, civil war will spread across borders escalating into regional wars, which will in turn escalate a major refugee crisis.*

GUATEMALA’S PRESIDENT UNDER FIRE AS PROTESTS BREAK OUT



Protests ripped through Guatemala last week due to anger over the country’s 2021 budget that many in the country say takes from worthwhile initiatives, such as funding human rights agencies and coronavirus treatments, and instead directs the money straight back into the coffers of lawmakers.

Alejandro Giammattei, the president, was the focus of much of the unrest that resulted in an arson attack at the Congress building in Guatemala City last Saturday. Rosa de Chavarría, a psychology professor, told the *Associated Press* that the protesters are outraged over “poverty, injustice, the way they have stolen the public’s money.”

Protesters called for Giammattei to resign and demanded that he veto the budget. The *AP* report pointed out that the country is still trying to emerge from two major hurricanes this year.

The *AP* reported one of the items approved was \$65,000 that lawmakers will be able to use to pay for their own meals. That money would have otherwise gone to human rights issues, the report said.

“Congress allocated more money for their meals and didn’t allocate money to the poor people,” Diego Herrera told Reuters.

The *AP* report said the church leadership in the country also sided with the public over the newly announced budget. Jordan Rodas, Guatemala’s human rights prosecutor, called the budget a “devious blow to the people because Guatemala was between natural disasters, there are signs of government corruption, clientelism in the humanitarian aid.”

TREND FORECAST: *From Africa to Asia, from the Middle East to Latin America, as the COVID War rages on and economies lock down deeper, the “Greatest Depression” will worsen, poverty rates will rise, and civil unrest will escalate into civil wars... and, in many areas, spread into regional wars.*

U.K. PM ANNOUNCES MAJOR INCREASE IN MILITARY SPENDING



United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced earlier this month his intentions to allot an additional \$32 billion to military spending because he is “not content to curl up on our island” and leave military tasks to its international friends.

Defense News reported that the additional funding will be earmarked for shipbuilding, space, cyber, research, and other sectors for four years. The *Wall Street Journal* pointed out it was likely a politically-savvy move by Johnson in his effort to show the U.S. that Britain is its main ally.

Johnson said, “The international situation is more perilous and more intensely competitive than at any time since the Cold War and Britain must be true to our history and stand alongside our allies. To achieve this we need to upgrade our capabilities across the board.”

TRENDPOST: As Gerald Celente says, “When all else fails they take you to war.” Boris Johnson’s tough talk and boosting the military budget comes when the nation can afford it the least. Britain’s economy is on trend to suffer its worst recession in more than 300 years. The Office for Budget Responsibility expects the nation’s 2020 GDP to decline 11.3 percent, the biggest annual drop since the Great Frost of 1709 when the coldest winter in 500 years ravaged Europe.

Also, while the U.K. officially exited the European Union on 31 January and its so-called transition period ends on 31 December, no “transition” trade deal has been reached with the EU, thus putting more downward pressure on its weakening economy.

BACKLASH IN FRANCE OVER PROPOSED LAW CRIMINALIZING POLICE IMAGES



French President Emmanuel Macron faced backlash last week over a proposed law that would make it illegal to post photographs of police officers that could potentially expose an officer to “physical or psychological integrity.”

Euronews.com reported that the main criticism of the proposal comes from those who see it as a crackdown on press freedoms. They point to the punishment that can carry a year’s prison sentence or a fine of €45,000, and they say the law would greatly diminish the press’ ability to hold law enforcement responsible for misdeeds. The bill has already been passed by the country’s National Assembly, which is considered its lower house of Parliament.

One of the issues with the bill is many critics see the wording as vague. *The New York Times* reported that under the law, it would be illegal to broadcast “the face or any other identifying element” of the officer.

The *Times* reported civil liberty advocates in France have grown concerned over what they see as a “rightward push” by Macron’s centrist government. One other bill Macron’s government hopes to pass focuses on Islamic extremism and calls for the banning of home-schooling. The bill also would demand all organizations receiving public subsidies to be tested on “the values of the republic.”

The *Financial Times* reported those opposed to the law banning most photographs and videos of police say it is intended to shield the public from blatant instances of police brutality. There was an incident last Monday where police officers were accused of “exceptional savagery” when dismantling an illegal migrant camp in the city.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the head of France’s Unbowed party, told Parliament, “An authoritarian regimes installing itself. The first Liberty the citizen should benefit from is the control of those to exercise authority.”

TRENDPOST: *Yesterday, the French parliament did a 180, dropping the bill that would have basically prevented anyone from filming policemen in action.*

Christophe Castaner, the head of Macron’s La République en Marche! (LREM) party, said at a news conference, “There is a need to clarify the measure,” and the bill will be “completely rewritten and a new version will be submitted.”

We note this to illustrate the power of the people when they unite in protest against political systems and politicians who rob them of their constitutional rights and human privileges.

As the “Greatest Depression” worsens, battles between people and the state will intensify, with the police taking stronger measures to enforce political dictates.

THE PRESIDENTIAL REALITY SHOW®

BIDEN SAYS IT’S “PATRIOTIC” TO WEAR MASK & PLAYS COVID WAR CARD



The unofficial president-elect Joe Biden, a major proponent of mask-wearing, said in an interview last Tuesday with *NBC* (a few days before breaking his foot allegedly when playing with his dog), “I think it’s critically important. I think it’s a patriotic responsibility to wear a mask, to socially distance.”

In a speech he delivered last Wednesday, Biden talked about the fight for the “soul” of the country and spoke about the dangers of the country sinking into coronavirus fatigue.

Clearly playing the COVID War card – a war, as with the many others the people obediently march off to – he said, “I know the country is grown weary of the fight... We need to remember we’re at war with the virus, not with one another, not with each other.”

As with other leaders who take their nations to war with no exit strategies, Biden promised that America is “not going to lose this war.”

Ignoring the facts and not providing a scintilla of hard data or scientific evidence, he said the calls to social distance and wear masks were not based on the politics of the hour, rather scientific fact. He said that “every one of them is based on science, real science.”

Yet newspapers, such as *The New York Times*, which reported on this event, as with others media outlets, never asked for or demanded the evidence to support his statements.

We're #1

Mr. Biden has said he intends to get the U.S. back in position to “lead the world,” while he introduced his cabinet nominees, all of whom held lower positions during the Obama presidency.

“It’s a team that reflects the fact that America is back, ready to lead the world, not retreat from it. Once again sit at the head of the table. Ready to confront our adversaries and not reject our allies. Ready to stand up for our values,” he said.

TREND FORECAST: As Gerald Celente has forecast in his *Trend in The News* videos and in numerous interviews over the past weeks, a Biden White House would closely resemble the Obama administration.

Indeed, many of Biden’s cabinet and high staff picks to date were members of the Obama White House. Key among them – enforcing his pledge to “lead the world” – Biden selected Anthony Blinken, with his “go-to-war against Libya, Syria, and Yemen” track record, as his Secretary of State.

TRENDS-EYE VIEW

SHOOTINGS NEARLY DOUBLE IN NEW YORK CITY



No surprise to **Trends Journal** subscribers: In March, when U.S. politicians launched the COVID War, we warned that people would be leaving densely populated urban areas for suburbs and ex-burbs to escape rising crime and the fear of being taken down by the coronavirus. (See our 21 April article, [“CRIME ON THE RISE DURING THE GREAT LOCKDOWN.”](#))

The New York Police Department released sobering data last week that showed shootings in the city increased by about 95 percent when compared to the same period last year.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that through last Sunday, there have been 1,359 shootings from 1 January 2020 through mid-November compared to 698 the year before. The shootings have been occurring predominately in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. Homicides in the city are also up more than 37 percent, the report said.

Maureen Callahan, a columnist for the *New York Post*, wrote in last week that it is “remarkable” to see just “how quickly decades of effort” in the City to make it the safest in the world has “completely unraveled.”

“Anyone who rides the subways these days has these dreadful thoughts: Will today be the day I’m attacked? Will this be the day shoved off the platform into an oncoming train? And: Where the hell is our mayor?”

New York Mayor DeBlasio spent a good part of the year trying to deal with the virus outbreak, protests over police brutality, and an already uneasy relationship with police in the City.

REMOTE WORK BECOMES TECH SECTOR’S NEW NORMAL



More than 24 percent of U.S. tech companies plan to shift their staffs entirely to remote work, a survey by Remote.co and Sapio Research has found.

Almost 75 percent of U.S. tech employees would move out of the U.S. if work permitted, with the majority favoring northern Europe, Canada, or Latin America, the same survey discovered.

Among tech executives, 62 percent said companies need to reach beyond their own geographic regions and even their own countries to hire the best people for their needs.

Logistical challenges to hiring and managing far-flung workers are “at an all-time low” because service companies have sprung up to facilitate hiring abroad, managing employee tax withholdings in various countries, and similar tasks, Kentaro Kawamori, CEO of Persefoni, told Business Insider.

“I’m really revolting against the idea of a centralized HQ,” Robert Vis, CEO of MessageBird, said in an Insider interview, adding that he has “done a complete 180” on the idea of remote work since the pandemic and economic shutdown disrupted usual work patterns.

The pandemic and shutdown “absolutely changed our approach to hiring,” Kawamori said. “The new normals of a COVID-19-impacted world meant we could lean harder into this model” of hiring and managing a workforce spread across the globe.

TREND FORECAST: *The more people who work remotely, the further commercial real estate prices will fall. In turn, businesses and transportation systems that relied on commuters will economically suffer, as will the work force once employed in those sectors.*

THE ART OF TRENDS

“THE GREATEST DANGER” by Stephen Green



www.MuseumofAwesomeArt.com

TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE *by Bennett Davis*

CAN VITAMIN D DEFEAT THE COVID VIRUS?



A small study by doctors at Reina Sofia University Hospital in Cordoba, Spain, indicates that taking vitamin D supplements might keep a person from catching the COVID virus or minimize its effects on those who already have it.

The physicians divided 76 newly hospitalized COVID patients into two groups. One group of 26 was given the usual cocktail of drugs used to treat COVID cases. The other group of 50 got the same cocktail plus a drug that raised vitamin D levels in the bloodstream.

Of the 26, 13 (50 percent) wound up in intensive care; two died. Of the 50 patients whose vitamin D levels were boosted, only one went to the ICU and none died.

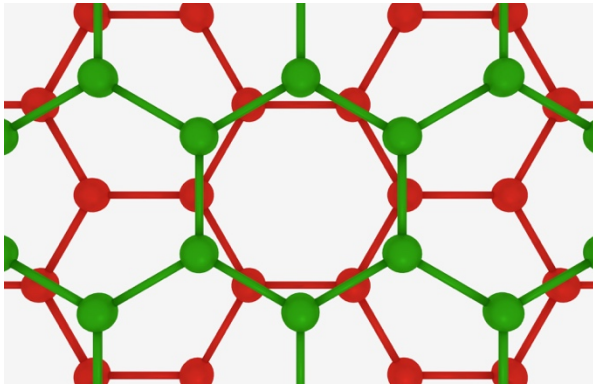
The experiment followed a Spanish study of 200 hospitalized COVID patients that found that more than 80 percent – more than 160 of the 200 – had vitamin D deficiencies when they were admitted to hospitals.

Vitamin D has long been known to boost the immune system.

Researchers theorize that vitamin D impairs viruses' ability to replicate as well as tamping down inflammation while stimulating a positive immune response.

The Spanish research team has called for wide-scale tests of vitamin D's effectiveness as a COVID preventive and treatment.

NEW “TWISTRONICS” GRAPHENE IS SUPERCONDUCTOR



Since it was first created in 2004, graphene – a sheet of carbon just one atom thick – has fascinated scientists as a kind of universal material: it’s bendable yet many times stronger than steel, it’s transparent, and conducts electricity.

Graphene already is being used in medical filters and specialty coatings, among a spectrum of current and possible applications.

Now it’s also helping engineers achieve the long-sought goal of superconductivity – transmitting electricity without losing any to resistance or “friction” in the wires that carry it.

In 2018, researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology laid one sheet of graphene on top of another and twisted the top sheet by just 1.1 degrees.

The result has created an entire new field of research: twistrionics.

When the top sheet was twisted by that small amount and an electronic current was applied, the two sheets switched from conducting electricity to insulating against it; then the material became a superconductor, transmitting electricity without losing any to resistance.

The two-layer device already is being used to make superconducting electronic switches, known as Josephson junctions, that are essential in quantum computers, the next generation of machines able to calculate orders of magnitude faster than today’s versions. The junctions also are essential in some devices that measure subtle magnetic fields and monitor electrical activity in the brain.

Challenges remain, such as holding the twisted sheet at the proper angle without wrinkling it and the daunting prospect of cooling the devices to near-absolute zero before they can work.

TRENDPOST: *Until well into the 2030s, devices using twisted graphene will be limited to specialty uses, such as medical devices and quantum computers. But “twistronics” has shown scientists a way to make materials without chemistry, a feat never before achieved on such a wide-ranging scale of applications.*

STUDY: OXYGEN TREATMENT REVERSES AGING



Researchers at Tel Aviv University and the Shamir Medical Center say they have reversed key signs of aging in older adults by subjecting them to hyperbaric oxygen treatments (HOTs).

In HOTs, a person is sealed in a tank and the air pressure inside the tank is raised to two or three times normal levels. As the person breathes under this abnormally high pressure, more oxygen is forced into the lungs. The extra oxygen helps the body fight infections, release biochemical growth factors, and foster the growth of stem cells.

HOTs have been used to treat conditions ranging from anemia to gangrene.

The Israeli scientists gathered 35 adults 65 or more years old and gave them 90-minute HOTs five days a week for three months.

At the end of the study, the test volunteers showed better attention, information processing speed, and executive functions, the researchers said.

Perhaps most important, volunteers' bodies had cleared away a large proportion of old, damaged, and weakened cells and their telomeres had lengthened.

Telomeres are long-chain molecules attached to the ends of each human chromosome. As we age, telomeres shorten. Longer telomeres are thought to ensure healthier DNA replication, so finding a way to lengthen telomeres has been described as the “holy grail” of anti-aging research.

The Israeli research team said that these biomarkers of age in the test subjects had reverted to those of people about 25 years younger than the subjects were.

TRENDPOST: *A hyperbaric oxygen treatment can cost \$500 or more, so the study subjects received about \$30,000 worth of care over three months – not something that most of us can afford. If additional research confirms these benefits, entrepreneurs will find ways to make the equipment and treatments more affordable.*

Eventually, visiting a HOT center may become no more unusual than seeing a chiropractor.