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OCTOBER SURPRISE: THEY'RE KILLING US!

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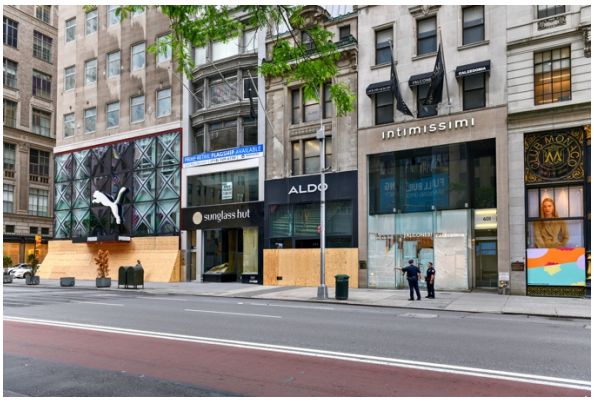
6 October 2020

URGENT TREND FORECAST

AS GOES NYC, SO GOES THE U.S.A.



New York City has been pushed into an economic death spiral by the state's Governor Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio who both have imposed tyrannical restrictions. Having destroyed thousands of businesses and hundreds of thousands of lives, their lockdown rules served as a powerful sedative for the "City that never sleeps"... which is now slipping into a coma.

From Wall Street to Times Square, from Broadway to the Meat Packing District… East Side, West Side, all around the town, the "light fantastic on the sidewalks of New York" are burned out. There's no dancing in the street.

Midtown is no town. Dead and empty. Bars are barren, Broadway is locked down, restaurants are closed, stores are boarded up, hotels closing down, tourists are gone, homicides are skyrocketing… from uptown to downtown, homeless fill the streets.

Unlike the bounce back after the Panic of ’08, and beyond the economically devastating lockdown rules, another prime reason there will be no big rebound is the alteration of securities trading laws. In the past, stocks could not legally be traded outside of lower Manhattan, so, in previous eras, when NYC fell on hard times, finance provided the anchor for the tax base.

Since the restrictions were imposed, finance has steadily fled the island for more tax friendly locations… and, this time, they have left for good. Not only are the tax benefits attractive elsewhere, but since the politicians have beaten the joy and energy out of the City, it no longer has the dynamic energy that earned it the title of “Center of the World.”

From coast to coast, east to west, Manhattan was the status symbol of America. Thus, as we analyze the current events forming future trends, as goes New York City, so goes America.

The following are some of the facts and hard data that portend dark times ahead for once-bustling and great New York City.

HALF OF NEW YORK CITY BARS AND RESTAURANTS MAY DISAPPEAR. Half of New York City’s 24,000 bars and restaurants may close permanently as a result of the economic shutdown, according to a report from Thomas DiNapoli, the New York State comptroller.

These businesses employed 318,000 people before the pandemic but only 91,000 were still working in April, the report said. The number has since risen to 174,000 but remains barely half of the sector’s workforce at full strength.

About 44 percent of the city’s restaurant workers are Hispanic, the report noted, meaning that Hispanic neighborhoods in the city and surrounding areas have been particularly damaged by the shutdown.

“The devastation is clear,” DiNapoli said.

About a third of the city’s restaurants and half its bars that were open in February remain closed now, an analysis of credit card data shows. In a worst-case scenario, half of eateries will close permanently by next September, several studies have calculated.

TIME RUNNING OUT FOR TIMES SQUARE. While some areas of New York City have seen the beginnings of an economic recovery, even if temporary, the fabled Times Square has been left out.

The area is heavily dependent on tourists. But in August, only 87,219 visitors passed through the square, compared to 404,181 in August 2019 and 50 million in all of 2017, according to city data.

Broadway theaters, the neighborhood's $1.8-billion economic engine that sold 14 million tickets last year, are closed until January at least, leaving at least 33,000 people out of work.

The square's businesses also rely on office commuters. Only about 10 percent of office workers have returned to the city and the district's retail vacancy rates are the city's highest; almost 25 percent of the shops were available for lease during the second quarter.

The "Times Square economy" had generated about $58 billion in economic activity in 2016 and accounted for about 15 percent of the city's entire GDP, according to a study for the nonprofit Times Square Alliance.

As commuters and businesses desert the area, burglars and the homeless have moved in, sparking worry the area is in a tailspin.

Others see the closing of tourist-oriented businesses as a way to make the square a mecca for city residents, perhaps converting some closed hotels to apartments and casting more streets as pedestrian-only boulevards.

"Without a Times Square recovery, New York is unlikely to truly recover," the *New York Times* commented in a recent article.

BANKRUPTCIES SURGE 40 PERCENT IN NEW YORK CITY. More than 6,000 New York City businesses have closed since the pandemic arrived, 4,000 of them permanently, according to review website Yelp.

As a result, 610 commercial bankruptcies were filed in the city from March 16 through 27 September, a 40-percent increase over the same period a year earlier, Bloomberg reported, and far more than in any year since the Great Recession.

When temperatures regularly fall “below 60 degrees… 25 to 50 percent of restaurants in New York City will not come back,” predicted restaurant consultant Vin McCann.

In September, a group of the city’s eateries filed a class action suit against the state of New York, claiming $2 billion in damages on behalf of the city’s 24,000 bars and restaurants.

Only about 15 percent of office workers have returned to their downtown suites and “retail and real estate will continue to decline until you can reignite office traffic,” said Joseph Malfitano, a bankruptcy counselor.

“By late fall, there will be an avalanche of bankruptcies,” said Al Togue, a bankruptcy lawyer. “When the cold weather comes, that’s when we’ll start to see a surge.”

MANHATTAN APARTMENT SALES CRATER. The number of Manhattan apartment sales fell 46 percent in the third quarter, leaving 10,000 flats vacant as urbanites fled to outlying areas and Florida, according to reports by real estate agencies.

In September, home sales rose 76 percent in the Hamptons on Long Island, 56 percent in Westchester County, and 36 percent in Connecticut’s Fairfield County.

In Florida, signed contracts rose 62 percent in Palm Beach County and 21 percent in Miami-Dade.

Manhattan apartments that were sold were discounted an average of 9 percent, almost double the 5 percent that pertained last year.

New York faced a glut of luxury apartments before the pandemic and economic shutdown and more have been dumped onto the market since.

The typical price of Manhattan flats is about 25 percent lower than at the peak in 2015 and 2016, which is likely to lure buyers, said Jonathan Miller, CEO of Miller Samuel, a real estate consulting firm.

As people leave the city and the tax base shrinks, remaining residents will be called on to fill the budget gap and face reduced services, perhaps leading to less frequent garbage pick-up, rising crime, and other quality-of-life deficits.

That prospect could make potential buyers hesitate.

“I don’t see an improvement in the market in the fourth quarter, but we could see notable improvement in 2021,” Miller said.

NEW YORK CITY STARES INTO FINANCIAL ABYSS. Mounting business failures. Two-thirds of its hotel rooms empty. A $2-billion loss of income tax revenue from residents this year. A 16-percent unemployment rate, twice the national pace, and a 44-percent rate among restaurant and hotel workers.
New York City is facing a financial crisis unparalleled since the 1970s.
The city is forecast to lose about $9 billion in overall revenue this year, more than 10 percent of its annual $86-billion budget.

The city gains most of its revenue from taxes on income, real estate, and retail sales. All are in a tailspin.

Income tax collections fell 11 percent during September’s second week, the fifth consecutive week of shrinking revenues.

August’s apartment vacancy rate in Manhattan rose above 5 percent for the first time, leaving many landlords, especially smaller ones, struggling to pay their property taxes.

The owner of the historic Flatiron Building, desperate to hold a tenant, offered the company free rent until 2021; the company declined, expecting it could find an even better deal elsewhere. The value of the Empire State Realty Trust, which owns the iconic Empire State Building, has fallen by half this year.

Sales tax revenue dropped 35 percent in the second quarter and is down 15 percent on the year to date.

With tourists and commuters gone, cornerstones of the city’s retail corridors also have vanished. Brooks Brothers and Neiman Marcus are bankrupt; Macy’s is concentrating on its suburban stores; and smaller stores are fleeing empty streets and still-astronomical rents.

New York State, coping with its own $14-billion budget hole, has offered the city no help.

Now the administration of mayor Bill de Blasio is petitioning the state for permission to borrow $5 billion over 30 years from other lenders.

Some analysts say the arrangement would not permanently solve the city's fiscal woes but only delay the inevitable layoff of as many as 22,000 municipal workers and drastic cuts to city services.

Critics complain that de Blasio lagged far behind the crisis in offering plans to meet the fiscal shortfall.

TRENDS ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT

U.S. MARKETS FRONT

On the equity market front, it's more of the same. Stock markets keep rising as the global and domestic economies keep sinking.

The reason for yesterday's market boost, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, was because "investors [a.k.a. gamblers] cheered signs that political uncertainty may ebb following reports of President Trump's improving health."

As we analyze market conditions, we believe it will make no difference who wins The Presidential Reality Show®. The locking down of states, cities, and towns by politicians has caused massive economic destruction, which already has killed tens of thousands of business and ruined tens of millions of lives.

As we have been reporting, Yelp studies conclude that as of 31 August, over 30,000 retailers remained closed and an estimated 58 percent will not reopen.

On the restaurant front, their study shows that to date, 32,109 restaurants have closed down, of which 19,590 will not reopen. They also note that 6,451 bars closed down and 3,499 won't reopen.

Thus, not only are the business being devastated, so, too, are all of their employees who are now unemployed and the long chain of suppliers that serviced the operations.

And, of course, this is just one segment of the financial ruination that expands the industrial, commercial, professional, and artistic landscape that has been locked down and destroyed.

TREND FORECAST: *Considering the hard facts and indisputable realities of the damage caused by the political system locking down much of the nation, we find no correlation between rising equity markets and who will win the Presidential Reality Show®.*

When your dead, your gone. For society, the media, and politicians to believe the tens of millions of businesses across the globe that have been destroyed as a result of the lockdown will resurrect, to us, is pure fantasy.

Indeed, the "Greatest Depression" has begun. The economic damage inflicted upon humanity has not only crippled businesses, it has destroyed the lives of hundreds of millions of people across the globe.

As for stocks, September was the markets' first negative month since March. We maintain our forecast of a high likelihood stock will fall into bear territory by years' end.

And, please be sure to read Gregory Mannarino's article, "DEBT CRISIS 2.0: BE PREPARED" for a look inside the markets and how to protect yourself from the upcoming global meltdown.

Today, the Dow reversed a 200-point gain after President Trump tweeted: "I have instructed my representatives to stop negotiating until after the election when, immediately after I win, we will pass a major Stimulus Bill that focuses on hardworking Americans and Small Business."
Gold and silver slumped some 2 percent after President Trump called off the stimulus talks, since prices would rise on the news that the government would inject more cheap money into the system.

TRENDPOST: *It's not over 'til it's over. Despite the news of no new stimulus injections into the U.S. economy prior to Election Day, we forecast that if the markets start to crash before then, a stimulus deal will be made.*

And, regardless of who is elected president, we forecast more monetary methadone shots in 2021, as the nation's economy sinks deeper into the "Greatest Depression."

With more cheap money being pumped into the system, the dollar will continue to dive and gold and silver prices will resume their up-trend rise, hitting new highs. We maintain our forecast that gold will trade in the mid- to high $2,000 in 2021. and silver will double its current value, trading in the $60 per ounce range.

DEBT LOAD HOBBLES U.S. RECOVERY

When the economy shut down in March, the U.S. economy was toting $64 trillion in government, business, and consumer debt – more than three times the national GDP.

Economies with high debt tend to recover more slowly from a setback than economies with less borrowing.

In the U.S., up to 70 percent of the economy is made up of consumer spending. When household debt is high, as it is and has been for years in the U.S., households have less to spend when it comes time to spur economic growth.

Partly because of consumer debt, after the Great Recession, real median income didn't return to its 1999 peak of $61,526 until 2016.
In the months before the economic shutdown, the percentage of delinquent auto loans was approaching its peak level in the Great Recession.

Similarly, corporate debt climbed steadily in the months before the shutdown, leaving them with the decision now either to hire and invest in production or keep payrolls thin and use the money instead to meet their debt payments.

Overleveraged companies swelled the amount of "non-investment grade debt," otherwise known as junk bonds, to more than double since 2010. Artificially low interest rates and, now, central bank intervention have kept many of those companies from going bust.

Meanwhile, state and local governments have been squeezed between tax-averse voters and rising costs. Many public agencies have not set aside enough money to cover their pension liabilities, risking default and transferring those liabilities to federal guarantee programs.

With the pandemic pushing governments past the financial brink, many of those agencies already have laid off workers and cut services.

TRENDPOST: *Since peaking in February, state and local governments have shed over 1.2 million jobs. And, the U.S. Labor Department reported 216,000 government jobs have been lost in September.*

As the "Greatest Depression" worsens and sales go down, business go bust, people go broke, real estate dives… tax revenues will sharply fall, pushing cities and villages deeper in debt. Thus, more government jobs will be lost.

On the broader scale, as we continue to note, there is a complete disconnect between Wall Street and Main Street.

Equities should be tanking in tune with the economic meltdown spreading across the globe. Instead, they continue to be artificially propped up by central banks and governments' injections of monetary methadone to keep the money junkies high.

AMERICANS: GET OLD, RETIRE POOR

Half of Americans now aged 55 or older are likely to have less than $20,000 a year to live on at age 65, according to an analysis by economist Teresa Ghilarducci at New York's New School.

"That means chronic deprivation for the rest of your life," she said.

The reason: the economic shutdown. Older workers have been more vulnerable to layoffs than younger ones, leaving them jobless during a time of life when saving for retirement ramps up.

Three million older workers have been pushed out of the labor force since March. Nearly half of them may never find another job, a study by the New School's Retirement Equity Lab found.

As a result, jobless elders may feel compelled to drain money out of their retirement funds – something the CARES Act made more alluring by removing penalties on withdrawals made by people younger than 59.5 years and allowing them to pay back the funds tax-free within three years.

Also, employers have not been contributing normally to workers' retirement plans. During the Great Recession, 20 percent of employers suspended contributions to such plans; since January, about 50 percent have.

"They learned they could get away with it," Ghilarducci said.

Jobless people younger than 62, and therefore not yet able to collect Social Security or enroll in Medicare, are the most vulnerable, she said. "Millions of people could fall between the cracks."

TRENDPOST: *Adding to the dismal economic plight of many boomers is the dawn of an unprecedented era of chronic poor health. Among the conditions that are rising at historic rates: diabetes, heart failure, cancer, circulatory conditions, kidney and liver diseases, and related illnesses.*

Today, more than 25 percent of Americans over the age of 65 have been diagnosed with diabetes. Astoundingly, some 70 percent of boomers are overweight, and nearly 40 percent are clinically obese.

As a result, they will be far more dependent on others and government subsidies to survive. In fact, in the U.S., public health care expenses are expected to rise nearly 6 percent this year as a direct result of the increased spending necessary to cover the escalating number of boomers enrolling in Medicare health insurance programs.

Deaf, Blind, and Out of Their Mind

Latest estimates project that one in ten people older than 65 have developed features of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. This is a progressive, irreversible, non-curable disease that will continue to worsen despite the best medical care.

And as their conditions decline, they will need greater supervision and assistance. Dementia disorders will further tax already overburdened health care systems worldwide, most of which are ill equipped to provide medical care for these patients.

TREND FORECAST: *The world is not prepared for the impact the Bye, Bye Boomers trend is about to unleash.*

As the data shows, the golden years for millions of seniors in 2020 will be marked more by how to survive rather than how to thrive. As noted, the data in virtually every area that determines quality of life for seniors is negative and trending more negative.

The institutions and legacy support systems designed to help alleviate the impact of these trends is woefully inadequate.

Bye Bye Boomer is a macro, powerful trend. How seniors will house, feed and heal themselves are the three categories that demand creative, broad thinking.

From shared living options, such as co-housing, a newly emerging trend, to affordable, effective whole health healing alternatives that can improve the lifestyle of Golden Agers, there are numerous golden opportunities for Ontrendpreneurs®.

TRENDPOST: *As the economy declines and jobs are lost, more children have moved back with their parents. According to the Pew Research Center, "The share of 18- to 29-year-olds living with their parents has become a majority since U.S. coronavirus cases began spreading early this year, surpassing the previous peak during the Great Depression era. In July, 52% of young adults resided with one or both of their parents, up from 47% in February."*

On one hand, with more children at home, any income earned they can contribute toward living expenses and housing costs is a positive for the older generations that are short on cash.

On the other hand, it will put more downward pressure on the apartment rental sector, especially in large cities, that are (were) attractive experiences for younger generations.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME FALLS IN AUGUST, SPENDING RISES

Personal income fell 2.7 percent in August compared to July, due entirely to the end of federal unemployment benefits of up to $600 a week, the U.S. commerce department reported.

Household income remained, however, at 2 percent above February's mark because of one-time federal stimulus payments, ongoing unemployment benefits, and stock market profits, most of which accrued to the wealthiest 10 percent of the population.

Personal spending increased 1 percent in August over July, but far less than the 9-percent jump in May, 7 percent in June, and 2 percent in July.

Spending in some categories, such as cars and bicycles, has outpaced pre-pandemic amounts. The service sector – particularly restaurants and entertainment venues – lags far behind February's mark.

U.S. economic growth will slow to 2.5 percent in this year's fourth quarter, IHS Markit predicts, compared to the double-digit expansion analysts expect took place in the third.

LAYOFFS CONTINUE AS JOB CREATION SLOWS

American Airlines Group and United Airlines Holdings have begun laying off more than 32,000 workers between them now that federal support for airlines' payrolls has ended on 1 October. The Disney Co. has announced 28,000 workers temporarily furloughed now will be terminated.

Allstate Insurance is cutting 3,800 jobs, about 8 percent of its pre-pandemic labor force. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, a major publisher of textbooks and educational materials, is paring its payroll by 22 percent.

Other companies are likely to add to the ranks of the unemployed.

The end of the federal $600 weekly unemployment benefit has left millions with a subsistence income, hobbling consumer spending that could propel the economy and keep workers on the job. Also, the one-time $1,200 federal stimulus payment for individuals also has largely been spent or saved against potential hard times ahead.

“The layoffs are an additional headwind in an already weak labor market,” said Rubeela Farooqi, High Frequency Economics’ Chief U.S. Economist. “As long as the virus isn’t contained,” the soft labor market “is going to be an ongoing phenomenon.”

In September, nonfarm payroll rose by 661,000 jobs, not the 800,000 expected by economists surveyed by Dow Jones. The gap was attributed to thousands of schools being fully or partially closed, cutting 216,000 jobs, and 34,000 census-takers ended their work.

There were job gains, however, throughout other areas of the economy as the unemployment rate fell from 8.4 to 7.9 percent.

Leisure and hospitality businesses led the increase, adding 318,000 workers. Retailers took on 142,000 workers and health care and social services 108,000.

Transportation and warehousing gained 74,000 workers, manufacturers added 66,000, and financial services 36,000.

Also in September, about 318,000 furloughed workers were permanently fired. About 10 million of the 22 million jobs lost during the shutdown have yet to be recovered.

TREND FORECAST: *The rapid devastation of the hospitality, travel, restaurant, retail, entertainment, convention/trade show, theme park, theater and cinema businesses – and those who worked for them – that has been caused by government lockdowns is unprecedented.*

As we have noted, as the economy weakens and tax revenues decline, federal, state, and city governments will fire more employees, thus dramatically increasing long term job losses.

RETAIL BANKRUPTCIES HITTING RECORD HIGHS

Through mid-August this year, 29 major retailers had filed bankruptcy, passing the 22 filed last year during the same period, according to BDO, a professional services firm.

Clothing and footwear stores felt the brunt of this year's failures, along with home furnishing and department stores.

In the first six months of the year, 18 retail chains filed bankruptcy, including GNC Holdings, JCPenney, Neiman Marcus, Stage Stores, and Tuesday Morning. From 1 July through August, 11 more retailers went belly up, including Ascena Retail Group, Brooks Brothers, Jos. A. Banks, Lucky Brands, Men's Wearhouse, and Stein Mart.

The current pace of retail bankruptcies could set a record number this year, passing the previous mark of 48 large retailers that went bust in 2010 in the wake of the Great Recession, BDO said.

During the period, retailers collectively announced the closure of more than 10,000 brick-and-mortar stores, 6,000 of which resulted from bankruptcies.

Thousands of closures also were signaled by companies still in business, such as Bed Bath & Beyond, Gap, and Macy's.

Of the 130 million square feet of retail space going dark this year, more than half belong to just five companies: Bed Bath & Beyond, JCPenney, Macy's, Pier 1, and Stein Mart.

By mid-August, the number of vanishing stores already had surpassed the record of 9,500 for all of 2019.

Retailers are likely to close 25,000 stores in total this year, according to Coresight Research.

Before the economic shutdown closed the retail sector and sent shoppers online, many retail chains already had overborrowed and were competing in a market saturated by too many stores.

“The trend is still a lot of liquidations and asset sales,” noted BDO partner David Berliner.

SAN FRANCISCO LEADS NATIONAL RENTAL RATE DECLINE

The price of rental housing continues to decline around the U.S., with San Francisco’s rents falling 20 percent from a year previous, the steepest drop in the country.

September’s median price of a one-bedroom flat in the city was $2,380, down 7 percent from August, according to Zumper, an online apartment finder.

The price sag is due to a combination of tech companies permitting employees to work from home and unemployment resulting from the economic shutdown.

“I think we’re talking years” for the rental market “to fully recover, not months,” said Anthemos Georgiades, Zumper’s CEO.

Houses are still selling in San Francisco, although not as quickly as has been common in recent years and many owners have cut prices to draw buyers.

Listings reached a peak of 1,483 in August.

PEPSICO IS IN THE CHIPS

Pepsico reported $2.29 billion in third-quarter net revenue, in part because of stronger sales in Cheetos, Doritos, and other snack foods.

The company is struggling to keep up with demand for its new “Cheetos Mac’n Cheese” product, Pepsico said.

The company’s Quaker Oats division saw double-digit growth in its pasta and macaroni and cheese dishes.

International sales rose 4 percent, also driven by snack food sales.

New lockdowns in the face of a resurgent COVID virus, such as those in Spain, will slow the beverage market’s return to pre-pandemic sales volumes, the company said.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have been forecasting, the longer people are locked down, the more junk foods they are eating. And Pepsi’s soaring sales of Cheetos Mac’n Cheese continue to prove it.*

Also, as we have also been reporting, the line from the business mainstream media that people were eating healthy was, as evidenced by obesity and other self-inflicted health illnesses, Presstitute hype.

On the upside of this down trend, when lockdowns are fully eased and fear of dying from the virus subsides, for the now worried majorities, getting back in shape and getting healthy will be a growing trend for OnTrendpreneurs® to profit from.

The main target market will by the 18- to 45 year-old demographic. Currently, the field is wide open, ready to be filled with innovative strategies that will appeal to the higher levels of human consciousness.

WILL CHINA'S GOLDEN WEEK REAP GOLD?

China has entered its week-long shopping spree called "Golden Week," and economists will be observing the willingness of shoppers to open their wallets after the country appears to have firm control over its virus outbreak.

Beijing has not recorded a locally transmitted symptomatic case since 15 August, and *The New York Times* reported there seem to be two trends emerging: China has bounced back to near normalcy while other countries, like Spain, continue to grapple with the virus, and it seems the "ripple effects" from the outbreak are lingering.

There have been hundreds of millions of people in the country attending various events and taking brief vacations during the national holiday. The *BBC* reported approximately 550 million people will travel within the country for various festivities. Qunar, a travel service, told *Reuters* that economy flights to some areas of the country have sold out.

Beijing still has restrictions on those entering the country, and most venues are operating at about 75 percent capacity. But the country has loosened some of its rules, including face masks at all times.

The Times pointed out that although the numbers appear high, there seems to be trepidation by some citizens to resume carefree travel. The number of travelers is about 30 percent lower than in 2019, before the outbreak in Wuhan.

Zhang Tianbing, the head of the Asia-Pacific consumer products team at the consulting firm Deloitte, told the *NYT* that China shows consumption can bounce back once countries get a firm hold on the virus and customers have confidence, with both job and health security.

Citing government data, the *South China Morning Post* reported that the catering business in the country recovered 93 percent in August and restaurants have experienced high demand with "only a small number of seats in limited time slots" available.

"People's willingness to go out and travel is very strong, which will support further recovery in the catering industry," Fu Yifu, a senior researcher at the Suning Institute of Finance, told the paper. "When people travel, they have all meals outside, so the restaurant revenue will increase significantly."

TREND FORECAST: *China, the world's second largest economy, is forecast to have positive GDP growth this year, while the GDP of all other major economies sink into negative territory.*

Despite business not fully bouncing back, with the 150 million Chinese who once traveled abroad now traveling domestically, it supports another element of Beijing's duel circulation policy to rely less on exports and become more of a self-sustaining economy.

It should be noted that in 2000, the year before China was made a member of the World Trade Organization, only 10.5 million Chinese traveled overseas.

GLOBAL ECONOMIC TRENDS

MANUFACTURING STILL INCREASING AS HIRING STAGNATES. The Institute for Supply Management's (ISM) Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) rose to 55.4 in September, the fourth consecutive month showing growing strength.

A reading above 50 indicates expansion.

However, the gauge was 7.3 percent below its February pre-pandemic level.

The ISM's hiring sub-index registered 49.6 in September, indicating factories are still laying off more people than they hire. IHS Markit's employment survey for September showed a slight gain.

U.S. factories employed about 12.1 million workers in August, roughly 700,000 fewer than a year previous.

IHS Markit's Eurozone PMI edged up from 51.7 in August to 53.7 in September, largely on the strength of German exports.

Germany is one of China's major suppliers of machine tools and other capital equipment. Chinese manufacturing has bounced back strongly from the economic shutdown, chiefly due to government subsidies and foreign investment.

Some 251,000 workers in Europe lost their jobs in September, despite ongoing government programs aimed at subsidizing wages and keeping people on payrolls.

The continent's unemployment rate rose from 8 percent to 8.1 percent for the month.

In India, the manufacturing sector's PMI climbed from 52.0 in August to 56.8 in September on stronger exports. The number of jobless workers, however, increased during the month.

EUROPE'S CENTRAL BANK MAY LET INFLATION RUN. For the first time, the European Central Bank (ECB) is considering letting inflation exceed the bank's targeted rate of percent to boost prices on products and services.

The ECB may follow the U.S. Federal Reserve's lead, the ECB said. In September, the Fed said it may allow inflation to rise above its targeted 2-percent rate to make up for a long period of time when inflation has been below that number.

The Fed's shift in strategy has contributed to the weakening dollar in recent weeks, making U.S. products cheaper abroad. The strategy pressures other central banks to follow suit, some analysts believe.

"The usefulness of such an approach could be examined" during the bank's strategy review, said ECB president Christine Lagarde.

"The discussion is whether central banks should explicitly make up for" inflation falling short of central banks' targeted rates when those rates "have spent quite some time below their inflation goals," she added.

"If credible, such a strategy could strengthen the capacity of monetary policy to stabilize the economy" if inflation lags "because the promise of inflation overshooting" the bank's targeted rate "raises inflation expectations and therefore lowers real interest rates."

The Eurozone's economy has entered a deflationary period since the economic shutdown; boosting inflation could reverse that.

"Make-up strategies" to nudge inflation upward "may be less successful when people are not perfectly rational in their decisions – which is probably a good approximation of the reality we face."

The ECB expects to complete its strategy review by September 2021.

TREND FORECAST: *Yesterday, despite burgeoning debt levels and declining GDPs, the IMF called on nations around the world to increase fiscal stimulus to generate economic growth.*

Their report said countries should not worry about heavy debt loads and should keep borrowing money because interest rates are at historic lows.

We note this sharp reversal of the IMF, which had long been concerned that countries were taking on too much debt but are now telling them to go deeper in debt… as it illustrates the fear they have of global economic meltdown.

Therefore, with the IMF calling for more cheap money pumping, we forecast the more monetary methadone injected into their economies to artificially boost them, the deeper the value of their currencies will sink and the higher gold and silver prices will rise.

And, we maintain our forecast that before their currencies decline into Weimer Republic worthlessness, they will invent a digital currency with a new name that will also be backed by nothing and printed on nothing. (See our 24 March article, "FROM DIRTY CASH TO DIGITAL TRASH.")

RENMINBI CONTINUES CLIMBING AGAINST THE DOLLAR. The renminbi, China's internal currency, has risen about 3.6 percent against the dollar during the past three months, rising last week to 6.82 to the dollar and setting it on course for its strongest performance since the third quarter of 2018.

The renminbi's rise is due to several factors:

- The dollar has undergone a global sell-off.
- Investors are assuming that the worst of the U.S.-China trade war is over.
- Neither nation shows signs of quitting the "phase one" trade treaty signed in January.
- China's apparently strong industrial economic recovery is an investment magnet; more than $42 billion flowed into the country's stocks and bonds in 2019's second quarter.
- China's ban on outbound tourists during the economic shutdown kept hundreds of millions of renminbi at home instead of being spent outside the country.
- The U.S. Federal Reserve's decision to hold interest rates on bonds near zero, China's internal interest rates are about two points higher, so holding renminbi-denominated debt is more lucrative than dollar-denominated debt.

China's bonds are forecast to draw another $140 billion in investments next year when China's sovereign debt is included in the FTSE Russell's government bond index.

But "the main impact on the renminbi has come from the broad-based tariff increases we've had over the last couple of years," said Mansoor Modi-uddin, Bank of Singapore's Chief Economist.

No new tariffs are expected before the 3 November U.S. presidential election.

TREND FORECAST: *As previously noted, we forecast the 20th century belonged to the U.S., whereas the 21st century will be China's, in part because the business of the U.S. is war and the business of China is business.*

It is interesting to note that for years, President Trump blamed rising Chinese imports because their currency, the yuan, was being artificially devalued. Thus, the cheaper their currency, the less cost to buy their products with strong currencies.

China's exports are still rising, however, as their currency grows stronger and its economy is forecast to be the only one of major nations whose GDP will grow this year.

In part, we attribute the nation's economic strength as a result of the government stimulus to build its infrastructure, money being pumped into small business sectors, thus creating jobs, and its move toward a self-sustaining economy.

JAPAN'S RECOVERY SLOWER THAN EXPECTED. The Tankan Survey of business outlooks among Japan's major manufacturers in the third quarter edged closer to positive territory, moving from -34 to -27 but not reaching the -23 analysts had expected.

The key auto industry registered -61, iron and steel -55, and production machinery weakened to -43. Hotels and restaurants reported a near-lethal -81.

Communications and construction each were positive at +21 and retail gained 16 points to +18.

The survey contacted about 10,000 companies and had a response rate of 99 percent.

The slow pace of recovery is dashing hopes of a smooth turnaround and leading more economists to foresee a protracted recession.

The government's stimulus program includes direct payments to households and a "Go To" campaign promoting domestic tourism, and the Bank of Japan is offering low-interest business loans.

REPORT ON CANADA'S MASSIVE DEFICIT TOO ROSY, CRITICS SAY. Canada's $328-billion federal budget deficit is "barely sustainable" but will decline to $73.8 billion in 2021 into 2022 and continue declining after that, a report from Yves Giroux, the nation's Parliamentary Budget Officer, has concluded.

The forecast estimates $225 billion in pandemic response and economic rescue measures in place or in planning as of 1 September.

It also assumes the country will sustain current public health measures for the next 12 to 18 months as a vaccine is developed and disseminated; government stimulus and rescue spending programs will taper off through 2021 as now planned with no others begun; and the Bank of Canada keeps interest rates low.

“We project that the level of real GDP will reach its pre-crisis level by early-2022,” the report said.

The report does not include new proposed spending for universal prescription coverage and a national childcare initiative.

Canada’s GDP for the first six months of this year lagged pre-pandemic performance by 13.4 percent, the report noted, but expects two-thirds of that drop-off to be recovered before December.

In fact, the report could be outdated already, said Concordia University economist Moshe Lander. The COVID-19 crisis remains unpredictable, and a second wave has begun in places like Ontario and Quebec, he said.

“I think we’re going to have to delay a lot of what they say six months to a year,” said Mr. Lander, “because of the second wave that’s coming and the lockdowns that are going to be connected to it.”

The government also has not yet offered a plan to help laid-off workers in sectors, such as food service, that have permanently shrunk to find jobs in other industries, he noted.

GOING DOWN, GOING BUST, GOING OUT

How bad is it in the current world of businesses, careers, jobs, and professions?

AVIATION'S WOES TO IMPACT 46 MILLION JOBS WORLDWIDE. Of the 88 million jobs worldwide that depend fully or partly, directly or indirectly, on aviation, 46 million are likely to be lost temporarily or permanently, according to a 30 September report from the Geneva-based Air Transport Action Group.

Airlines, airports, and aircraft makers alone will trim payrolls by about 43 percent this year, lopping about 4.8 million jobs, the report said.
Another 26 million jobs could vanish from tourism and 15 million from companies that sell goods and services to airport retailers and shops that cater to tourists and travelers.

The economic activity that aviation supports could plummet by 52 percent, costing the global economy $1.8 trillion, the report warned.

About 58 percent of tourists arrive at their destinations by air.

Air travel will return to pre-pandemic levels no sooner than some time in 2023 and probably not until 2024, industry analysts and executives have said.

REGAL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP CLOSES ALL U.S. AND U.K. THEATERS. The second-largest movie theater chain in the world, as well as in the U.S., will suspend operations indefinitely at its 536 U.S. theaters and 127 in the U.K. on 8 October, leaving as many as 45,000 employees jobless.

After being shuttered since March, many of the chain's theaters reopened in August to show "Tenet," a major Warner Brothers thriller. Due to varying state and local restrictions, however, only about two-thirds of theaters opened.

Theaters in New York City and Los Angeles have remained under mandated closure, shutting down two essential markets.

The $200-million flick grossed only $41.2 million in the U.S. during its first five weeks, leading MGM to again delay the release of its new “No Time to Die” James Bond film from next month until April 2021.

More than a dozen other films, including “Black Widow” and “Wonder Woman 1984,” have either seen their releases delayed or skipped theaters and were released on video, as was Disney’s “Mulan.”

With no blockbuster to draw audiences, Regal has decided to leave theaters dark for at least the next several months.

Regal is unable to offer audiences "the breadth of strong commercial films necessary for them to consider coming back to theaters against the backdrop of Covid-19," the company said.

Cineworld Group, Regal’s heavily-indebted parent company, reported revenues plunged 70 percent during the first six months of this year, leaving the company with a loss of $1.6 billion. Cineworld’s share price dove 42 percent on 5 October following the Regal announcement.

On 30 September, the National Association of Theatre Owners, the Directors Guild of America, and the Motion Picture Association sent a letter to Congress pleading for aid for the industry.

Ninety-three percent of movie theater companies have lost more than 75 percent of their second-quarter revenue compared to last year, the letter said, and, without aid, 69 percent of small and mid-size theater companies will go bankrupt within the next few months, costing two-thirds of related jobs, or about 150,000 in the movie exhibition industry.

TWO MORE SHALE OIL PRODUCERS GO BUST. Oasis Petroleum and Lone Star Resources have been the 37thand 38th U.S. oil firms to file bankruptcy this year, putting the industry on track for the most bankruptcies since 2016.

Oasis, which worked the shale fields of west Texas and North Dakota’s Williston Basin, presented a plan already approved by its creditors to reduce its debt by $1.8 billion. The company has secured $450 million in loans to keep operating.

Lone Star, a player in Texas's Eagle Ford shale beds, also presented the bankruptcy court with a pre-approved deal with creditors to pare its $626 million in debt by more than 60 percent.

During the first eight months of 2020, 36 producers collectively toting $51 billion in debt declared bankruptcy.

SHELL CUTS JOBS. Royal Dutch Shell, the oil giant with more than $300 billion in annual sales before the economic shutdown, will cut 7,000 to 9,000 workers or about 10 percent of its workforce.

In June, Shell wrote down the value of its petroleum reserves by as much as $22 billion as the economic shutdown and surge in renewable energy slashed global oil demand.

Shell says it will use the money it saves with the layoffs, plus its oil and gas profits, to invest in "lower-carbon products" and it will no longer measure success by the number of barrels or cubic feet of gas it produces.

TRENDS IN THE MARKETS *by Gregory Mannarino*

DEBT CRISIS 2.0: BE PREPARED

In my 29 September **Trends Journal** article, "MARKETS: DAY OF RECKONING," I explained how the U.S. middle class is being systematically eliminated and that the middle class is America's *real* economy.

Although the concept of a “middle class” is still engrained in the American psyche, the reality is now it is just an illusion. Today’s “average” person is living way beyond his/her means and typically has little to zero net worth.

Granted, many of the middle class may be invested in an employer-sponsored 401k, but these gains are non-realized. In other words, they do not exist. In the case of a 401k, being rich on paper is vastly different than possessing real liquid assets. “Liquid” meaning these assets can be readily converted into cash. For many, it is difficult, if not impossible, to exit from their 401ks… so their “paper” gains cannot be realized.

Looking at the Market

Stock market valuations are now in hyper-bubble territory, and they have a less-than-zero bearing, nor any connection whatsoever, to the real economy. Moreover, the U.S. economy is in a full-on economic meltdown with no end in sight.

The propaganda machine via the mainstream media relentlessly feeds the masses completely false, propagandized misinformation disseminated straight out of the mouths of corrupt politicians. Every piece of government statistic is faked, including numbers regarding the unemployed, labor force participation, manufacturing, productivity, payrolls, hourly wages, exports, and GDP. America truly has become Never Never Land.

Even though America is in a full-on economic collapse, the stock market continues to rise, as I frequently write about in my articles for the **Trends Journal**. It’s a phenomenon… created by the Federal Reserve’s massive money-pumping schemes.

The 2008 financial crisis was called a “credit crisis,” which is a somewhat misleading way of saying “debt crisis.” Think about it: is your credit card giving you credit? Or creating debt?

Today, the world is facing a much more serious debt crisis than the one in ’08, which led to a global meltdown. But there is no comparison… the next meltdown will be far worse.

Own Gold and Silver

In my opinion, the simplest way to bet against the ever-expanding global debt crisis is to hold both physical gold and silver. Gold and silver are anti-debt units, which I believe are massively undervalued. I explain to those who follow my work that they need to **"**Bet Against the Debt and Become Their Own Central Bank." As I see it, both gold and silver are well-positioned to increase in value multiple fold when the debt bubble inevitably bursts.

Be prepared!

Author's note: *Beating the markets in this environment is easy, provided you know what to look out for. Beyond a doubt, what do we know will continue? That central banks will continue to vastly inflate.*

This means the Fed will continue to flood epic sums of cash into the market by buying treasuries, therefore keeping yields artificially suppressed. This mechanism will continue for the foreseeable future.

From an equity/stock standpoint, this will cause stock prices to rise/inflate. As a trader, I take full advantage of this by trading options. My gains are made real by moving into and out of positions relatively quickly (though I am ***not*** *a day trader).*

Moreover, I post every position I enter and exit in real time publicly in my newsletter. From when I started my newsletter in March of this year to date, I have publicly placed over 70 trades, and I have suffered only two realized losses. My newsletter is free to subscribers, so consider signing up:
https://gregorymannarino.substack.com/

by Gregory Mannarino TradersChoice.net

TRENDS IN SURVIVALISM *by Bradley J. Steiner*

DEFENSE TIPS FOR THE MEAN CITY

Aside from the techniques of self-defense (i.e., strikes of the hands, kicks, releases and counterattacks, use of weapons, etc.), there are many subtle and obvious things a person can do in order to either reduce the chances of being attacked or be fully prepared in the event an attack comes.

Having the skill in which to handle a situation or being in possession of a weapon is not enough. If these things are neutralized by one or more attackers who maneuver effectively to take you off guard, then skills and weapons become useless against them.

What follows is some of the essential tactical miscellany I always stress to students and that I enjoin them to make second nature, so as always to be ready.

Try to not have your hands encumbered with packages. If your hands are full with packages, you look and are more vulnerable to attack (and to having whatever you are carrying robbed). Have at least one hand completely free at all times. Do not drop your attention to what is around and near you because you are thinking about what you just purchased and are concentrating on getting it into your vehicle or onto a public conveyance. Street punks watch for these things. They target persons who appear to be preoccupied. No matter what, when you are out and about you must place a priority on situational awareness (alertness) and security.

In fact, you may have successfully discouraged some piece of street trash from attacking you, and you'll never know it. No one walks up to someone and says, "You know, I was planning to mug you, but you just didn't look like an easy mark,

and you seemed to be too conscious of everything around you. So, I decided to look for another victim."

Throw what's in your hands into your attacker's face. If you have something in your hands (bag of groceries, box from a store, large item you just bought, etc.), throw it in your attacker's face, and then break his leg with a kick or access your legally carried sidearm. If it's something that lends itself to use as a weapon, use it that way. A shovel you just purchased from a hardware store, perhaps, or some other lawn tool, etc.

In a violent emergency, everything else drops to a level of insignificance and everything you do, possess, and think is directed toward the destruction of your attacker(s). This shift must come instantly so as to shock your attacker and create an advantage for you that you must not relinquish!

Always be aware of your surroundings. The "knock-out punch" game is still popular amongst some savages. It cannot effectively be carried off if no one can approach you and get close enough to attack without your perceiving his approach. When walking down any city street, walk down the center. This makes a complete surprise attack from an alley, doorway, or from between parked vehicles much more difficult to launch. Assuming you remain aware and awake, you'll see it coming.

Be cognizant of footsteps. Pay attention to anyone approaching from your sides or rear. If you hear something, turn, and if it is an assailant, ***attack him at once!*** Someone closing in on you with an aggressive demeanor, an upraised fist, an object being wielded as a potential weapon, etc., demands a vicious retaliatory reaction – right now! – by leaning away and lashing out with a side kick. (On my "American Combato" YouTube channel, see Professor Bryans' demonstration of this kick and of the handaxe chop, both excellent ways to handle an undesirable who moves in on you quickly.)

Gravel to the rescue: I never tire of recommending that students carry a handful of ordinary gravel in their outer pocket. Tossed suddenly into an assailant's face, it disorients him long enough to access a weapon, use a weapon, or employ just about any offensive unarmed combat action you wish.

Keys for self-defense: Keys – especially large truck keys – make excellent weapons. They can be ripped across an attacker's face; driven end first into his eye or throat, neck or nostril… and damage is assured. Assuming you have your key in hand, ready to open your vehicle or apartment door when you are set upon,

use it! One young lady I know saved herself from a violent attack in NYC some time ago by reacting in just this way when she went to her car, which was in a parking garage. She saved herself from harm, and the piece of garbage ran like a rabbit, screaming in pain.

Keep your sidearm readily accessible: When you obtain a concealed carry permit and a handgun, be certain to carry your sidearm where it is readily accessible. I do not like ankle holsters, except for carrying a second handgun. Accessibility is slow and cumbersome, and you want that sidearm in your hand and ready to go in a fraction of a second should you need it. Carry it in a convenient and readily accessible manner, and practice with it empty for rapid, effective drawing in an emergency.

Teach your child to run and scream if confronted: If you have a child, teach your child that his or her proper reaction in a situation where you may be confronted by trouble in the street is to run away from the scene and scream loudly and repeatedly for the police. This will remove your child from immediate access by whoever is creating the problem and free you to deal with the creature as you must without fearing your child will be injured. This is good advice for your wife or girlfriend, too (unless, of course, she is an effective combat shooter and is carrying a lawful sidearm!).

Utilize your chair if necessary: If you are seated at a table or in a chair (this doesn't apply when seated at a counter, etc.) and a suspicious-looking individual approaches, stand up and innocently drop your hand to rest on the back of the chair. Now you are braced to: a) deliver a kick while perfectly balanced, and b) use the chair as a weapon. After disorienting him first with a fast kick to his shin, a chair can then be used against an assailant to smash him with over the head. Or, you may use it very effectively as a lion tamer uses a chair to keep a jungle cat at bay. Very effective against a knife attack!

For the ladies: scream loudly if intimidated: One thing a freak does not want is to attract attention. If you are approached by someone who attempts to intimidate you in a store or other populated area, scream at the top of your lungs: "HELP POLICE! I NEED THE POLICE! THIS F—ING BASTARD IS ASSAULTING ME!"

Scream and don't stop. This is for those situations when a menacing, frightening approach is made – not when you are physically attacked outright. In the latter instance, only a violent, powerful, relentless attack against your attacker is in order. Calling for help under these circumstances will likely prompt an attacker to try to knock you unconscious or kill you.

Lock your vehicle doors between stops: Whenever you make a brief stop with your vehicle (for gas, to pick up a snack at a convenience store, etc.), lock your vehicle's door and leave the windows rolled up. A not unheard-of type of attack is made by criminals who enter someone's (usually a woman's) car in just such a situation. They hide behind the driver's seat in the back. When the driver returns to the vehicle and drives off, the offender arises with a weapon and forces the driver to stop or to go where the criminal wishes.

Don't utilize the peephole in your front door: Peepholes are not necessarily safe or a good idea. Persons have been shot through their door's peephole when they looked to see who was outside. Or, more crudely but no less dangerous, assailants have been known to jam a screwdriver through the peephole into the resident's eye. My advice: do not open your door unless you are expecting someone or have good reason to believe that you know who is on the other side of your door. Security cameras (placed high to avoid tampering) are good.

Familiarize yourself with the I.D./badges of your local and state police: Make it your business to know and be able to identify the I.D. and badges of your local and state police. Pretending to be a law enforcement officer is one ruse that is very common with criminals.

If someone at your door is declaring he is "the police" (or from city utilities, the phone company, etc.), unless you called him yourself, answer by saying "Just a moment, please, I just got out of the shower; I have to put some clothes on." Then go to your phone immediately and call whichever department the individual claims to be from. If no officer (or repairman, etc.) has been dispatched, either tell the police you have someone attempting to gain entry to your home or hang up and call the police and request immediate help.

And forget what you may have heard about slow response times. When the police believe a forceful break-in and assault is imminent, they get there and fast!

If you are followed: Should you ever discover you are being followed, do not panic. Do not lead your pursuer to your residence, either. Instead, go immediately into the nearest store and report that you must call the police; it's an emergency. Then telephone the police, give them your location, and explain you are being followed. Stay put until the police arrive.

Be careful and courteous with strangers: Be extra-courteous (and extra careful!) with any stranger. No harm in politely answering: i.e., "I wish I could, buddy, but I'm broke, myself." It's a far better way to refuse a stranger's request

for a handout than any abrupt, rude, or contemptuous expression of dismissal and/or refusal. With both freaks and so-called “normal” people, sensitivity is through the roof today. A lack of courtesy might very well trigger violence when violence never was intended in the first place!

I must conclude this brief discussion of cautions with this reminder: We are living in a very dangerous time, and urban America is the most dangerous of places. Be alert, aware, and ready; but never betray fear and lack of confidence by being rude, acting like a “tough guy,” or bluffing. Just equip yourself with the unarmed and (to the extent it is legal) armed capacity to defend yourself and those you love.

When you are truly prepared, it shows and is projected without any bravado or pretenses.

by Bradley J. Steiner

2020 COVID-19 TREND REPORT

“GIVE ME LIBERTY” … OR GIVE ME MASK

Leaders speak, Presstitutes parrot them, and the proletariat follow.

Lacking the capacity and courage to Think for Themselves or too cowardly to do so, the same class of masses that Heiled Hitler, saluted Stalin, and marched to Mussolini now obediently believe and obey what's fed to them by their government masters and media whores who have led them to fight the COVID War.

On 8 September, the *Washington Post* and the statistical analysis company Qualtrics distributed a nationwide survey from 7 August to 7 September. The goal was to find out how Americans feel about the lockdown restrictions ordered in the vast majority of states.

The result: over 70 percent of Americans are fine with giving up significant freedoms in order to fight the coronavirus.

The survey asked for opinions on the following restrictions:

- Require people to wear masks in public – or not, out of respect for personal freedom

- Close nonessential businesses – or not, out of respect for economic freedom

- Require people to cooperate with contact tracers – or not, out of respect for the right to privacy

- Require people to stay at home – or not, out of respect for freedom of movement

- Restrict religious gatherings – or not, because of religious freedom

- Restrict public demonstrations – or not, because of freedom of speech and assembly

- Suspend asylum and refugee admissions – or not, protecting human rights

- Use cellphone data to track the movement of people who test positive for the coronavirus – or not, given a right to privacy

Getting the most support, with a four to one majority, was the requirement that all people wear masks in public.

The second most supported lockdown policy was the shutting down of nonessential businesses.

Looking at six of the freedom impositions: mask mandates, shutting down of nonessential businesses, stay-at-home orders, restrictions on public demonstrations, restrictions on religious gatherings, and cooperating with contact tracers, between 69.4 percent to 78.3 percent of respondents were in favor of less freedom.

The only restriction opposed by a majority of respondents was the use of cellphone data to track infected citizens. Just over 58 percent were against it.

Of the impositions agreed on by a majority, the one with the lowest support level, 60 percent, was the suspension of asylum and refugee admissions.

Political Divide

Freedom restrictions were supported by 74.2 percent of Democrats compared to 61.5 percent of Republicans. While Libertarians agreed the least with the impositions, they still supported them by a slight majority of 52.1 percent.

Independent voters agreed to less freedom by 68 percent.

According to the two persons who analyzed the data for the *Washington Post*, Rebecca Sanders and Jack Mewhirter, both associate professors of political science at the University of Cincinnati, across party lines, "Those critical of the president are more likely to favor limits on rights and freedoms to protect public health. Accordingly, Republicans critical of Trump are more supportive of restrictive policies than Democrats who approve of his performance."

Conclusion

Professors Sanders and Mewhirter summed up the overall data: "All this suggests Americans are more willing to trade off rights and freedoms to protect public health than the protests might suggest. The public, on aggregate, is highly concerned about the pandemic and willing to sacrifice to contain it."

TRENDPOST: *Obeying leaders and following orders is, and has been, a global trend for millennia. Starting yesterday, the French government declared that for the next two weeks, Paris is to be placed on maximum COVID-19 alert: restaurants*

must implement new sanitary protocols to stay open, while bars, gyms, and swimming pools will be closed.

As with the U.S. and many other nations, the polls show the proles are in favor of marching off to the COVID War: a poll published on Sunday by BFM television showed that 61 percent of people living in Paris and its suburbs support the closing of bars.

TRENDPOST: *Absent from media coverage is that the lockdowns have not worked in nations which have locked down the hardest, while the case rates are down in nations such as Sweden and Belarus where there were not lockdowns.*

Furthermore, the amount of days a lockdown persists and the new sanitary regulations imposed on businesses by governments have been issued without supportive scientific evidence.

For example, why not lockdown for 13 days or 17 days? Why precisely two weeks?
Indeed, politicians and Presstitutes blame the spike in cases on the people for not obeying their COVID War dictates rather than the failure of government actions that have destroyed millions of lives and businesses around the world and have done nothing to protect those most susceptible of dying from the virus.

TRENDPOST: *With virus cases rising but death rates remaining low, in central Europe, nations such as the Czech Republic are re-introducing state of emergency orders. What should be noted, but is barely reported, is that the longer and harder nation's lock down, the less taxes governments will collect.*

Again, as we have illustrated, the politicians who launched the COVID War – just as with politicians who launched other wars – have no exit strategy to end it. Thus, dire suffering and long implications of their draconian actions will continue to create severe socioeconomic damage.

As a result of the revenue shortfalls, governments will raise taxes, which in turn will be a major platform for new anti-establishment political parties that will be forming across the globe.

FACE MASKS: POLITICS COUNTS, SCIENCE DOESN'T

As noted, the **Trends Journal** has been reporting for several months on the scientific evidence disputing the political mandates of mask wearing.

A report, "Why Face Masks Don't Work: A Revealing Review," by Dr. John Hardie was published by the Oral Health Group in Canada in October 2016. Dr. Hardie has been investigating infectious disease control for over 30 years, and his numerous articles have been featured in Canadian medical journals. Reviewing seven medical studies, Dr. Hardie concludes:

> "With their original purpose being highly questionable it should be no surprise that the ability of face masks to act as respiratory protective devices is now the subject of intense scrutiny.
>
> No matter how well a mask conforms to the shape of a person's face, it is not designed to create an air tight seal around the face. Masks will always fit fairly loosely with considerable gaps along the cheeks, around the bridge of the nose and along the bottom edge of the mask below the chin. These gaps do not provide adequate protection as they permit the passage of air and aerosols when the wearer inhales.
>
> Traditionally face masks have been recommended to protect the mouth and nose from the 'droplet' route of infection, presumably because they will prevent the inhalation of relatively large particles. Their efficacy must be re-examined in light of the fact that aerosols contain particles many times smaller than 5 microns."

A number of medical professionals have pointed out the lack of hard evidence regarding the efficacy of masks in controlling the spread of infections. Two examples:

- In 2015, Dr. R. MacIntyre, Professor of Infectious Diseases at the University of New South Wales, writes in the *British Medical Journal*, "The use of reusable cloth masks is widespread globally, particularly Asia, which is an important region for emerging infections, but there is no clinical research to inform their use and most policies offer no guidance on them. Health economic analyses of facemasks are scarce and the few published cost effectiveness models do not use clinical efficacy data. The lack of research on facemasks and respirators is reflected in varied and sometimes conflicting policies and guidelines."

- In 2014, research consultant Lisa Brosseau and industrial hygienist Dr. Rachael Jones published an article appearing on the website of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy in which they wrote, "Medical and infection control professionals have relied for years on a paradigm for aerosol transmission of infectious diseases based on very outmoded research and an overly simplistic interpretation of the data."

2020: Masks and Politics

On 23 July, Tom Jefferson, honorary research fellow, and Carl Heneghan, Director of the Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine (CEBM) at the University of Oxford, published an article in which they wrote, "The increasing polarized and politicized views on whether to wear masks in public during the current COVID-19 crisis hides a bitter truth on the state of contemporary research and the value we pose on clinical evidence to guide our decisions."

Published on the CEBM website, the authors note that after reviewing 12 studies on the effectiveness of wearing masks, only one of them included the inexpensive cloth masks most people are wearing. That study, done in Vietnam, "found ILI (influenza) rates 13 times higher in Vietnamese hospital workers allocated to cloth masks compared to medical/surgical masks."

The authors cite a June report by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health that states, "Health authorities have given conflicting recommendations regarding the use of facemasks by asymptomatic individuals in the community to reduce the spread of COVID-19."

The Institute adds, “The undesirable effects of facemasks include the risks of incorrect use, a false sense of security (leading to relaxation of other interventions), and contamination of masks. In addition, some people experience problems breathing, discomfort, and problems with communication.” The Norwegian Institute report concludes, “There is no reliable evidence of the effectiveness of non-medical facemasks in community settings.”

The CEBM article also notes, “The small number of trials and lateness in the pandemic cycle is unlikely to give us reasonably clear answers… This abandonment of the scientific modus operandi and lack of foresight has left the field wide open for the play of opinions, radical views and political influence.”

The two medical researchers conclude, “It would appear that despite two decades of pandemic preparedness, there is considerable uncertainty as to the value of wearing masks.”

TRENDPOST: *These and other reports on the ineffectiveness and dangers of constant mask wearing are absent in mainstream media coverage. And, now, young children are being conditioned not only to wear masks and embrace sanitary hysteria… but to become socially distanced from playmates and older people.*

FAT CHANCE COVID WON’T KILL YOU

Since the onset of the COVID War, when some New York City hospitals were being filled with coronavirus patients, the **Trends Journal** cited medical research concluding that among the most vulnerable victims were those suffering from obesity, Type 2 diabetes, respiratory conditions, and heart disease.

In the 21 April **Trends Journal**, we reported:

> A new study published this month in the Oxford University Press medical journal Clinical Infectious Diseases shows patients younger than 60 with a BMI in the 30-34 range ("obese") who contracted the virus were being admitted to hospitals at double the rate of non-obese peers, and, once in a hospital setting, they were nearly twice as likely to need the resources of an intensive care unit.
>
> "Obesity is more important for hospitalization than whether you have high blood pressure or diabetes, though these often go together, and it's more important than coronary disease or cancer or kidney disease, or even pulmonary disease," said Dr. Leora Horwitz, director of the Center for Healthcare Innovation and Delivery Science at NYU Langone.
>
> More confirmation that COVID-19 is primarily a health issue for the elderly and obese comes from a second study conducted by NYU doctors and researchers, which was published on 12 April. The report showed the strongest predictor of the need for hospitalization from COVID-19 was being older than 75, second strongest was being 65-75, and the third most likely factor was being 'severely' obese.

Then, on 10 June, the medical journal *BMJ* published an editorial citing the high-risk factor of those who are obese contracting COVID-19 and calling on governments to take a more active role in educating and helping to prevent the rise in obesity. One author, Professor Graham MacGregor of the Queen Mary University of London, said, "I think people have recognized now that based on every study you look at – including the early studies in China which were open studies, then from Europe, then from New York – they all show obesity increases the severity of COVID-19 and increases mortality."

Going Down Heavy

According to the CDC, 71.6 percent of Americans adults aged 20 and over are overweight, and 42.2 are obese.

Now, an 8 September peer-reviewed study in the journal American Association for the Advancement of Science, as reported in Science magazine, shows that beyond obesity, even people who are "overweight" are also at higher risk of dying from the coronavirus.

Previously, it was thought that only those defined as "clinically obese" were at high risk. Obesity is rated according to a body mass index (BMI), which takes into

account one's height and weight. As the Mayo Clinic confirms, those with a BMI of 30 or more are considered "clinically" obese. But the updated data shows even those defined as "overweight" with a BMI of 25-30 are also at high risk.

In our 25 August Trends Journal, we reported, "A study from Columbia University revealed that clinically obese people who had contracted COVID-19 were 60 percent more likely to die." We went on to note, citing facts from the CDC, that "obesity rates are afflicting Black and Hispanics at higher rates than Whites."

And in the 14 April **Trends Journal**, after Governor Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan locked down the entire state to fight the COVID War, we wrote, "While the Governor decided to shut down the entire state, missing in the reporting is that Detroit, a city of some 4.3 million that has seen a huge rise in poverty over the past few decades, is the scene of nearly 90 percent of all COVID-19 deaths in the state. Millions of destitute residents, already in poor health and with poor eating habits, live in rundown, unsanitary housing and lack access to decent health care."

Better Late Than Never

Repeating what we have been reporting for several months, last Tuesday, *The New York Times* said, "Excess weight goes hand in hand in hand with other medical conditions, like high blood pressure and diabetes, which may by themselves make it harder to fight COVID-19."

The article pointed out that obesity has a particularly devastating health effect on poor Blacks and Latinos who have higher rates of obesity. (According to 29 June data on the CDC website, non-Hispanic blacks had the highest age-adjusted prevalence of obesity at 49.6 percent, followed by Hispanics at 44.8 percent, and non-Hispanic whites at 42.2 percent). The *NYT* article also points out that the large numbers of minorities living in poor neighborhoods often have less access to quality medical care.

An article published on 11 August in the medical journal *medRXiv* titled, "Descriptive epidemiology of 16,780 hospitalized COVID-19 patients in the United States" showed an even stronger link between excess weight and those needing to be hospitalized after contracting the coronavirus: a hefty 77.2 percent of the patients admitted to hospitals with severe COVID-19 symptoms were obese or overweight.

A study published on 3 June by the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center states, "When obesity occurs, a person's own fat cells can set off a complex inflammatory chain reaction that can further disrupt metabolism and weaken immune response – potentially placing people at higher risk of poor outcomes from a variety of diseases and infections, including COVID-19."

Lockdowns Making the Problem Worse

Medical evidence makes it clear that excess fat suppresses the body's natural immune system from functioning at needed strength. Dr. Barry M. Popkin, Distinguished Professor of Nutrition at the University of North Carolina, wrote in a university newsletter on 26 August about the devastating effects of governors closing down economies and issuing stay-at-home restrictions:

> "The pandemic's resulting lockdown has led to a number of conditions that make it harder for individuals to achieve or sustain a healthy weight. Working from home, limiting social visits, and reducing everyday activities – all in an effort to stop the spread of the virus – means we're moving less than ever. The ability to access healthy foods also has taken a hit. Economic hardships put those who are already food-insecure at further risk, making them more vulnerable to conditions that can arise from consuming unhealthy foods."

TREND FORECAST: *Once again, the mainstream media is not only late in reporting the hard virus facts of who is dying, at what age, and why… instead, they sell fear and hysteria while essentially downplaying the scientific results when they do report them.*

As Gerald Celente has been saying loudly and clearly for months, and what is absent from the "wait for the vaccine" mainstream media, is that a strong defense against any virus is a strong immune system.

We forecast a strong growth market for whole health healing opportunities for OnTrendpreneurs® to capitalize on as sizable segments of populations move toward embracing a "New Age 2.0" body, mind, and spirit movement.

CASES RISE BUT DEATH COUNT RARELY MENTIONED

On 3 October, *Yahoo* published an article with the headline: “These 11 states Now Have the Worst Covid Outbreaks in the US.”

Seeing this headline, an inexperienced reader reasonably could assume that a very dangerous disease has spread across America. If one examines the article more thoroughly, however, the fear narrative quickly falls apart.

The article begins its fear campaign by stating the pandemic appeared to be winding down in August and September, but, in recent weeks, the U.S. has seen an 8 percent rise in COVID cases.

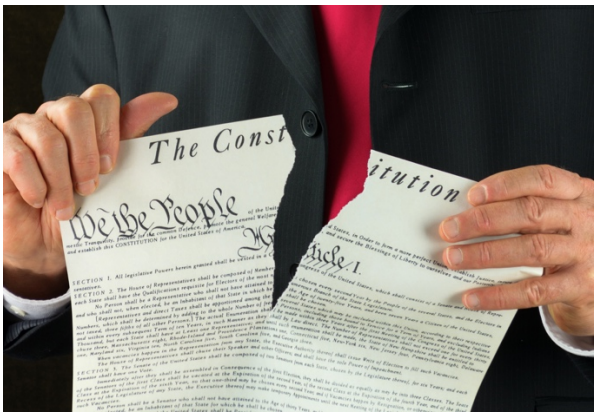
Stop here and think for a minute… what information is being omitted?

On deeper scrutiny of the “8-percent increase” in cases, we find the article has left out how many tests were performed. Without knowing the amount of increase (or decrease) in testing, the “8 percent” figure is completely irrelevant.

The article loses further credibility by omitting the number of deaths from the states suffering the “worst outbreaks.” Yet, it does list those suffering the “worst outbreaks” in cases: Alabama, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Idaho, Arkansas, Iowa, Montana, Utah, Wisconsin, South Dakota, and North Dakota.

On 3 October, the total number of COVID deaths in these 11 states was 17. The combined population of these 11 states approximately 30 million people.
If you do the math, that means your chance of dying from COVID in these “hotbeds of infection” is 0.000036 percent.

MICHIGAN'S LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS ILLEGAL



The Michigan Supreme Court last week handed Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer a legal setback when it ruled against her authority to extend coronavirus mandates in the state without seeking approval by state lawmakers.

Whitmer called the decision "deeply disappointing" and pointed out that every state in the U.S. is under some form of a declared emergency. The *Detroit Free Press* reported the court's split decision challenges dozens of her orders. The paper said the questions were brought by a federal judge and the next steps were unclear.

Judge Stephen Markman wrote in the opinion that the governor can declare a state of emergency for 28 days without the approval of the Legislature. He said if the Legislature doesn't act after the 28 days, the emergency order is essentially null and void. Whitmer has clashed in the past with Republicans in the Legislature. The majority wrote, in part, that "no individual in the history of this state has ever been vested with as much concentrated and standardless power to regulate the lives of our people."

Patrick Wright, Vice President for Legal Affairs at the Mackinac Center, which brought the original lawsuit against Whitmer, said the court's ruling voiced the 10 million Michiganders "by reaffirming the constitutional protections of checks and balances afforded through the separation of powers."

The court ruled 4-3 and said Whitmer overreached on her authority to declare additional mandates after 30 April, the paper reported. The date marked the last time the Legislature approved the emergency declaration order.

“This virus continues to take lives of Americans every single day, and without a cure or approved vaccine, that will continue for the foreseeable future,” Whitmer said.

Robert Sedler, Professor of Law at Wayne State University Law School, told the paper he believed the court’s ruling would be binding and have an impact on the current stay-at-home orders in the state.

Governor Whitmer has grown to national prominence over public feuds with President Trump, who once said she “doesn’t have a clue” about the coronavirus and how to deal with the economy.

“Michigan has already gained and regained more than half of the jobs that it lost – and if your state was ever allowed to safely reopen by your governor, who doesn’t have a clue, just like Joe [Biden], you would have gained far more than that,” Trump said earlier this month.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have stated, with President Trump now having declared, “Don’t be afraid of Covid. Don’t let it dominate your life!” he will hit hard Democratic swing states such as Michigan with the message that their governor’s lockdowns destroyed people’s businesses, livelihood… and lives.*

AS COVID WAR RAGES, WOMEN BOOZE UP

We have been reporting on the many destructive socioeconomic, geopolitical, and personal implications of the COVID War on society. The RAND Corporation released a study in the medical journal *JAMA Network Open* that asked 1,540 adults to compare how their drinking habits have changed compared to last year. The study found drinking is up among all adults, but “heavy drinking” is up 41

percent for women. Heavy drinking is considered four or more drinks within a few hours.

Jonathan Metzl, Director of the Department of Medicine, Health and Society at Vanderbilt University, called the coronavirus outbreak – with the virus itself and job losses that have accompanied it – an "incredible, once-in-an-epoch stressful situation, and the kinds of outlets people usually have in their lives are just not available."

Dr. Metzl told Jessica Grose, author of a *NYT* column on the matter and the mother of small children, that many people's lives have been upended and otherwise unremarkable events, like going to the gym or seeing friends, are likely no longer possible for many.

Ms. Grose's column is focused on the number of her friends – young mothers – who have turned to alcohol, marijuana, and prescribed drugs to deal with the uncertainties and fears that come with the coronavirus.

As Dr. Metzl pointed out, the turn to self-medication is not unique for this generation, as the post-WWII generation of women also turned to tranquilizers.

He is the author of "Prozac on the Couch: Prescribing Gender in the Era of Wonder Drugs," and told Ms. Grose that these drugs were intended to sedate women who were returning to life at home after taking jobs in the workforce while the men in the country were fighting.

"It's ironic we're having this conversation now, in light of profound threats to everything women stood for in the '60s and '70s," Metzl said.

MASK UP AND DIE?

On 26 September, the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS) released their updated report on the "COVID outbreak" and the efficacy of various methods employed to deal with the virus. The report's alarming conclusions are foreshadowed by the exposé's opening sentence: "Covid-19 is as politically-charged as it is infectious."

The AAPS report contains a trove of data and conclusions concerning disease transmission from dozens of scientific studies conducted globally over the past decades. In aggregate, the studies indicate that healthy people receive little to no benefit from wearing most masks; and, in fact, some studies reveal that certain masks actually increase the rates of transmission.

The studies on mask efficacy produce a variety of conclusions. Some indicate certain masks are somewhat effective at curbing disease transmission, however, the universal cloth masks that are required in many places do virtually nothing to protect the wearer or those near them. In contrast, numerous studies show that certain masks actually increase the rate of transmission, particularly when constantly adjusted or not regularly cleaned.

From the CDC's review, here is their official position since 1946:

> "There is limited evidence for face masks' effectiveness in preventing laboratory-confirmed influenza virus transmission either when worn by the infected person for the source control or when worn by uninfected persons to reduce exposure.
>
> Proper use of face masks is essential because improper use might increase the risk for transmission."

And the data from Kansas matches the CDC review's conclusion:

> "In Kansas, the 90 counties without mask mandates had lower coronavirus infection rates than the 15 counties with mask mandates. To hide this fact, the Kansas health Department tried to manipulate the official statistics and data presentation."

An eye-opening study out of Singapore concluded that out of 714 participants, only 90 wore their masks properly (about 12 percent).
Some do not want to wear a mask because of the additional health problems associated with prolonged mask usage. Many mask wearers report suffering an

increased frequency of headaches, while others reported a new affliction known as “face-mask-associated-headaches.”

Note: The mask/headache correlation was noted in a Scandinavian study in 2005 as well as a 2009 study from Japan. It is believed headaches could result from the mask’s elastic straps or from the decrease in oxygen intake one suffers when wearing a mask.

Another aversion to prolonged mask wearing is the new phenomenon known as “mouth mask.” Wearing a mask decreases saliva production. Saliva fights bacteria, and without saliva, teeth will decay, gum lines will recede, and “sour” breath can occur.

Wearing a mask can clearly have a host of other harmful health effects on individuals. What is often overlooked, and perhaps most profound, is the emotional and societal consequences resulting from outlawing smiles and social contact.

The immediate macro impact of the masked society was a decrease in communication. Not only do masks muffle sounds, they also hide visual cues that help listeners interpret verbal information. This is particularly detrimental to hearing-impaired people as well as children who are in the process of mastering language.

The decrease in communication was accompanied by a decrease in socialization, which was detrimental to all age groups. Many middle-aged people expressed added stress, resulting in an increase in substance abuse, while physical abuse and suicide also increased.

The combination was particularly devastating for the older population and children. Since the outbreak of government restrictions, many older people have endured heart-breaking isolation almost completely devoid of meaningful physical and emotional interaction.

Children are also suffering disproportionately from the mask mandate. A report entitled, “The Psychological Damage in Children,” produced by 70 Belgian doctors, “begged for the cancellation of masks at school.”

The report stated,

> "In recent months, the general well-being of children and young people has come under severe pressure. We see in our practices an increasing number of children and young people with complaints due to the rules of conduct that have been imposed on them. We diagnose anxiety and sleep problems, behavioral disorders and fear of contamination. We are seeing an increase in domestic violence, isolation and deprivation. Many lack physical and emotional contact; attachment problems and addiction are obvious.
>
> The mandatory mouth mask in schools is a major threat to their development. It ignores the essential needs of the growing child. The well-being of children and young people is highly dependent on the emotional connection with others… The aim of education is to create an optimal context so that a maximum development of young people is possible. The school environment must be a safe practice field.
>
> The mouth mask obligation, on the other hand, makes the school a threatening and unsafe environment, where emotional connection becomes difficult. In addition, there is no large-scale evidence that wearing face masks in a non-professional environment has any positive effect on the spread of viruses, let alone on general health."

With so many adverse social and health problems associated with masking, it seems nonsensical that universal mask mandates would be championed so widely.

Perhaps, though, it is not about public health, as other government programs such as contact tracing and increased testing have been shown to be statistically ineffective at decreasing mortality rates. So why is this happening?

In a 9 July report, *The New England Journal of Medicine* concluded:

> "We know that wearing a mask outside health care facilities offers little, if any, protection from infection. … The chance of catching Covid-19 from a passing interaction in a public space is therefore minimal. In many cases, the desire for widespread masking is a reflexive reaction to anxiety over the pandemic."
>
> It is also clear that masks serve symbolic roles. Masks are not only tools, they are also talismans that may help increase health care workers' perceived sense of safety, well-being, and trust in their hospitals. Although such reactions may not be strictly logical, we are all subject to fear and

> anxiety, especially during times of crisis. One might argue that fear and anxiety are better countered with data and education than with a marginally beneficial mask."

Couple that damning report of the symbolic nature of the pandemic response with the reality that **fear** can actually lower one's immune system, thereby increasing the likelihood of illness.

Perhaps more persuasive than any of the medical studies included in the report is the readily available data from entire countries which refused to institute nationwide mask mandates and did not suffer statistically relevant increases in virus deaths. That data point alone should be enough to raise the eyebrows of anyone still capable of critical thought.

TRENDPOST: *For some 30 years, the* ***Trends Journal*** *has been encouraging readers to improve their immune systems through a healthy, natural lifestyle. Indeed, the first book Gerald Celente wrote was "Natural Healing" in 1988.*

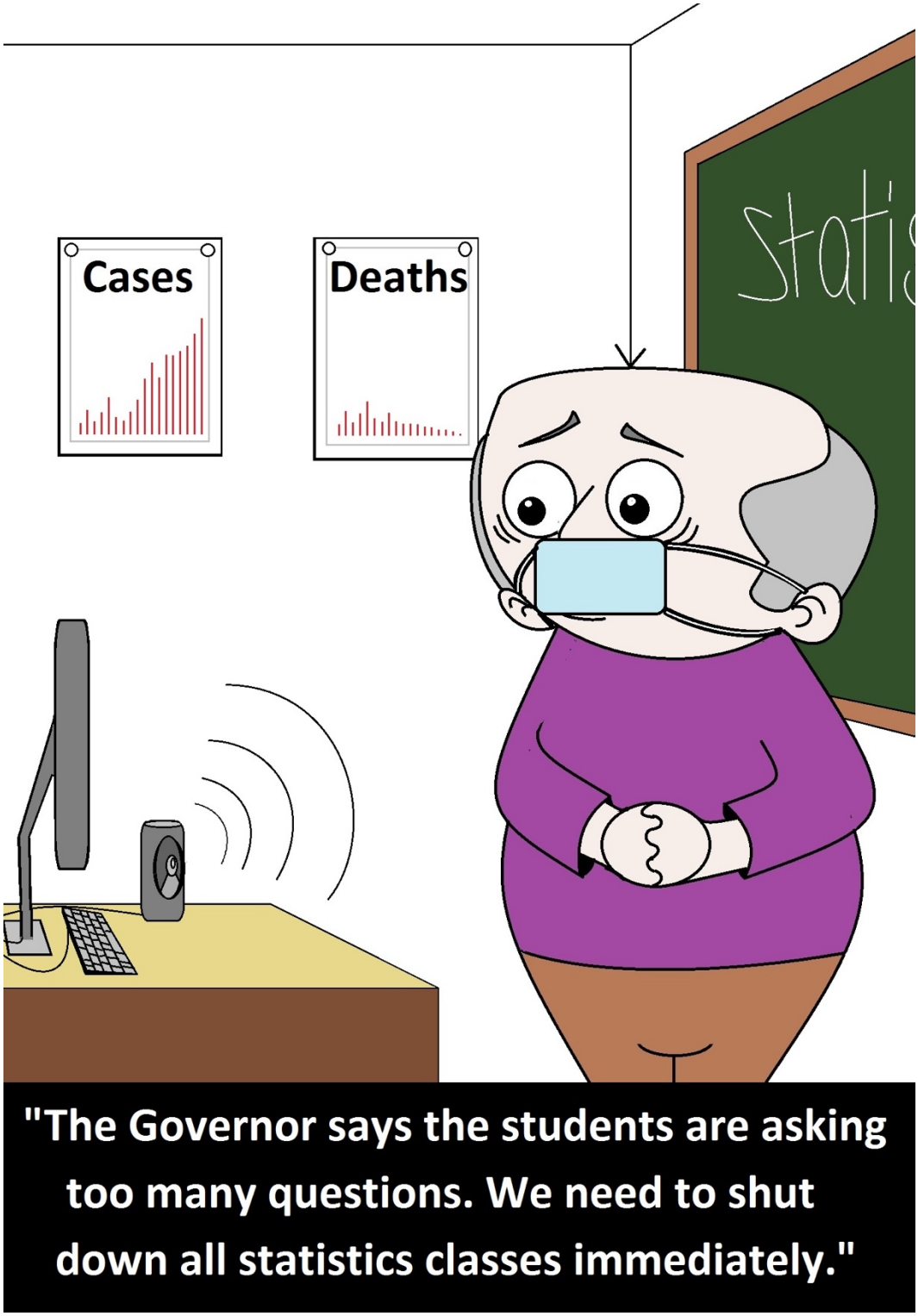
Mr. Celente has an honorary Doctorate of Law from the National University of Health Sciences for the work he has done over the decades in integrative and complementary medicine.

Again, as we keep noting, building up a person's immune system by eating and living healthy is often the most effective natural medicine to fight off a disease.

In the same vein, as governments are forcing people to shelter-in-place and wear masks, the positive effects of fresh air and sunshine/vitamin D are negated. Data from the 1918 Spanish Flu concludes that patients who were exposed to sunshine and fresh air had much higher recovery rates.

TRENDPOST: *Going back to 1961, scientific studies have concluded that drier air is more conducive to disease transmission because it enables respiratory droplets to be able to travel longer distances. Yet, despite this well-documented scientific evidence, there was no campaign for fresh-air or campaign against air-conditioning. (It is perhaps notable that most nursing homes have very little fresh air, as they are entirely ventilated with air conditioning.)*

TRENDS IN TOONS *by Stephen Green*



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TRENDS-EYE VIEW

SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTIONS = INFLATION

Evidence of supply chain disruptions are everywhere consumers look… except the mainstream news. The unprecedented “shelter-in-place” rules imposed by governments to fight the COVID War have not only crippled the livelihoods of hundreds of millions across the globe and destroyed the businesses of countless millions, they also have crushed many sectors of the economy.

The international lockdown restrictions have disrupted the flow of raw materials, component parts, and finished goods. The widespread shortages, coupled with the creation of trillions of dollars of devalued digital cash backed by nothing and printed on nothing will lead to higher prices.

Going to the Store

Across the country and around the world, there have been sporadic shortages at local grocery stores of “essential” items since the lockdowns were imposed. The first scarcity many shoppers noticed was that toilet paper isles had been wiped clean, and many common household cleaning products were unobtainable.

As more people stayed home, afraid to go out, the shortages spread to the food sector where many canned goods were in short supply as were some dairy and meat products. At the onset of the lockdowns, dairy farmers were forced to dump milk down the drain, cattle ranchers were forced to slaughter livestock, and meatpacking facilities were closed down due to positive coronavirus tests.

TREND FORECAST: *While reports of new cases continue to make headline news, "essential" businesses, i.e., liquor stores, Walmart, Target, Home Depot, Amazon, etc., where cases also rose, barely make the news and were permitted to do business as usual while small businesses deemed "unessential" were forced to stay locked down.*

Thus, the economic devastation, particularly in the food, hospitality, events, tourism, and restaurant sectors will further widen the gap between rich and average citizen, while the big businesses grow bigger and smaller ones disappear.

Nature's Wild Card

Making matters worse, weather-related disasters around the world have put an additional strain on food resources that were already in relatively short supply.

In the U.S., California fires are threatening the Central Valley, one of the nation's most productive food regions. Iowa and the Midwest were recently devastated by a derecho (a large storm with high winds), which damaged countless acres of corn as well as grain elevators and silos.

In the U.K, the country is expecting the lowest wheat harvest in decades due to cool temperatures. Sheep are freezing in Patagonia; the rice fields of Bangladesh are flooded; and, across the globe, farmers and livestock producers are expecting below average yields due to Mother Nature.

Food prices, especially meat products, already are rising in many locations. Expect food prices to further increase and future shortages to become more common as the food supply chain suffers continued attacks from an invisible enemy.

Shortages are also plaguing other sectors. International disruptions in raw materials and component parts have stalled automobile manufacturers and have put the brakes on bicycle production. Essential building materials are also in short supply: pressurized lumber is being squeezed while the supply of standard screws has tightened considerably.

The nationwide shortages pertaining to essential goods have stoked fears of civil unrest, which has triggered a dramatic increase in demand for guns and ammunition. This increased demand has overwhelmed the firearms sector as new demand has outstripped the supply.

TRENDPOST: *Prices generally rise for two reasons: the creation of additional currency or curtailment in the supply of goods and services. We are currently experiencing both: an increase in the currency supply as well as a reduction in goods and services… the result of which will be an increase in prices – inflation.*

Although the outlined information above is alarming, perhaps the most alarming shortage is the near complete absence of honesty and morality in the media, government, academia, and medical community. These entities acted in lockstep to foment the narrative of a worldwide pandemic that has resulted in the destruction of the global economy.

There appears to be a dearth of courage and common sense among citizens around the world. As I see it, the only solution to salvage society is to increase the number of critical thinkers.

by Stephen Green

GROWING TREND: COLLEGE STUDENTS AGAINST FREE SPEECH

I

n a 2011 Pew Research Study on the purpose of education, “Just under half of the public (47%) says the main purpose of a college education is to teach work-related skills and knowledge. Another 39%, however, say that college is an opportunity for students to grow personally and intellectually.”

A more recent 2019 Gallup poll on the same subject confirmed that after job and career concerns, the most important reason for attending college was “general motivation to learn and gain knowledge.”

But a new poll published on 29 September, the largest ever to look at free speech on college campuses, shows a significantly growing trend of students who are intolerant of even listening to those they disagree with and many other students are fearful of retribution if they vocally disagree with professors and/or college administrators.

Nearly 20 percent of the students responding said it was legitimate to tear down posters and physically use violence to stop scheduled speakers they vehemently disagree with.

The majority of students responding said they were unlikely to freely express their opinions for fear of retribution from both professors and classmates. Only 15 percent responded "very comfortable" disagreeing with a professor, with another 30 percent being "somewhat comfortable."

The poll of 20,000 students across 55 campuses. was conducted by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), Real Clear Education, and College Pulse.

Sean Stevens, senior research fellow in polling and analytics for FIRE, noted the survey showed, "One of the most common things that comes up is politics and perceptions. Whether they're liberal or conservative, if they're in a minority, they're less likely to speak up. That's a pretty prominent theme across the board with the political disagreements."

Thirty-one percent of students agree that President Trump should not be allowed on campus to share his views and 22 percent were in favor of banning former Vice President Joe Biden.

Additional highlights from the poll:

- 42 percent said they believed their college would punish students for expressing strong opinions on certain subjects.

- Ivy League students were more likely to use direct protest against speakers they opposed. Thirty-six percent agreed shouting down the speaker is "always" or "sometimes" justified compared to 27 percent of non-Ivy League students.

- Sixty percent of students recalled at least one incident when they refused to give an opinion due to fear of retribution about how others might respond.

- Seven of the top ten colleges most open to free speech are public state universities with undergraduate enrollment above 15,000.

- The top five colleges for free speech are in the Midwest and West: The University of Chicago Kansas State University, Texas A&M University, University of California, Los Angeles, and Arizona State University.

- The lowest-rated colleges for free speech, with only one exception, are all in the Northeast and South: Syracuse University, Dartmouth College, Louisiana State University, University of Texas, and DePauw University (Indiana).

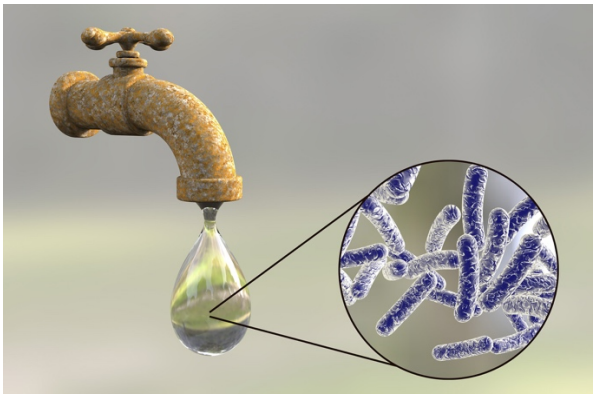
Summing up the survey, Executive Director of FIRE, Robert Shibley stated, "These rankings provide proof that your choice of college can make a real difference in your ability to speak your mind. Campus leaders no longer have an excuse for remaining ignorant about students who feel muzzled on their campuses. One thing is for sure: colleges have a lot of work to do."

TREND FORECAST: *As the "Greatest Depression" worsens, college enrollment will continue to decline. Thus, those who do go to college will come from a socioeconomic demographic of higher income and more like-minded views.*

Picking up where political leaders left off, as evidenced by the survey – the imposition of Executive Order draconian rules and regulations that rob citizens of personal freedoms, contact trace them, and omit representation of We the People – young people are following their leaders.

Indeed, the nation has become a "Do as I say, believe in what I say, I have the last word, and if you disagree, I'll do what I can to destroy you" mentality.

U.S. WATER: "FOREVER CHEMICALS & TOXIC WASTE"



Worried COVID will kill you?

As dozens of governors continue to impose coronavirus lockdown restrictions despite declining death rates, as college administrators continue to ban all partying and limit any social gatherings despite data showing college students are among the least likely to get sick with the virus, millions of Americans across the country continue to face a much larger death threat than COVID-19.

As vox.com reported on 17 April: "Millions live without access to clean water in the U.S."

The latest toxic water crisis emerged on 27 September when Texas Governor Greg Abbott declared a "state of disaster" after a six-year old boy died from a brain-eating microbe called Naegleria fowleri. Residents in the city of Lake Jackson, along with the other 375,000 residents living in Brazoria County, were originally told to not use their water for any use other than flushing toilets.

Two days later, Toby Baker, Executive Director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), stated, "The path forward for the citizens of Lake Jackson is not going to be one that's short. Chlorine is being pumped through the entire county's water system, which will take about 60 days."

Later in the week, TCEQ notified residents they could use water for drinking and cooking, but only after boiling it. Residents in those communities continued to be advised to not let water get into their noses when bathing, showering, and washing their faces.

The CDC confirms the deadly microbe can destroy brain tissue and cause death within a week.

Millions of Americans at Risk for Toxic Water

For decades, the **Trends Journal** has been reporting on the health crisis of toxic water supplies throughout the U.S. and its effects, which are far deadlier than the coronavirus.

In our 2 February 2020 issue, we reported:

- Aside from the tons of chemicals, pesticides, and industrial poisons pumped and sprayed into the earth, water, air, and food, the Defense Department has cited 401 bases in the U.S. that release the firefighting foam-

containing chemical polyfluoroalkyls (PFAS), toxic chemicals that are in drinking water in cities and suburbs across America… including some of the country's largest metropolitan areas.

- On 22 January, the non-profit Environmental Working Group mapped PFAS contamination in almost 1,400 sites in 49 states and stated Environmental Protection Agency data showing 110 Americans may be drinking water contaminated with PFAS, is probably too low an estimate. The report adds "PFAS are known as 'forever chemicals' because once released into the environment they do not break down, and they build up in our blood and organs."

- A 2018 study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences stated: "Drinking water contaminants pose a harm to public health. Some can cause immediate illness, such as the 16 million cases of acute gastroenteritis that occur each year at US community water systems… water quality violations are widespread, with 9–45 million people possibly affected during each of the past 34 years.

- On 17 August 2017, *USA Today* issued a report revealing "As many as 63 million people – nearly a fifth of the United States – from rural central California to the boroughs of New York City, were exposed to potentially unsafe water more than once during the past decade, according to a review of 680,000 water quality and monitoring violations from the EPA. The findings highlight how six decades of industrial dumping, farming pollution and water plant and distribution pipe deterioration have taken a toll on local water systems."

Flint Fiasco

America's most publicized water pollution crisis of recent years was in Flint, MI, when, in April 2014, the politicians and health officials (a.k.a. sociopaths and psychopaths) in charge shifted the city's water source to a highly toxic river to save money, yet they neglected to install proper safety devices.

Toxic lead from antiquated pipes began leaching into the public water, which exposed over 100,000 residents to toxic lead levels, including some 12,000 Flint children, causing deaths and infecting thousands with debilitating neurotoxic health issues. On 19 November 2019, *The New York Times* reported, "The contamination of this long-struggling city's water exposed nearly 30,000

schoolchildren to a neurotoxin known to have detrimental effects on children's developing brains and nervous systems."

According to the *CBS 60 Minutes* report on 5 July this year, "Three years after the crisis began, the percentage of third graders in Flint who passed Michigan's standardized literacy test dropped from 41 percent to 10 percent."

Due to the efforts of citizens to sue, the city of Flint had replaced about 85 percent of the contaminated pipes by early 2020. In April of this year, however, the work was stopped after the state ordered a lockdown to deal with the coronavirus.

Government Response: Do Less

Despite the evidence of widening water pollution health concerns across America, *Reuters* reported last December, "Over the last decade, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's budget and work force have both decreased by 16 percent... Most U.S. states have cut environmental budgets and staffing since 2008."

According to the Environmental Defense Fund, "For the third year in a row, the Trump administration proposed deep cuts to EPA. These reductions would allow more lead, toxic chemicals, and contaminated water – jeopardizing the health and safety of all Americans."

On 24 January, *The New York Times* reported, "The Environmental Protection Agency has made it easier for cities to keep dumping raw sewage into rivers by letting them delay or otherwise change federally imposed fixes to their sewer systems, according to interviews with local officials, water utilities and their lobbyists."

Recently, on 31 August, the Trump administration announced it was lowering standards required by coal-fired power plants for releasing wastewater infused with pollutants from lead, arsenic, and other toxic pollutants.

TRENDPOST: *The media, politicians, and Presstitutes rarely report on the tons of poisons, pesticides, and chemicals pumped every year into the earth, water, and air.*

And nary a word on the unreadable and unpronounceable artificial ingredients, colors, and pharmaceuticals injected into foods, fish, and game… that slaughter millions of the world's population each year.

Instead of focusing on what can be done to reverse the poisonous destruction of life on earth… from politicians to Presstitutes, from little children to the elderly, the main concern of a masked-up, locked-up society is fear of dying in the COVID War, which, as we have detailed, over and over again, is a minor threat compared to real dangers that confront us.

PRESIDENTIAL REALITY SHOW®

FACEBOOK: FU, WE'LL TELL YOU

With the climax of The Presidential Reality Show® just a few weeks away, Facebook declared it would eliminate all advertising that aims to "delegitimize" the election.

The *Financial Times* reported the social media giant changed its hands-off policy regarding political advertising after President Trump raised the topic of fraud during last week's tense debate in Cleveland. Detractors of the president say his warnings are a desperate attempt to save his campaign. Supporters point to recent undercover footage from Project Veritas that could validate some of Trump's claims.

Facebook's policy change includes a ban on ads claiming voter fraud is a widespread issue and ads that attempt to "delegitimize any lawful method or process of voting or voting tabulation as illegal, inherently fraudulent or corrupt."

Zuckerberg's relationship with President Trump has been a sensitive topic on the left-leaning Silicon Valley, and his approach to the spread of misinformation has been criticized by members of both political parties.

The *Financial Times* recalled when Zuckerberg said the platform should not be seen as "the arbiter of truth" when describing his company's approach to political ads and their truthfulness.

The paper reported that aside from the voter fraud policy, Facebook will also eliminate all ads claiming premature victory on election night.

Rob Leathern, a Facebook Director of Product Management, said on Twitter, "As we get closer to Election Day, we want to provide further clarity on policies we recently announced. Last week we said we'd prohibit ads that make premature declarations of victory. We also won't allow ads with content that seeks to delegitimize the outcome of an election."

TRENDPOST: *Facebook forbids ads that "delegitimize" the election? What is legitimate about the election?*

For centuries, America's political system has been controlled by two murderous, thieving gangs who hide behind the Democrat and Republican labels: the "Bloods" constant state of wars that murder millions and steal trillions to wage them and, on the other side, the too-big-to-fail "Banksters" and their Wall Street Money Junkies.

In America, the land of the leashed, who anointed the high and mighty Silicon Valley Con-men and Con-women to determine what is legitimate or not?

Yet, there are no protests, no pushbacks, in a nation where freedom of expression is being outlawed.

CHRIS WALLACE: PRESSTITUTE OR JOURNALIST?

Chris Wallace, the *Fox News* anchor still recovering from last week's bruising Presidential Reality Show® Side Show spectacle (a.k.a. debate), went on the attack last week, contradicting the prediction from Dr. Scott Atlas that President Trump would likely enjoy a swift recovery from his COVID diagnosis.

Dr. Atlas, a coronavirus advisor to President Trump and a neuroradiologist, told *Fox News* that despite Trump's age and weight, he is a "very, very healthy guy" and "the overwhelming majority of people, even at his age, do fine with this. He is very healthy, and so I anticipate the same for him."

Wallace, who has been criticized over his debate performance by some for appearing to let Joe Biden off easy while calling out President Trump for interrupting, slammed Atlas' medical opinion. Wallace said Dr. Atlas is not a disease expert and has "no training in this area at all. There are a number of top people on the president's coronavirus task force who have had grave concerns about Scott Atlas and his scientific bona fides."

Wallace declared it was far too early to make any determinations on the president's prognosis and spewed out the line that we should narrow our minds and listen to the media's crowned King of Disease Experts, Dr. Anthony Fauci, for more accurate information.

President Trump announced that he and the first lady tested positive for the virus last week, and he was admitted into Walter Reed Medical Center for observation.

TREND FORECAST: *Contrary to what Chris Wallace believed, President Trump was released from the hospital Monday evening.*

The following, in part, was the Trump campaign pitch to raise money a few hours after he returned to the White House:

> "I just left Walter Reed after receiving incredible care and I'm feeling really good! In fact, I feel better than I did 20 years ago. I'm telling you: Don't be afraid of Covid. Don't let it dominate your life! This is the greatest country in the world, and under the Trump Administration, we have developed some really great drugs and knowledge. WE WILL BEAT THIS, TOGETHER!"

As Gerald Celente has forecast, and as the cover of last week's ***Trends Journal*** *illustrates, the primary theme of the presidential race will be "Masks vs. No Masks."*

President Trump has made that perfectly clear by his statement, "Don't be afraid of Covid. Don't let it dominate your life!

At this critical juncture, that is what this election is about: the "Afraid of COVID" vs. the "Not afraid of COVID" voters.

Gerald Celente has noted in the ***Trends Journal****, in his Trends in The News videos, and in numerous interviews that President Trump will be attacking the Democratic governors in swing states who have locked them down, and he will blame the Democrats for the economic hardship which has ensued.*

President Trump will continue to push for opening up the economy and attack his challenger, Joe Biden, who said he would lock it down if scientists told him to.

In addition, with the big news since Friday that President Trump was going to the hospital because he tested positive for the virus, forgotten was his terrible performance at last Tuesday's debate, which previously was headline news.

Indeed, if Trump again hits the campaign trail and keeps promoting the opening up of the economy, Celente forecasts – minus a wild card and there are plenty of them to be played – Trump will narrow Biden's lead.

Therefore, the next two debates, if they are held, will be crucial as to who wins The Presidential Reality Show®.

TRENDPOST: *As the late, great George Carlin so accurately noted, "It's one big club, and you ain't in it."*

The mainstream media has degraded into a high-school level Freak Show. Chris Wallace, like CNN's Chris Cuomo (whose daddy was Governor Mario Cuomo) and Anderson Cooper (whose mommy was Gloria Vanderbilt), are examples of the class of arrogant know-it-all Presstitutes who were born on third base and thought they hit a home run.

Chris Wallace's daddy was Mike Wallace. From Wikipedia: "Myron Leon 'Mike' Wallace, an American journalist, game show host, actor, and media personality. He interviewed a wide range of prominent newsmakers during his seven-decade career. He was one of the original correspondents for CBS' 60 Minutes, which debuted in 1968. Wallace retired as a regular full-time correspondent in 2006, but still appeared occasionally on the series until 2008."

BOTCHED BALLOTS HIT NYC

The great debate about the efficacy of mail-in ballots hit New York City last week when a printing mishap affected absentee ballots in Brooklyn, resulting in an estimated 100,000 voters receiving return envelopes with errors. Michael Ryan, New York City Board of Elections' Executive Director, said these ballots came with an incorrect "oath envelope."

Some of the ballots had errors such as informing voters to "mark the oval to the left" when, in fact, the ovals were above the candidates' names. Another issue pointed out was that some ballots were missing slashes between the words "military" and "absentee," which led to confusion.

Valerie Vazquez-Diaz, a spokeswoman for the Board of Elections, said the error affected 99,477 voters, according to *CNN*. In addition to the errors, about 1,000 ballots had incorrect names and addresses.

Mayor Bill de Blasio criticized the Board of Elections and said, “They have to fix this immediately. This is appalling. It is so easy to avoid this mistake and it is very easy to fix this mistake.”

TREND FORECAST: *While Democrats have been pushing for mail-in ballots, President Trump said last week, “Mail ballots, they cheat. Mail ballots are very dangerous for this country because of cheaters. They go collect them. They are fraudulent in many cases. They have to vote. They should have voter ID, by the way.”*

Beyond the Brooklyn ballot issue, The New York Times reported new allegations of ballot harvesting in Minnesota and voter fraud cases in North Carolina.

Thus, as we have forecast, minus a wild card, it is highly probable it will be long after Election Day before it is determined which candidate is the winner of The Presidential Reality Show®.

TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS

CAUCASUS WAR: THE DEADLY FUTURE

Top world powers issued a joint statement last week condemning “in the strongest terms” the recent escalation in southern Caucasus (located on the

border of Eastern Europe and Western Asia) that has led to mounting casualties for Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The U.S., France, and Russia have called for a ceasefire after a recent breakout of violence stemming from a decades-old conflict for the Armenian-controlled region inside Azerbaijan called Nagorno-Karabakh.

The two former Soviet republics have been contesting the region since 1988, and went to war over it, until they called a cease fire in 1994.

The recent confrontations have led to dozens of citizens being killed and hundreds injured. The statement, from the countries that co-chair the OSCE Minsk mediation group, condemned the escalation and called for the "immediate cessation of hostilities between the relevant military forces."

What prompted the week-long clash has been disputed by both sides. *The New York Times* said an Armenian missile strike killed a general and other officers in July along the cease-fire line.

The clashes had at first involved just militaries, but now the war has escalated and civilians and cities are being bombed. In fact, it is the worst fighting since the war between the two nations broke out some three decades ago. According to *RT*, Armenian forces said some of the injuries included its citizens and warned Azerbaijani civilians to leave the area due to looming retaliatory strikes.

Turkey to the Rescue?

With its currency fallen to all-time lows against the dollar; its economy slumping into depression; and the nation in conflict with Libya, Syria, and Greece, Turkey's President Récep Tayyip Erdogan has taken sides in the conflict, sending arms and militia to back Azerbaijan.

The *Financial Times* reported that Erdogan double-downed on his "warmongering rhetoric," and turned down the ceasefire demand, saying, "In order for there to be a solution, the occupiers must withdraw from these lands. It's time for results and our Azeri brothers and sisters have taken matters into their own hands."

Erdogan condemned Armenia for "attacking Azerbaijani lands" and said his country stands with "the friendly and brotherly Azerbaijan with all its facilities and heart."

Arayik Harutyunyan, the president of the unofficial Armenian authority in Nagorno-Karabakh, said, “We must be prepared for a long war… The war will end with the defeat of Azerbaijan, or at least not with a victory,” according to WSWS.org.

He said Turkey also has its eyes set on Iran. WSWS.org pointed out the history in the region that includes “geopolitical rivalries, imperialist wars and local ethnic conflicts.”

TRENDPOST: *Since the fighting between the two nations erupted on 27 September, both sides blamed each other for starting the battle that has killed dozens. Yesterday, Armenia accused Azerbaijan of firing missiles into Nagorno-Karabakh, and Azerbaijan blamed Armenia for bombing several towns and cities. It is reported that Iran, which borders both countries, is trying to negotiate a peace plan between the two warring nations.*

If peace is not made and war continues, the future of the citizens of those nations will be deadly. A letter from Mukhtar Garadaghi, published in this morning’s Financial Times, exposes the severity of the conflict, which has been overlooked or is not mentioned.

Garadaghi states, “The common narrative largely ignores the fact that both Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding Azerbijiani regions were ethnically cleansed from over 600,000 Azerbijianis in the early 1990s. Coupling the recent genocide with the international interest in the region is a recipe for prolonged conflict.”

TREND FORECAST: *As Gerald Celente has long noted, “When all else fails, they take you to war.”*

Turkey is a failing nation. Its GDP is down 11 percent in the last quarter and has been on a steady decline over the past four years. With its currency crashing to new lows against the dollar and euro, over a week ago, Turkey’s central bank did a 180, raising interest rates in hopes of stopping the lira’s slide.

As the “Greatest Depression” worsens, civil unrest and military confrontations in the already economical and geopolitically unstable region will escalate.

Most citizens of the world are deaf, dumb, and blind to what is going on in the region and unaware of the dangers ahead. Indeed, this could be a flashpoint for World War III.

HONG KONG: NO PROTESTS. BEIJING RULES

Last week, authorities in Hong Kong continued the effort to stem protests in the city. They deployed some 6,000 police to screen "whole streets of shoppers" to find any evidence they were headed to an anti-protest demonstration during China National Day celebrations.

"It's China's National Day but this is Hong Kong's death day," said one woman whom *Reuters* described as "dressed in black, the city's protest attire."

Tensions remain high in the city after the implementation this past June of the national security law, which essentially eliminates freedom of speech in the city and gives Beijing the power to determine how laws are interpreted.

The *Financial Times* reported there were 86 arrests made last week, including a few local politicians. *Reuters* reported that Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam earlier praised the area's "return to stability."

Prior to the COVID lockdown imposed on Hong Kong in late January by Beijing, protests against Chinese government rule had been raging since June 2019.

Reuters reported that the protest last week was aimed at the law and demanded the release of 12 Hong Kong citizens who were caught at sea trying to reach Taiwan.

TREND FORECAST: *We continually reported in the* ***Trends Journal*** *Beijing could not quell the extensive Hong Kong protests which began in March 2019, that had well over a million citizens taking to the streets. The demonstrations were in reaction to the Fugitive Offenders legislation bill, which would have allowed China to extradite Hong Kong criminal suspects to the mainland.*

As Gerald Celente had forecast when the virus first broke out in China this past January, Beijing would use COVID-19 to achieve what they were unable to accomplish before the virus stuck Wuhan: Lockdown Hong Kong to stop the protests.

That has now been accomplished… along with Beijing's new national security law, the city is under the full dictate of the Chinese government.

AMERICANS: VIOLENCE AS A MEANS TO POLITICAL ENDS

The violent protests that have erupted in cities across the U.S. in the name of social justice, is, as we had forecast, the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the nation's overall feelings regarding justifying violence to achieve political victory.

Researchers wrote in *Politico* last week that they've observed a troubling trend in the country – from both parties – when it comes to accepting political outcomes.

Politicians running for the presidency often note that the peaceful transfer of power is one of the hallmarks of the U.S. Democracy. But, as evidenced by last week's debate when President Trump discussed the problems with mail-in ballots, there may be a bitter debate as to who wins The Presidential Reality Show®.

What if, for example, President Trump is winning the race on election night, only to see his lead vanish when mail-in ballots are counted?

The researchers compiled separate data and determined that one in three Americans, from both political parties, now believe violence could be justified if it meant advancing their personal political goals.

The researchers called on Congress to act quickly and form a “bipartisan” commission to defend the country’s “democratic norms” and to ease the public’s mistrust leading up to the election.

One of the interesting elements of the study is that the trend seems to be moving quickly in the wrong direction. The report said since June, the number of those polled who felt it was okay if there was “a little” violence to achieve their goal jumped from 30 percent among Democrats and Republicans to 36 percent among Republicans and 33 percent of Democrats.

The *Politico* report said the country should be concerned about the shift toward violence and pointed to how divides in society that can lead to violence “gave rising autocrats an excuse to seize emergency powers” in 1930s Europe.

There have been recent clashes between protesters on the streets, which the researchers wrote could be a troubling sign before the election. They noted in normal times, party leaders have sway over their supporters and can often calm this kind of tension, but the “partisan polarization” is at such a fever pitch that “we cannot rely on the candidates and campaigns to pull us out of it.”

TREND FORECAST: *Beyond Americans being politically divided, as Election Day approaches, a recent Gallup poll shows only 17 percent of the nation approves of the way Congress handles its job.*

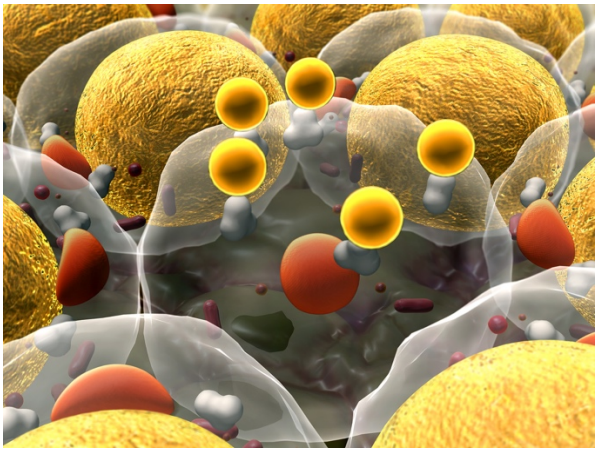
As Gerald Celente stated following last Tuesday’s presidential debate, it was more of a Trump loss than a Biden gain.

Thus, regardless of who wins the race to the White House, among those who backed the loser and those who did not vote because of their dislike of both candidates, the seeds have been sown for a new third party.

Key platform elements will be anti-tax, anti-vax, populist, libertarian… and, to follow the Chinese way, self-sustaining.

TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE *by Bennett Davis*

TRANSPLANT FAT TO LOSE WEIGHT



The human body holds two kinds of fat: brown fat, which burns energy, and white fat, which not only increases our pants size but also can cause obesity, and its attendant ailments range from joint damage to diabetes.

People with obesity often have a genetic profile that renders the body unable to make enough brown fat.

Now scientists at Boston's Joslin Diabetes Center have found a way out of that problem.

The researchers used cells that were developing into white fat cells and genetically engineered them to amplify a gene that redirected the cells to become brown fat cells instead.

When the modified cells were transplanted into mice fed a high-fat diet, the treated mice were better able to clear fats and sugar from their blood, and also gained less weight, compared to a control group of mice.

TRENDPOST: *Re-engineering a person's own white fat cells to become brown avoids the problem of transplant rejection and could become a routine treatment for obesity and a preventive approach to diabetes in the 2030s.*

FINGER VEINS, NOT FINGERPRINTS, FOR I.D.

Fingerprints, the century-old standard for making positive identifications, isn't so positive in the days of computer graphics and artificial intelligence.

In the near future, we'll rely on finger vein patterns instead.

Researchers at the University of Buffalo have developed a 3D scanner that reads the patterns of blood vessels in a finger pad. Instead of a two-dimensional fingerprint, the scanner adds the dimension of depth, which, the developers say is an impossible combination to falsify with today's technologies.

The scanner uses a technique called photoacoustic tomography. A laser light shines into the finger. When the light encounters a blood vessel, it emits a faint "poof" sound, similar to the "whoosh" a puddle of gasoline makes when it ignites.

An ultrasound detector then collects the three-dimensional pattern of sounds and uses an algorithm to construct a digital record of the vessels' placement in space.

In tests of 36 people, the system correctly identified the person 99 percent of the time, with accuracy increasing in tandem with the number of finders scanned simultaneously.

TRENDPOST: *As the new ID system is miniaturized, it could be used in smartphones or wearables to provide biometric identification instantly, a security concern that will become more important in an ever-more technological, cyber-insecure future.*

HUMAN-MADE “SUPER-ENZYME” SPEEDS PLASTIC DECOMPOSITION

The bacterium I. sakaiensis has been eating away at the 300 million tons of plastic humanity tosses in the trash each year, but it takes the bug weeks to finish a meal.

Bioscientists at the Kyoto Institute of Technology engineered a better bug, one that breaks down plastic six times faster than its ancestors.

The bacterium breaks down PET, one of the most commonly used plastics, using an enzyme called PETase. Researchers at the U.S. National Renewable Energy Laboratory and the University of Portsmouth re-engineered the enzyme in 2018 to make it work about 20 percent faster.

The Japanese team has chemically connected PETase with MHETase, a similar enzyme, and found that the new, conjoined “super-enzyme” sped the bacterium’s digestion of plastic sixfold.

The new super-enzyme breaks down plastic into its component chemicals, ready for re-use as part of an infinite recycling loop.

TRENDPOST: *More and more businesses are shunning virgin plastic as they respond to consumers’ demands for eco-friendly corporate practices. The new enzyme could help meet manufacturer’s soaring demand for recycled plastic*.