TRENDSJOURNAL.com | FORECASTING SINCE 1980 | 14 SEPTEMBER 2021

TRENDS JOURNAL

Put your money where your mind is.®

Who's Watching Who?

14 September 2021

PUBLISHER
GERALD CELENTE

EDITOR
AMY BYRNE

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
GREGORY MANNARINO
BRADLEY J. STEINER
GARY NULL
RICHARD GALE
BEN DAVISS
JOE DORAN

COVER ART
ANTHONY FREDA

How to read the Trends Journal on Kindle devices

Suggested "Text Aloud" pdf readers:
– for android phones search "Voice Aloud Reader" or "ezPDF" on Google Play
– for Apple phones search "PDF Voice Reader Aloud" on the App store

Inside

WELCOME TO AMERICA

Welcome to this week's **[Trends Journal](#)**: WELCOME TO AMERICA: WHALE WATCHING. Who's Watching Who?

I know, in today's politically correct, mentally dead, Woke society it is not proper to point out that according to the CDC, 78 percent of the people hospitalized with COVID were obese or overweight.

And despite the crap that the mainstream media sells, obesity and being overweight is not just a poor person's problem.

My trip to Cape May, New Jersey, last week on my way back from speaking at Dr. Ron Paul's "War on Us" event in D.C., inspired me to ask our artist, Anthony Freda, to design the cover. Cape May is not a cheap vacation destination. The bulging young and old masses were middle and upper middle class.

Not only is the health of America deadly, it is costly.

In 2018, The Milken Institute released a study, "**America's Obesity Crisis: The Health and Economic Costs of Excess Weight**," that found: In 2016, chronic diseases driven by the risk factor of obesity and overweight accounted for $480.7 billion in direct health care costs in the U.S., with an additional $1.24 trillion in indirect costs due to lost economic productivity.

On the upside, there will be growing OnTrendpreneur® opportunities to cash in on this ballooning trend by providing whole health and other healing remedies and modalities for all of those that want to rise to higher social, spiritual and physical levels... and we forecast there are many millions ready to do so.

On the broader downside, as detailed in the **Trends Journal**, get ready for a rough economic end of year. And as you can see, we are doing our very best to provide you with trends, analysis, forecasts and strategic opportunities to protect you from the explosive turmoil ahead.

Wishing you the best!

Gerald Celente and the Trends Journal Team

COMMENTS

POLITICAL SOLUTIONS RUNNING OUT
No political solutions for what is coming. I drove a giant loop around our country this summer and returned home with my wife on Aug 24th. I talked to many folks and the pain is significant. I see an unavoidable collapse that has already arrived.

Farmers asking for water while a 20 year drought is cooking parts of the west. A yellowstone park ranger giving me the blunt and dire words, "we kill everything we touch." She told me temperatures have not been this high in the last 25,000 years. Ranchers who are selling their cattle in hopes of buying them back next year.

Folks are freaked about covid as well as concerns about forced vaccines. People seem to be struggling and as breaking points become fully debilitating we see the workforce falter. We are fragile and things seem to be getting worse. Good luck keeping your humanity in this upcoming confrontation.
.

Dennis OBrien

TECH STOCKS DRIVING THE MARKETS
The largest tech stocks who dominate the Indexes are the same ones propelling Indexes to new highs, as their weighting is based on size. It's the same cast of characters: Amazon, Facebook, Microsoft, Apple, Google. These stocks are going-up and when they go up, so do the large market indexes, as well.

When they sell, down come the Indexes right with them. Investors who buy high and sell low end up with puny returns while the big boys collect the difference. It's rigged, as you can see. As long as these large tech. stocks are on the rise, investor sentiment is euphoric. When these same stocks tank, investor sentiment tanks. Rinse and repeat.

Craig Bradley

PULL THE PLUG ON TECH POWER
Joe,
You hit a home run with this week's article. Thank you—

joeldee

PASS ON THE VAX PASSPORT
It is important not to get any vax passport. Getting one is supporting tyranny. If they send you one, burn it.

All the western vaxs will greatly reduce your lifespan. We don't have to wait long and the unvaxxed will be the most sought after and valuable workers. The only ones with full cognition, good motor skills and plenty of energy.

The unvaxxed will rebuild the world.

Dominic

If it happens again, we can expect a second global depression, as well. Just remember, the Bull climbs the stairs but the bear jumps out the window. America is already socially and politically disintegrating. Imagine what would happen if we had another 1929 all over again. Chances are, few would survive and everyone would be the poorer for it too.

Craig Bradley

CHINA HAS ITS OWN PROBLEMS
TJ flatters China way too much. The CCP steals tech, threatens the sovereignty of their neighbors, allows the erection of tofu dreg constructions, oppresses its people and syphons off their wealth, and etc. They have a huge debt problem coupled with a population replacement issue. Their business is totalitarian oppression and corruption, with a little business on the side.

Brettagher

TRENDS ON THE U.S. ECONOMIC FRONT

U.S. MARKET AND ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

STOCKS END WORST WEEK IN SEVEN MONTHS

Last week, U.S. equity markets slumped to their worst weekly performance since February, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average and Standard & Poor's index dropping 0.8 percent and the NASDAQ, dominated by tech stocks, off 0.9 percent.

As we had forecast since the media began selling the Delta variant fear and hysteria in July and politicians instituted more COVID War mandates... it would negatively impact economic growth.

It's now "official" since *The Wall Street Journal* reported last week that the markets are sliding because investors' fear that COVID's surging Delta variant could weigh on the economic recovery and slow this year's economic growth.

A dismal August jobs report showing the economy created just 235,000 jobs last month worsened market jitters, as did news that companies were once again curtailing business travel, the producer price index jumped 0.7 percent in August, and consumer sentiment crumbled to its lowest level in a decade, as we reported in "Consumer Sentiment Tanks" (17 Aug 2021).

The S&P 500 closed Friday at 4,458 and yesterday it edged higher, closing at 4468.73.

While the tech-heavy Nasdaq slipped 9.91 points yesterday, the Dow was up 261 points.

With Delta variant fear still spreading, today, the Dow opened up 100 points but closed down 292 points, the S&P fell 25.68 closing at 4,443 and Nasdaq was down 0.45 percent. So far, the major averages are all down at least 1 percent this month.

The "big" news of the day was that the August Consumer Price Index was up 0.3% month-to-month... 5.3 percent from a year earlier. Totally absent from the mainstream media coverage is that the inflation spike, which Fed Chair Jerome Powell and the other Fed hacks said was "temporary"... is false. As we have forecast, the globe is entering a period of Dragflation: sinking economies, currency devaluations, weakening wages... and rising inflation.

And what is a major factor that will also devalue currencies? Read all about it in Gregory Mannarino's article, The Debt Hyper Bubble Must and Will Grow Exponentially.

TREND FORECAST: *The S&P index has roughly doubled in value since its March 2020 low and is up 19 percent this year. It could end this year at 4,250, about 5 percent below its 2021 high so far, Bank of America analysts noted,* *according to the WSJ. However, we forecast the markets are poised for a decline into bear market territory by year's end.*

GOLD: On the inflation news, which the media tried to downplay since it came in at 5.3 percent and not the Street's estimate of 5.4 percent annual growth, today, gold moved up $13 to close at 1,807.70 per ounce. With equity markets going down and inflation going up, gold's betting that the Fed won't be tapering or raising interest rates this year, and will, at best, slowly taper and raise rates a quarter of percent next year.

BITCOIN: While the coin had some volatile moves over the past three weeks, climbing above $50K per coin and hitting the low $40,000 per coin range, it is still trading in the $46,000-$47,000 per coin range that it has been at for the past few months.

We maintain our forecast for Bitcoin to dive deeply if it goes below $25,500 per coin and rise sharply if it breaks strongly above $50K per coin and steadily maintains the above mid-$50K range.

We also maintain our forecast that a major factor in forecasting the future price of bitcoin and other crypto currencies is dependent on government regulations. Thus, the more regulation, the lower the value of the coins, the less regulation, the higher the prices rise, especially as more small time traders keep jumping into the crypto market. What is also of concern in the U.S. now, is if Washington enforces proposed cryptocurrency tax regulation.

And today, Securities and Exchange Commission Chair Gary Gensler is testifying before the U.S. Senate Banking Committee to discuss the agency's oversight on cryptocurrencies.

However, in the long term we still forecast growing strength as more businesses accept cryptocurrencies, especially bitcoin, and more equity market firms invest in the crypto sector.

For more on bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, please see our "TRENDS IN CRYPTOS" section.

OIL: Oil prices rose yesterday and today, following OPEC's release of its monthly report on Monday that forecasts global oil demand in 2022 will exceed pre-COVID War highs. Today, Brent Crude was up 21 cents, closing at $73,78 per barrel and West Texas Intermediate was up 17 cents, closing at $70.67 per barrel.

This, combined with difficulties to return to full oil production following the havoc Hurricane Ida wreaked on the Gulf Coast and new concerns of another storm hitting Texas... oil prices are hovering near a six-week highs.

However, prices are still down some $4 per barrel from the 2021 highs. Therefore, minus a wild card event, be it man made such as military tensions in the Middle East or by Nature, we forecast oil prices will remain in the $70 to $80 per barrel range for the foreseeable future. Even with a sharp economic down turn, we forecast general inflationary pressures will keep many commodity prices high.

FED MUST SHIFT POLICY QUICKER, ECONOMISTS SAY

The U.S. Federal Reserve will be forced to taper off its $120-billion monthly bond purchases swiftly and raise interest rates next year to tame inflation, according to a majority of 49 academic economists polled by the *Financial Times*.

Consumer demand, coupled with savings amassed during last year's shutdown and global shortages and supply chain disruptions, have pushed inflation to its highest rate in 13 years, the *FT* reported, and more than double the Fed's target rate of 2 percent.

As a result, the Fed likely will give up on its goal of waiting for “maximum employment” before raising rates, the economists said.

The Fed’s official expectation is that it will not raise rates until 2023, bank officials have said repeatedly.

The Fed also will end its bond purchases some time next year, the majority predicted.

The Fed has said that ending the bond purchases is a necessary prelude to raising rates, as we reported in “Will Fed Reduce Bond Purchases Later This Year?” (3 Aug 2021).

The Fed will announce the beginning of the end of its bond purchases at its November meeting, 40 percent of survey respondents said; 30 percent expect the announcement at the December meeting and 25 percent expected no announcement this year.

The Fed will raise rates by a quarter of a percentage point next year, more than 70 percent of those polled believe, with about 20 percent expecting the hike to come in the first six months of 2022.

Any predicted timeline depends on the COVID virus being controlled and the job market remaining strong, the economists cautioned, two conditions currently not being met.

COVID hospitalizations are at record rates in several states and the economy added only 235,000 jobs in August after posting about a million in each of July and August (see related story).

The consumer price index rose 5.4 percent in August, according to preliminary data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; the official rate is scheduled to be released today.

The U.S. unemployment rate will end this year at 4.9 percent, the economists said, with 43 percent saying the job market would not attain its pre-COVID jobless rate of 3.5 percent until 2023; 23 percent think 2024 is a more realistic time frame.

TREND FORECAST: *With politicians imposing a series of new mandates to fight the COVID War across the nation, and the public's COVID fears rising, the economists' expectation of a quick end to the Fed's bond-buying and an interest rate hike in the next nine months is too optimistic.*

While inflation pressures the Fed to raise rates now, the central bank will delay any decisions until at least next year to see how quickly—or slowly or at all—the jobs market and consumer spending react to higher prices.

That will delay rate hikes until at least the middle of next year at the earliest.

FED TAPERING COULD START THIS YEAR, BOSTIC SAYS

Despite recent weakness in the U.S. job market and economic growth, "I still think that some time this year is going to be appropriate" for the U.S. Federal Reserve to begin winding down its $120-billion monthly bond purchases, Raphael Bostic, president of Atlanta's Federal Reserve bank, said in an interview last week with *The Wall Street Journal*.

However, the bank's Open Market Committee is unlikely to announce any such decision after it meets next week, he said.

Since early summer, Bostic has advocated an early start to tapering the central bank's asset purchases.

Curtailing the Fed's bond-buying is unlikely to harm the economy, he said, and doing so "faster is better than slower." He said that ending the asset purchase program should take no longer than a year.

"I think the economy is in a fairly strong position," he said, noting that business leaders in his bank's region "are still pretty bullish on things and believe the economy is very close to having its full-on sea legs and not needing as much accommodation of policy."

TRENDPOST: *Is Bostic overly optimistic or just a Fed shill playing his role to distract the masses from the truth? Anyone who has seen August's disappointing jobs report, surveys showing consumers' outlook tanking, office occupancy rates at unprecedented low levels, tourism, travel, trade shows, conventions, concerts all sliding, etc., would not declare the U.S. economy to be "in a fairly strong position."*

Instead, the economy's position is precarious, which will prompt the Fed to delay any decision to next year. They will keep the cheap money scheme going to artificially prop up equity markets and economies.

UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS FALL TO 18-MONTH LOW

The number of claims filed for new unemployment benefits shrank to 340,000 in the most recent week reported, down from the previous week's revised total of 354,000, to reach the lowest number since March 2020, according to U.S. labor department figures.

The number bested the 345,000 expected by economists surveyed by Bloomberg but remained well above the 200,000 weekly pre-COVID average.

Continuing claims also fell, reaching 2.75 million, notching a fifth consecutive week of smaller numbers and beating surveyed economists' median forecast of 2.81 million.

TRENDPOST: *As we noted in "Unemployment Claims Drop" (2 Feb 2021), official unemployment figures fail to include people who have stopped looking for work or who have exhausted their benefits. Therefore, the actual number of jobless people is higher than the government reports.*

According to Lydia Boussour, an economist with Oxford Economics, when adjusting for people that have dropped out of the labor force and misclassifications, the actual unemployment rate is around 9 percent.

TREND FORECAST: *The Biden Bounce is losing momentum now that the federal unemployment benefit has lapsed. Estimates are that the end of the $300 weekly jobless payment will cost the economy as much as $8 billion in consumer spending in coming months as the Delta variant and supply chain chaos continues to hamper the economic recovery.*

The loss of the extra federal dollars will compound the economic sluggishness that supply chain disruptions and the second wave of the virus are creating.

These factors also dampen enthusiasm for investment in business creation in retail, restaurants, travel, entertainment, theatres, tourism, trade shows, conventions etc. and other sectors that depend on consumer spending.

JOB CREATION? DISMAL DAYS AHEAD

U.S. employers added a paltry 235,000 non-farm jobs in August after adding one million in July and 962,000 in June, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported as it also revised upward the previous two months' numbers.

The consensus among economists had called for 735,000 new jobs last month**,** almost three times the actual number created.

In August, the return of the COVID virus prevented as many as 5.6 million people from working, according to figures cited by CNBC, an increase from the 5.4 million found in July.

Also last month, 1.5 million people said fear of the virus kept them from looking for work, a number unchanged from July.

Most of August's weakness was in public contact industries**,** such as bars, hotels, and restaurants, which had led the hiring surge over the summer.

Leisure and hospitality added no net new jobs; bars and restaurants dumped 42,000 workers, BLS figures showed.

The number of hours worked at eateries and entertainment venues fell sharply last month, according to HomeBase, which makes time management software for small businesses.

Retailers rid themselves of 28,500 workers, an indication that shoppers are once again hesitating to visit stores, *The New York Times* noted.

August also showed the first increase since December in the number of people working from home, bad news for downtown businesses that depend on commuters.

The COVID virus's Delta variant "seems to be the overwhelming factor affecting the labor market right now," senior economist Daniel Zhao at Glassdoor told Business Insider.

The plunge in hiring is a setback for president Joe Biden, who has staked his presidency on taming the virus and re-igniting the U.S. economy to sustain the infrastructure and social-spending programs he has proposed.

To force people back to work, at least 25 states ended their residents' access to the $300 weekly federal unemployment benefit, which officially expired 6 September.

The jobs report indicates that those states did not benefit greatly from doing so.

"It's entirely possible that the withdrawal of [federal] enhanced unemployment benefits led to a small increase in payrolls, but it's just being completely overwhelmed by Delta," Zhao said.

Wages continued to rise in August by 0.6 percent compared to July, pushing them up 4.3 percent year over year.

The labor force participation rate stood still at 61.7 percent, the same as in July, still less than the 63.3 percent before the COVID virus arrived.

TREND FORECAST: *Previously we warned that the hiring figures were tallied in mid-August and likely do not reflect the full extent to which the spreading virus has damaged the economic recovery.*

DURABLE GOODS DOWN = SLOWDOWN

Consumers' purchases of items designed to last at least three years, such as cars and washing machines, edged down 0.1 percent in July compared to June, totaling $257.2 billion.

Orders for durable goods has increased in 13 of the past 15 months, according to *The Wall Street Journal*, but is now being hurt by shortages of metals, computer chips, and other essential materials, as well as workers**,** as we have documented in several stories in recent months, including "Labor and Materials Shortage Restraining Recovery, Fed Says" (13 Jul 2021), "Chip Shortage Hampers Global Manufacturing" (23 Mar 2021) and "The Latest Shortage: Tin" (18 May 2021).

July saw a 48.9-percent plunge in demand for non-defense aircraft and parts, a market that can fluctuate sharply, the U.S. commerce department reported.

As is clear by the numbers, orders for core capital goods are clear indicators of overall business investment. On the "core capital goods" orders which exclude aircraft, the numbers were from June to July.

TRENDPOST: *The wide-ranging lack of labor and materials around the world will continue to drag on the market for not only durable goods, but also for the full range of consumer and industrial items, thus pushing inflation higher.*

On the housing front for example, citing supply chain disruptions, one of America's largest homebuilders, PulteGroup, issued a press release today which lowered its guidance for home closings:

> *"Despite the extraordinary efforts of our trade partners, the supply chain issues that have plagued the industry throughout the pandemic have increased during the second half of the year.*
>
> *"We continue to work closely with our suppliers, but shortages for a variety of building products, combined with increased production volumes across the homebuilding industry, are directly impacting our ability to get homes closed to our level of quality over the remainder of 2021."*

TREND FORECAST: *The knock-on effects of the shortages and lost sales will be a slowing of re-employment and income growth, a more sluggish economic recovery, and rising prices.*

As prices push higher, pressure grows on the U.S. Federal Reserve and the world's other central banks to raise interest rates higher sooner to lasso inflation. Such a move would have the counter-effect of driving down equity markets and risking a worldwide financial crisis.

In our report "More Chip Shortages, Higher Inflation" (27 Apr 2021), we predicted that the higher interest rates rise, the deeper the global economy and equity markets will fall, a forecast that is even more pertinent today.

DELTA VARIANT SICKENS U.S. ECONOMY

Earlier this year, economists' vision for September 2021 was bright: the vast majority of people would be vaccinated, schools would fully reopen across the country, and retail, travel, and face-to-face service businesses would bloom again... and the work-at-home millions would be commuting back to their offices.

Now, thanks to the media fear of COVID's Delta variant and politicians' demonic COVID War mandates, schools are uncertain about how, or even whether, to bring students back. Corporations are pushing back employees' return to the office into next year (see related articles). Retailers are requiring masks again, travelers are pausing their plans, and events that had been rescheduled are postponed yet again.

The omens are dark. Consumer sentiment has plummeted to its lowest point in a decade, according to a 27 August University of Michigan survey.

Instead of adding about a million jobs as it did in each of June and July, in August the economy tacked on a meager 235,000 (see related story).

In mid-July, the number of tourists visiting Hawaii reached 90 percent of pre-COVID volumes; six weeks later, the state's governor told potential visitors not to come.

Over the same period, attendance at movie theaters plunged from near-2019 levels to about half that.

A shortage of building materials has hobbled the construction industry and a scarcity of computer chips has shuttered auto plants from Detroit to Italy to Shanghai.

In late June, Oxford Economics had forecast 7.5-percent growth for the U.S. economy this year; in late August, it whittled the number to 6 percent.

Goldman Sachs had pegged this year's expansion at 6 percent but has now cut the number to 5.7 percent. However, it also bumped up its 2022 outlook from 4.6-percent growth to 4.7.

"Nothing is worse than dashed hope," chief economist Constance Hunter at KPMG said to the *WSJ*.

"You thought, 'My kids are back in school, I can go back to work.' But now that's very much in question," she added.

TRENDPOST: *In August, at least 1.5 million Americans refused to look for work out of fear of the Delta virus, the U.S. labor department reported. Despite the demand for workers in many business sectors, the U.S. economy is still 5.3 million jobs short of the number it supported in February 2020.*

Thus, until the workforce picks up, economies will stay down. It is simple math: the less people working, the less money they spend. And today, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the number of people employed with full-time jobs plunged by 13.7 million last year... registering the sharpest decline in this data since 1967, when the agency began tracking this data.

Making matters worse, and again, an inflation reality, while prices keep rising, median household income decreased 2.9 percent to $67,500 between 2019 and 2020, the Census Bureau reported.

PRODUCER PRICE INDEX CLIMBS 8.3 PERCENT

The Producer Price Index, a measure of what manufacturers charge wholesale markets for their finished products, jumped 8.3 percent from August 2020 through last month, the U.S. Labor Department reported the largest annual gain since the agency began tracking the number in 2010.

The index, a measure of inflation that has yet to reach consumers, rose 0.7 percent in August from July. The index gained 1 percent in each of the previous two months, indicating that the pace of inflation might be beginning to slow.

Food prices shot up 2.9 percent in August after falling in July, contributing to the 12.9-percent rise in food prices over the past 12 months.

TREND FORECAST: *As we noted in "Inflation Pressures Rising" (20 Jul 2021), while inflation is spiking, real wages are falling. For example, when the consumer price index increased 5.4 percent in June, real average hourly earnings fell 0.5%, despite a 0.3- percent increase in average hourly earnings.*

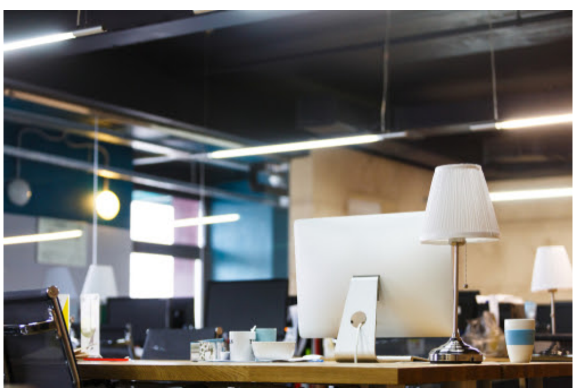
However, the Bank of England, the European Central Bank, Germany's Bundesbank, and the U.S. Federal Reserve all continue to insist that current high rates of inflation are transitory and do not yet require higher interest rates, although all have said they will tighten rates if further data shows the need.

Also, the sentiment on The Street, which we disagree with, is that the danger of a long-term inflation spiral remains low.

There are too many variables in flux to make a long-term forecast now. Indeed, when the markets crash, so too will many prices. However, to re-inflate failing economies, central banks and governments will re-flood the markets with cheap money, which will in turn lower the value of their currencies—and the lower the value of a currency, the more it costs to buy products, driving inflation even higher.

Indeed, in the U.S., the $3.5 trillion dollar spending package before Congress is just another example of governments flooding the markets with cheap money printed on nothing and backed by nothing that will artificially and temporarily push economic growth higher... while fueling inflation and sinking the value of the currency lower. Thus, the lower the value of the currency, the more it costs to purchase products and services... the higher inflation rises.

RETURN TO OFFICES POSTPONED: COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE BUST?



Office spaces in 10 major U.S. cities saw occupancy rates of 33 percent in the week ended 25 August, dipping from 35 percent in late July, according to Kastle Systems, which tracks swipe card use in more than 2,500 business buildings.

Offices in New York and San Francisco were the most lightly attended at 22 and 20 percent, respectively, also slightly below their July high marks, Kastle reported.

Commercial landlords had expected the fall would bring workers back to their downtown locales, but Amazon, Apple, and other companies have pushed back their return dates until next January or later, as we reported in Blackrock, Amazon Delay Return to the Office (10 August, 2021).

While most companies continue to pay rent on space not being used, the longer employees work from home, the more normal the practice becomes and companies will recognize the need for less office space in the future.

HSBC has announced that most workers will permanently work from home at least some of the time (see related story); Facebook announced months ago that it would become an all-remote company.

The loss of commuters to city centers continues to endanger the economic ecosystem of restaurants, shops, gyms, food trucks, and other businesses that desk workers support.

TRENDPOST: *The latest news bears out our forecast made in [“Amazon Pushes Back Return for Corporate Workers, But Those at Fulfillment Centers Must Report to Work”] (10 Aug 2021): The more people who work remotely, the further commercial real estate prices will fall. In turn, businesses and transportation systems that relied on commuters will economically suffer, as will the workforce once employed in those sectors.*

The shift to working at home will redefine economic ecosystems, especially in urban centers. Commuters buy lunch, gifts, clothes, gadgets, and other items in locales where they work; as workers stay home, downtown stores and restaurants will lose their traditional customer base and gas stations along commuter routes will see business plummet.

At the same time, owners of commercial real estate will face a reckoning as they slash rents to lure a shrinking base of tenants, forcing them to demand property tax concessions from cities that will struggle even more to maintain police, fire, and public works infrastructures.

SHIPS CLOGS = INFLATION

On 28 August, a record 44 ships were anchored off the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, Bloomberg reported, waiting for a slot in a terminal to load goods bound for China or unload merchandise coming from there.

Ships' average wait time had grown to 7.6 days on that date, compared to 6.2 days just two weeks earlier, according to data from the Port of Los Angeles.

Loaded ships are unable to set sail for China until the ocean freight backlog there has cleared after the country reopened a terminal at the port of Ningbo after shutting it down for two weeks after one worker tested positive for the COVID virus. (See "China Closes Key Port Terminal: Trouble Ahead," 24 Aug 2021.)

Ships laden with goods to unload have to wait as railroads and trucking companies deal with their own shortages of everything from workers to spare parts.

The snarls come at a time when U.S. retailers usually begin to stock up for the December holidays' buying season and as China prepares for its seven-day Golden Week holiday early next month.

China also has applied its "zero tolerance" anti-virus policy beyond its own docks.

"One of our dedicated charters was recently denied entry into China, because a crew member tested positive for COVID, forcing the vessel to return to Indonesia to change the entire crew before continuing," Michael Witynski, CEO of the Dollar Tree store chain, said in a late August call with reporters, including Bloomberg.

"Overall, the voyage was delayed by two months," he said.

The clogs have rippled across the world's oceans; in late August, at least a dozen cargo ships were biding time outside the port of Savannah on Georgia's coast, according to Bloomberg.

TREND FORECAST: *The long delays will add to the price consumers and factories pay for everything from car parts to Christmas toys, pushing prices higher and hardening inflation amid ongoing shortages.*

Combined with the Delta virus scourge, the multiple, ongoing shipping and supply chain foul-ups will harm the winter holiday sales season for retailers, especially those with walk-in stores, eliminate wholesale and retail jobs, and continue to slow the economic recovery well into next year.

Also, as we noted in our article cited above, in nations lacking strong citizens' movements opposing lockdowns and other harsh mandates, politicians are now likely to impose a new round of restrictions that harm workers, individuals, and businesses.

Again, we call on political leaders to learn the lessons of 2020's COVID War: isolate the vulnerable, allow others to move and work freely under reasonable, evidence-based precautions, and leave schools and businesses open so economies and society itself can survive.

BANKSTER BANDITS GET RICHER PLAYING THE INSIDE TRACK

In 2020, officials of the U.S. Federal Reserve traded stocks and other securities while the central bank was shoring up financial markets with bond purchases, rock-bottom interest rates, and other aids.

The reported trades were made by Robert Kaplan, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, and Eric Rosengren, president of the Boston Fed.

The trades violated no laws and complied with federal regulations, *The New York Times* reported, but raised questions about the officials' judgment and the Fed's ethical standards, which seem to allow the possibility or appearance that senior Fed officers could profit from inside information.

In particular, the 24 stock deals, each worth $1 million or more, Kaplan made last year raised eyebrows, although none took place during March or April 2020, when the Fed was implementing most of its support programs.

Kaplan traded shares of companies affected by 2020's economic chaos, including medical supplier Johnson & Johnson and several oil and gas companies.

Kaplan also bought bonds of companies that the Fed later included in its own bond purchases as part of its economic rescue effort.

"While my financial transactions conducted during my years as Dallas Fed president have complied with the Federal Reserve's ethics rules, to avoid even the appearance of any conflict of interest, I have decided to change my personal investment practices," Kaplan said in a statement.

"There will be no trading in these accounts as long as I am serving as president of the Dallas Fed," he pledged.

Rosengren also issued a carefully-worded statement.

"I made some personal investment decisions last year that were permissible under Fed ethics rules," he acknowledged. "Regrettably, the appearance of such permissible personal investment decisions has generated some questions, so I have made the decision to divest these assets to underscore my commitment to Fed ethics guidelines.

“It is extremely important to me to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest, and I believe these steps will achieve that,” he said.

The moves may not quell the outcry over ethics rules that allow Fed officials to trade actively across a range of venues, the *NYT* noted.

“What we have now is an ethics system built on a very narrow conception of what a central bank is and should be,” Peter Conti-Brown, a University of Pennsylvania historian of the Fed, commented to the *NYT*.

The Fed’s broad and active role in the economy, which has grown since the bank’s ethics rules were created, the *NYT* said, give Fed officials advance and inside information about economic sectors and prospects.

However, the bank’s ethical standards still place few limits on the investments its senior officers can make.

When asked if those rules should be tightened, John Williams, president of the New York Fed, said, “That’s a broader question that I don’t have a particular answer for right now.”

He made the comments last week in a conference call with reporters that the *NYT* cited.

Political scientist Sarah Binder at George Washington University, author of a book on Fed politics, was more blunt.

The ethical dust-up “highlights the crazy, weird, Byzantine nature of the Fed,” she said in an *NYT* interview.

“It’s almost impossible to keep the rules straight, the lines of accountability straight,” she said.

A similar controversy arose earlier this year when Janet Yellin was nominated to become treasury secretary.

Her financial disclosure forms showed that she had collected more than $7 million in speaking fees from banks and corporations in 2019 and 2020 after ending her time as chair of the Fed, which we reported in "Bankster Bandits in Charge—Janet Yellin's Secret Money, Meetings, and Phone Calls" (24 Aug 2021).

TRENDPOST: *The game is rigged. Governments and their Bankster Bandits buddies are nothing more than a criminal syndicate that front as legitimate operations for We the People that are shilled as "democracies" and a banking system.*

We have been writing about this for decades. It is not a "revolving" door of people rotating between government and Big business...it's one door. Or, as the great Comedian George Carlin noted, "It's one big club, and you ain't in it."

TREND FORECAST: *As the global economies decline and the rich get richer, prepare for our "OFF WITH THEIR HEADS 2.0" trend we forecast back in December 2019 when there was a global rise in anger directed at the 1 percent, that was already spreading globally prior to 2020's COVID War will accelerate.*

Those demonstrations that were sweeping much of the globe were halted when the government used the COVID War to restrict street protests.

As Gerald Celente has long noted, "When people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it." And many are "losing it." With the rich getting richer, the elites become more "elite' and there will be uprisings to bring them down.

With the gap between the rich and poor widening, so, too, will the animosity between the "haves" and "have nots." And as the Bigs keep getting bigger, income inequality will be a key platform in the formation of new political parties across the globe.

Gated communities will increase in popularity, and more private security will be hired by the haves who will be gangland targets.

ICONIC NEW YORK HOME DÉCOR RETAILER FOLDS

ABC Carpet and Home, a purveyor of luxury home décor to New York City's upper crust for more than a century, has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, blaming its woes on the COVID-era lockdown and a "mass exodus" of its customer base from Manhattan.

An investment vehicle called 888 Capital Partners has offered $15.3 million to buy the company out of bankruptcy and take over its two locations, one at 888 Broadway and the other in Brooklyn.

Paulette Cole, ABC's controlling owner, helped fund the buyout and would retain an interest in the reformulated company.

The deal also includes a $5.7-million loan to keep the stores open and the business functioning during the bankruptcy process, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

TREND FORECAST: *Business centers across the country, such as New York, Chicago, and San Francisco will continue to see the demise of touchstone businesses as the diaspora of at-home workers continues to drain affluent consumers from northern commercial hubs to secondary cities, particularly across the U.S. South and Southwest.*

WORKER SHORTAGES, VIRUS HOBBLE RESTAURANTS' RECOVERY

Sales in the U.S. restaurant and food service industry will reach $789 billion this year, a 20-percent gain on 2020's figure, but still well short of 2019's $864 billion, the National Restaurant Association (NRA) has predicted.

Eateries are still short of workers, face rising food costs and menu prices, and now the COVID virus's Delta variant is making diners hesitate to eat out, the association said in its midyear "State of the Industry" report.

Earlier this year, stimulus payments, pent-up demand, and the rapid progress of a national vaccination campaign sparked a restaurant revival, the NRA said, but now inflation, infection, and shortages weigh on the industry's recovery.

This year "is shaping up to be the year of transition and rebuilding," Hudson Riehle, NRA senior vice president of research and knowledge, said in a comment quoted by CNBC.

"There are recruitment and retention challenges, food cost challenges, rapid changes in consumer demand for both on-site, and off-premises dining," he noted, "but the pandemic impacts still are being dealt with on a week-to-week basis."

Although the industry has posted seven consecutive months of job gains and employed 11.3 million people as of July, it is still about one million jobs short of its pre-COVID workforce, NRA figures show.

Most recently, the sector shed 42,000 workers, labor department figures showed, as diners stayed home to avoid the Delta virus.

Three in four restaurant owners say finding and keeping workers is their most urgent challenge, the highest that concern has ranked in the 20 years the NRA has been asking members the question.

In January this year, just 8 percent rated labor as their most urgent problem.

Now the Delta variant is in a strong second place.

Six in ten U.S. adults report that the variant has caused them to change their patterns of dining out. One in five say they now sit outdoors, 37 percent say they order in, and 19 percent have quit restaurant dining entirely, according to a recent NRA survey.

Those who do patronize restaurants find menu prices have risen an average of 3.9 percent by 1 July, their biggest jump in more than ten years, CNBC reported.

“The two fundamental drivers of the restaurant industry are convenience and socialization, and that convenience component during the [COVID War] has been emphasized and accelerated for greater availability,” Riehle told CNBC.

“Recent months have demonstrated there remains substantial pent-up demand for the socialization driver—in other words, the onsite restaurants,” he noted, “so those two [drivers] engage in an ebb and flow as pandemic progresses and then wanes.”

TREND FORECAST: *In the best of times, the restaurant industry has thin margins, health safety worries, and staffing headaches. During the COVID War, it was the first sector of the economy to collapse and will be the last to recover.*

Restaurants’ costs will continue to rise with inflation, pushing menu prices up, reducing the number of people who can afford to dine out, and driving more restaurants to lay off workers and close permanently.

Any “recovery” for the industry will take years and, when the recovery peaks and levels, there will be fewer restaurants employing fewer workers, leaving fewer ways for teens and people of color, especially women, to enter the workforce.

AIRLINES PROFITS DOWN AS COVID WAR HEATS UP

On 9 September, major U.S. airlines lowered profit expectations for the rest of this year, due to reductions in bookings because of COVID’s rampant Delta variant, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

Airlines had made optimistic earnings and profit forecasts in summer as reservations for summer and fall travel grew, as we reported in “U.S. Airline Industry Takes Off” (27 Apr 2021); now bookings are fading and cancellations are up, the carriers said.

As recently as late July, airlines were forecasting profits this quarter as consumers’ pent-up demand for travel prompted airlines to add routes to vacation destinations.

Carriers also strengthened service to some business centers, such as New York and Chicago, as corporate bookings picked up.

Airlines had counted on business travelers to hit the road again after Labor Day but those bookings have failed to materialize in the numbers expected, they said.

As a result, United and Southwest airlines have abandoned their previous hopes for a profit this quarter and now expect losses, although Delta still expects a small profit for the period, it said.

United is paring back routes and schedules to meet demand and expects "challenging" slow periods between Thanksgiving and the Christmas season, CEO Andrew Nocella said.

International travel also has suffered.

During the summer, U.S. tourists began returning to Europe.

However, earlier this month, the European Union suggested its member nations ban non-essential American visitors due to the rising number of COVID cases in the U.S.

France already has banned unvaccinated U.S. travelers; other countries have imposed virus testing requirements.

Similarly, the U.S. has not removed travel restrictions on European visitors imposed in spring 2020, nor has it indicated when the strictures will be lifted.

TREND FORECAST: *As we wrote in "Airlines Still Living on Federal Aid" (9 Mar 2021), under the best conditions, the airline industry itself does not expect to recover its 2019 performance levels until 2023 at the earliest.*

However, as we have noted several times previously, with more people working from home and meetings online becoming the new ABnormal, business travel, which accounts for 75 percent of airline profits, will never return to its previous volume, shrinking not only airlines, but also the number of hotels, restaurants, shops, and attractions that business travelers used to patronize.

DELTA VARIANT THROWS WRENCH INTO AIRLINES' HOPES OF POST-COVID-19 REBOUND

Companies that rely on business travel—including airlines and hotels—have suffered in recent weeks due to the emergence of the COVID-19 Delta variant and the decision by many firms to step back from sending their employees on business trips.

"I'd say it's a pause, as compared to continued growth. That said, we understand why it's paused," Ed Bastian, the chief executive officer of Delta Air Lines, told *The Wall Street Journal.*

Airlines have been one of the sectors most impacted, even though *The Journal* pointed out that summer air travel reached 40 percent of the pre-outbreak level, which was short of the 60 percent that the industry hoped for. Business leaders have expressed trepidation about sending their workers abroad.

The report pointed to a survey by the Global Business Travel Association that found about 21 percent of travel managers said their companies have put into place some form of travel restrictions, and another 25 percent said their employer was weighing that option.

"We're not traveling internationally, period," Paul Knopp, the U.S. chief executive of KPMG, told the paper. "We use Microsoft Teams, where I say I can be on three continents in one day."

These tools are seen as the death knell for business travel. Bloomberg also conducted a survey of 45 large businesses and found that 84 percent plan to spend less on post-COVID travel in the future.

“Having Saved billions from slashed travel budgets during the pandemic with only a marginal impact on operations, companies, banks, consulting firms, and government offices will be hard-pressed to explain why they'd return to their old ways,” the Bloomberg report said.

The report pointed out that business travelers brought in up to three-quarters of airline profits before the outbreak and hotels relied on business travelers for two-thirds of its revenue. Morgan Stanley said hotels could see an 18 percent dip in revenue in the next year.

TREND FORECAST: *The **Trends Journa**l has reported extensively on the impact that COVID-19 has had on major U.S. employers, and has predicted that the Delta variant was going to emerge as a major threat to “normal.” (SEE: “DELTA VARIANT= GLOBAL HYSTERIA,” and “SPECIAL REPORT: NEW TOP TREND, COVID WAR 2.0.”)*

Moreover, the less business travel and tourism, the harder nations, cities and all the related businesses that depend on the travel sector will be hit. This in turn will bring down tax revenues, lower real estate prices ... and consequently push street crime and homeless populations higher in the affected areas.

WELLS FARGO: SLAP ON THE WRIST FOR COMING MORE CRIMES

Wells Fargo, the third largest U.S. bank by deposits, was handed a $250-million fine and a hard verbal spanking by the federal Office of the Comptroller of the Currency last week.

The bank was cited for “unsafe or unsound practice” in making home loans, including inadequate controls, ineffective governance, and errors that harmed its customers, the agency said.

Under the order, the bank may need to halt some foreclosures and must retain affected customers within its loan-servicing operation until the errors are corrected.

The action grows out of a 2018 finding of widespread deficiencies in its mortgage lending, including improperly charging fees to some customers.

Wells Fargo still faces additional disciplinary actions stemming from an earlier scandal, in which the bank opened accounts for some customers, and charged them fees, without their knowledge or consent.

Trendpost: *Like Deutsche Bank and JP Morgan Chase, which also have been cited for a series of civil and criminal violations, Wells Fargo joins the club of companies that are too big to fail, too big to jail.*

These elite corporations are allowed to re-offend with no individuals held responsible. The only penalty is fines that amount to an affordable dent in quarterly revenues, an acceptable cost of doing shady business.

In the U.S.S.A. it is a slap on the wrist for members of the Washington crime syndicate for their murders and thievery and prosecution to the fullest for We the Little People of Slavelandia.

SPOTLIGHT: BIGS THE "BIGS" BRIGADE BUYING UP THE WORLD

Each week, we report instances where the money junky hedge funds, private equity groups and the already big company swallows another piece of the global economy. Here are some more of what the BIGS have been gobbling up...

RENTS SOAR AS INVESTORS BUY PROPERTIES AND RAISE RATES

From January through July, U.S. residential rental rates shot up 13 percent, more than double the rate of inflation and the greatest jump in five years, according to Yardi Matrix, which collects and analyzes real estate data.

Rents have been pushed up, in no small measure, because investors ranging from private individuals to private equity firms such as Blackstone have bought $87 billion worth of rental houses during the first half of this year, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

We have documented this trend in our stories such as ["Invitation Homes to Buy $1 Billion Worth of Houses This Year"] (1 Jun 2021) and ["Private Equity Partners Target $5 Billion in Rental Houses"] (27 Jul 2021).

This year's massive property grab include**s** 68,000 single-family rental houses in the second quarter alone, real estate firm Redfin noted, when one in six homes sold was taken by an investor.

In addition, single-family homes built specifically to be rented instead of sold to families accounted for 12 percent of all single-family residential construction from January through June, Yardi found.

Blackstone, Goldman Sachs, and Invesco have collectively committed another $11 billion to the sector since June, the *WSJ* said.

Low mortgage rates and families' desire to flee dense, costly cities for roomier, less expensive homes farther away from urban centers have driven home prices to record levels, leaving fewer families able to afford to buy.

Now, thanks to investors targeting rental housing as a new profit opportunity, rents also are rising to, or in some cases past, the limits of affordability for an increasing number of households.

In July, the publicly-traded Tricon Residential reported rent increases of 21 percent, a record for the company, although current tenants renewing leases saw an average increase of only 5 percent. Often, leases limit the amount that rent can increase from one year to the next.

Still, increases for renewing tenants could have been as much as 10 percent if the company didn't choose to "hold back," CEO Gary Berman said in an August earnings call with analysts reported by the *WSJ*.

Tricon opened a $5-billion fund over the summer to buy another 18,000 existing houses; through a separate venture, Tricon continues to commission construction of houses built to rent.

Householders looking to apartments will find no relief there.

In 87 of the country's 100 largest cities, rents have returned to pre-COVID levels, according to the website ApartmentList.com.

Demand for flats is up because young people who moved in with friends or parents during the COVID War are now venturing back out on their own, the website reported.

Also, the cost of buying a house remains prohibitive for most people, despite continued low mortgage interest rates, and there are not enough rental units to meet demand, especially for households with moderate incomes, ApartmentList noted.

This year "will go down as a year when housing affordability went from bad to really bad, especially in mid-sized markets," Rob Warnock, senior researcher at ApartmentList, told *Business Insider*.

"Recent data suggest home prices are starting to cool a bit, but they're still up 20 percent since January 2020," he said. "This keeps more households renting for longer."

TRENDPOST: *As we noted in "Blackstone Pays $5.1 Billion for Rent-Controlled Apartments" (20 Jul 2021), with investment companies grabbing the most desirable houses in the most competitive markets, tens of thousands of houses will be off the market for years to come that otherwise would be available to individuals and families as wealth-building investments in the American Dream.*

That lack will limit wealth creation among younger generations, which already are burdened by student debt and a precarious job market.

These limitations will foment political unrest and amplify calls for debt relief, guaranteed incomes, and other progressive social ideas.

INVESTORS NOW TARGETING OFF-CAMPUS STUDENT HOUSING

Blackstone, Brookfield Asset Management, and other private equity firms are investing billions to create or buy upscale off-campus housing for college students now that the institutions are unlocking their classrooms, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Deals involving student housing totaled $2.52 billion during the first six months of this year, compared to $1.68 billion during the first half of 2020, the *WSJ* reported.

In 2020, when most colleges and universities switched to remote learning, many students chose to continue to live in their college-area housing, keeping rent collections steady.

Students "said, 'Who cares if it's remote learning?' The last thing I want to do is stay in the room I've lived in since eighth grade'," Al Rabil, CEO of Kayne Anderson Real Estate, said to the *WSJ*.

Rabil's company has developed 50 student housing properties, totaling 34,000 beds across 23 states.

With schools returning to in-person learning, investors expect the student housing market to grow even stronger.

Last month, Blackstone Real Estate Income Trust agreed to buy a majority stake in eight student housing projects, totaling 5,416 beds, for $784 million, the *WSJ* said.

The properties, to be developed and managed by the Georgia-based Landmark Properties, will be laden with amenities, some including separate game and video rooms, fully equipped gyms, and, in some cases, swimming pools.

Brookfield is talking with Scion Group, a Chicago developer of student housing, to partner in buying $1 billion worth of student residences, the *WSJ* said. The deal would be Brookfield's first venture into the field.

Enrollments have been trending higher at four-year schools, despite the COVID virus's Delta variant, the *WSJ* reported, encouraging the new investments in student housing.

More than 1,000 colleges and universities are mandating students to be vaccinated if they are to live and study on campus, according to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

TRENDPOST: *Students who rent apartments from private equity companies will be groomed to accept the idea of later renting homes from them, cultivating generations of real estate serfs who pay high prices to occupy homes they can never own.*

These renters will be denied the most common way that most Americans have built wealth: through home ownership. Paying premium rents to profit-driven landlords will keep these renters capital-poor, financially frustrated, and driven to press for social and political reform that will create more opportunities for them.

ICU MEDICAL BUYS SMITHS GROUP FOR $2.7 BILLION

British engineering conglomerate Smiths Group will sell its Smiths Medical division to California-based ICU Medical for $2.7 billion after rejecting a $2.3-billion bid from private equity firm TA Associates, the *Financial Times* reported.

The deal will leave Smiths with about an extra $50 million in cash, with the company's stockholders owning 10 percent of the new entity's shares, worth roughly $500 million.

A positive performance by the new entity could result in another $100 million added to the deal, the *FT* noted.

Terms of the sale, set to close early next year, include a $300-million penalty if ICU backs out of the agreement.

The combination expands ICU Medical's catalog of equipment it offers to hospitals' emergency rooms and intensive care units.

The British firm shed its medical division to focus more sharply on industrial technology, the company said.

Smiths' share price bumped up 3 percent after the sale was announced.

Smiths Medical, which makes specialized medical equipment and single-use supplies, reported £918 million—more than $1.2 billion—in 2020.

TRENDPOST: *Once again, more consolidation in the medical field. Thus, the more monopolization, the greater the power of those that control the industry who in turn pay-off politicians with bribes (that morons and imbeciles call campaign contributions) to charge what they want and do as they wish at the cost of the general public.*

M&A SPREE CONTINUES AS THE BIGS GET BIGGER, RICH GET RICHER

From 1 January through August this year, companies, private equity firms, and special-purpose acquisition companies (SPACs) have announced mergers and purchases worth more than $3.6 trillion worldwide, with about half—more than $1.8 trillion—in the U.S., data firm Dealogic reported.

Refinitiv, another research firm, pegs the total at $3.9 trillion, up from $2.6 trillion in 2019 and more than double the amount for the same period in 2020.

August, usually a quiet month for acquisitions, saw $500 billion in deals, according to the *Financial Times*.

The volume is the greatest for this eight-month stretch since Dealogic began tracking the number in 1995 and is on pace to pass 2007's single-year $4.3-trillion record for M&A announcements, the *FT* noted.

Mega-deals worth $1 billion to $10 billion make up about half of the transactions' total value, Dealogic noted.

However, several even bigger deals surpassed that category, including Discovery's $43-billion purchase of WarnerMedia; Square's takeover of Afterpay for $29 billion; and the $18-billion marriage between Indonesian ride-hailing star Gojek and Tokopedia, an online shopping powerhouse.

Also, Dell spun off VMWare in a $52-billion move and meal deliverer Grab made a $40-billion merger with a SPAC.

"High valuations of public tech companies are providing them with real currency to afford certain acquisitions," Atif Azher, partner in the Simpson Thacher law firm, commented to the *FT*.

Also, international deals made headlines: the Irish firm Aercap bought General Electric's aircraft leasing business for $30 billion; two Canadian railways wrestled each other to buy Kansas City Southern in the U.S. for $31 billion.

About 400 SPACs are waiting to spend $120 billion collected from investors, which could amount to as much as another $600 billion in purchases, JPMorgan Chase researchers reported.

In the U.S., the Federal Trade Commission reviews certain transactions worth at least $92 million. The agency has been unable to complete those reviews within the usual 30-day time period after a filing: it received 2,900 filings in the 10 months ending 1 August, 800 more than in its busiest full fiscal year in the last ten, the agency announced.

Tech deals led the parade of buyouts, with 8,742 deals representing 21 percent of M&As for the period, up from 16 percent last year and claiming the largest proportion since 2000.

The tech transactions were worth $832 billion, compared to $3.01 billion a year earlier and $2.91 billion in 2019, the *FT* said.

In addition, aerospace, autos and trucking, insurance, leisure and recreation, metals, publishing, and transportation all showed a volume of M&As that at least doubled their five-year averages, Dealogic said.

"With most businesses generating record profits, having access to inexpensive debt, and experiencing high share prices, it's difficult to see M&A activity slowing over the next six to 12 months," Frank Aquila, head of M&A work at law firm Sullivan & Cromwell, told the *FT*.

Investment banks and other advisory firms have scooped up billions in fees for structuring the deals, giving advice, and other services to buyers and sellers, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

JP Morgan reported pocketing a record $3.6 billion in fees during the most recent quarter. Goldman Sachs said its fee income rose by a third and took in $1 billion in such fees in each of the last three quarters, the *WSJ* noted.

Goldman exceeded that level of advisory income only one other time since 2009, the *WSJ* said.

The revenues have helped make Goldman the best performer this year in the Dow Jones Industrial Average, gaining 56 percent since December.

Service fees have kept many big-bank stocks riding high: fees are paid when deals close and many of the biggest are still pending, promising big paydays ahead for the banks and, implicitly, their shareholders.

Banks including Goldman and Jeffries have used some of the extra cash to bid higher wages for talented new hires and to give raises averaging 30 percent to junior staffers, who often do the tedious detail work involved in putting deals together, to persuade them to stay under the heavy workload, the *WSJ* found.

TRENDPOST: *The buyout boom has been fueled by the flood of cheap money the U.S. Federal Reserve and other central banks have poured into the world's economy during the COVID War, all at artificially low interest rates.*

Under those conditions, there's a low price and little risk in bulking up a company by buying competitors.

The M&A spree is one more factor that will leave fewer companies determining the products and services we can buy and the prices we pay for them.

WESTERN DIGITAL IN TALKS TO MERGE WITH JAPANESE CHIP MAKER

Western Digital, a $19-billion U.S. chip company in San Jose, is in advanced talks to merge with Japan's Kioxia, *The Wall Street Journal* reported. (See our early coverage in "Competitors Mull Purchase of Chip-Maker Kioxia," 25 Apr 2021).

Although the talks are well along, Western Digital could still decide to make an initial public stock offering or combine with another competitor, the *WSJ* noted.

The deal would be the latest in a series of consolidations in the chip industry, as companies seek to scale operations to a rapidly expanding market without taking years to build and equip new plants and train new workers.

Advanced Micro Devices paid $35 billion to buy Xilinx ("AMD Buys Xilink," 3 November, 2020); Nvidia bought Britain's Arm Holdings for $40 billion; and Analog Devices picked up Maxim Integrated Products for $320 billion.

Samsung, the world's largest maker of memory chips, said in July that exploding demand for the chips helped offset weak revenues from cell phone shipments amid a worldwide snarl in supply lines.

TREND FORECAST: *Demand for chips is soaring as computers offer more and more features, 5G wireless technology rolls out and spawns a new generation of* *smartphones and other appliances, and as electric vehicle makers in China, Europe, and the U.S. expand production.*

The research, development, and capital cost of entering the chip-making business has become virtually prohibitive. Therefore, existing companies will continue to maneuver for market share by taking over competitors until "consolidation" leaves only a handful of Bigs in the chip-making business.

PAYPAL PAYS $2.7 BILLION FOR JAPANESE BUY-NOW-PAY-LATER APP

Online payments pioneer Paypal will buy Paidy, a Japanese buy-now-pay-later (BNPL) app, in a mostly-cash, $2.7-billion deal, the *Financial Times* reported.

Paidy launched its delayed-payments app only last year.

It allows its six million users to spread payments over three equal monthly installments with no interest. The idea is a novelty in a country that still relies largely on cash for purchases of all but the most expensive items.

"Combining Paidy's brand, capabilities, and talented team with Paypal's expertise, resources, and global scale will accelerate our momentum in this strategically important market," Paypal vice-president Peter Kenevan said in a statement announcing the purchase.

Paypal's big gulp is the latest acquisition in the rapidly expanding BNPL business, in which consumers can spread payments for expensive items over a few months, typically with no interest charge and often without a credit check.

Last month, Twitter-owned Square put up $29 billion to take over Australian BNPL company Afterpay in the biggest M&A in the country's history, the *FT* noted.

San Francisco-based Affirm has partnered with Amazon to let customers spread out payments for items costing more than $50. Affirm's share price soared on the news.

PFIZER BUYS CANCER BIOTECH FIRM FOR $2.26 BILLION

Drug giant Pfizer has offered $18.50 a share in an attempt to buy all shares of Trillium Therapeutics, a firm with two trials under way for drugs that spark the immune system to attack blood cancers, including leukemia and multiple myeloma.

Pfizer's offer places a value on Trillium of about $2.26 billion, a 118-percent premium on the stock price's 60-day weighted average.

Trillium's drugs work similarly to Keytruda, a Merck concoction shown to be effective against cancer tumors.

Blood cancers make up about 6 percent of all malignancies, according to the *Financial Times*, with about a million people worldwide diagnosed with some form of blood cancer in 2020.

Last September, Pfizer's Breakthrough Growth Initiative, which funds promising research, put $25 million into Trillium and Pfizer's chief cancer scientist joined Trillium's scientific advisory board.

Pfizer is channeling some of its billions in profits from its COVID vaccine into cancer drugs.

In 2020, Pfizer's revenue from oncology drugs reached $10.9 billion, a 20-percent gain over 2019's, the *FT* reported, while a quarter of the company's revenue came from its COVID vaccine.

TRENDPOST: *Like every war, the COVID War has produced war profiteers.*

We have been documenting the windfall profits Pfizer, Merck, and other vaccine producers have been collecting for almost a year in our stories "Pfizer CEO Makes Windfall Profit from Vaccine News" (17 Nov 2020), "Drug Companies Cashing in on COVID" (11 May 2021), "Vax Mints New Billionaires" (25 May 2021), "Drug Lords Rake in Big Bucks with Bad Shot" (3 Aug 2021), and "More Booster Jabs, More Windfall Profits for Drug Lords" (24 Aug 2021).

In "Drug Lords' Vax Money Grab Getting Bigger" (17 Aug 2021) we noted that Pfizer reported $10.8 billion in revenues during the first half of this year and, thanks to its coronavirus vaccine, has raised projections and now expects to book $33.5 billion in sales for all of 2021, triple its take in the year's first half.

BioNtech, Pfizer's partner in the vaccine, reported $1.3 billion in profits for this year's first quarter.

The two companies expect to sell three billion doses of their formula this year and four billion in 2022, according to FiercePharma.

Moderna, which makes nothing but its COVID vaccine, sold $5.9 billion worth in the first six months of 2021 but expects annual sales to grow faster and finish this year at around $20 billion.

TREND FORECAST: *Pfizer and other pharma firms raking in big vaccine bucks will use chunks of their windfall to buy their way to bigger presences in the drug marketplace, making more Bigs bigger yet.*

Intuit, the TurboTax maker, is buying up Mailchimp, a leading pioneer in email marketing for $12 billion. A popular service that offers email service, customer-relationship-management tools and digital-ad purchases is used by many small and midsize businesses. Indeed, we use Mailchimp to notify you of **Trends Journal** reports and information.

TRENDPOST: *As we have reported, with interest rates at record lows and cheap money freely flowing, U.S. Bigs have struck some $2 trillion in buyout deals so far this year... nearly three times higher than in 2020 buyout binge according to Dealogic.*

Thus, the data proves it. Monopolies and Oligarchs are the New Age of a declining Land of Opportunity cultures.

TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT

WORLD ECONOMY HELD HOSTAGE BY SUPPLY CHAIN WOES

Most of Europe's electrical equipment manufacturers, and about half of the continent's computer, machinery, and rubber makers, report shortages of crucial materials.

Eighty-three percent of German businesses reported price hikes or delivery snafus with raw materials, intermediate products, and finished goods in August, according to a survey by DIHK.

Sixty percent of Europe's car makers are stalled by a lack of computer chips.

In Germany, where vehicle production has been cut 30 percent by a scarcity of materials, Volkswagen was ready to add extra shifts to its production line to catch up on orders

.

Then a wave of Delta virus washed across Asia, shutting down chip makers and shipping ports.

Snarls at ports in Asia have created choke points around the world, as we reported in "China Closes Key Port Terminal: Trouble Ahead" (24 Aug 2021).

"We had 16 containers being shipped to the U.S. in June and July and they still hadn't gotten through in August," Phillipe Moreau, CEO of French furniture maker Temahome, told the *Financial Times*.

"Lead times to the U.S. have doubled," he said.

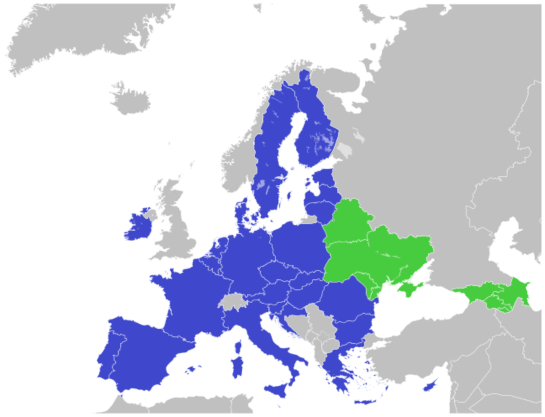
The cost to send a container on a ship between China and Europe was seven times higher last month than a year previous, according to data firm Freightos.

Furniture maker IKEA is shipping items from China to Europe by train so it can free containers to send finished items to the U.S., the company said.

Soaring shipping costs are one factor that has sent producer prices in the Eurozone up 12 percent year over year in July, the biggest jump since the European Union began keeping records in 2001. Consumer inflation in Europe rose 3 percent in August, the strongest bump in a decade.

TRENDPOST: *As we wrote in "COVID Outbreak at Chinese Port Threatens Global Trade" (15 Jun 2021), Round 2 of the COVID War will push inflation even higher. In addition, the shortage and higher cost of materials will force more layoffs, fewer re-hires, and will make consumers more reluctant to spend for fear of more layoffs. The worldwide shipping nightmare and the higher retail prices it creates will last at least through November, which in turn will limit supply of holiday selling season products for retailers.*

ECB “MODERATELY” REDUCES BOND PURCHASES



The European Central Bank (ECB) will continue its €1.85-trillion bond-buying program at a “moderately lower pace” through the rest of this year, bank president Christine Lagarde said last week, but she reassured markets that this was not a formal reduction in the program, which is due to expire early next year.

The move only reverses a decision made in March this year to increase the program and now brings the program’s scale back down to its original level, Lagarde emphasized.

“The lady is not tapering,” Lagarde said, borrowing a phrase from former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

The move illustrates a measure of cautious confidence in Europe’s economic progress, the *Financial Times* noted, after rising vaccination rates had ended shutdowns and boosted consumer spending and business investment.

Also, the continent’s consumers have a large cushion of COVID-era savings ready to be spent.

Bond prices in Germany, Italy, and other European nations rose on Lagarde’s statement.

“This is not a tapering decision,” Elga Bartsch, chief macro-investment researcher at the Blackrock Investment Institute, told the *FT*.

“Asset purchases look here to stay as the new policy framework paves the way for looser-for-longer monetary policy in the euro area,” she said.

In contrast, the Bank of England and U.S. Federal Reserve have signaled their intent to begin to pare down bond purchases this year; central banks in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand already are winding down their asset purchases.

The Eurozone still has two million more people jobless than before COVID arrived, Lagarde reminded, and that materials shortages and tangled supply chains could drive wage inflation, while a "fourth wave" of COVID infections could sink the recovery.

"We are not out of the woods yet," she said, although she added that the ECB expects the Eurozone's economy to be performing at pre-COVID levels by the end of this year.

TRENDPOST: *Like the U.S., European nations are hooked on the central bank's cheap money. We maintain our forecast that the ECB will continue to buy bonds and keep economic crutches in place for months after the current support program ends.*

Moreover, economic conditions will deteriorate as shipping disruptions continue, winter sets in and tourism continues to decline even in the ski season ... especially in nations where strict COVID War mandates and vaccine passports are imposed.

HSBC ENDORSES REMOTE WORK MODEL, SLASHES TRAVEL BUDGET

London-based financial services giant HSBC will permanently cut its corporate travel budget in half and look favorably on requests by as many as 70 percent of its employees to work from home at least some of the time, CEO Noel Quinn told Bloomberg in a 1

September interview. (See “Europe’s Banks Permanently Slash Business Travel,” 4 May 2021.)

The bank has adopted a model with employees sharing desks in central offices, has done away with the executive floor in its London headquarters building, and will cut its office space occupancy by 40 percent as leases expire in coming years, Quinn announced.

“I remember one day sitting at home, I traveled the world in a day, talking to clients in different parts of the world,” he recalled.

“My own view on the return to office is it would be a waste if we didn’t learn from the last 18 months,” he said.

HSBC staffers will be required to be in the office two or three days a week, he expects.

Face-to-face interactions create “that DNA and that teamwork,” he added.

“I’m really glad to be back in the office, seeing colleagues and having conversations in the corridor or in getting stuff done on the spur of the moment, rather than having to book a [video conference] or a telephone call,” Quinn said.

About 84 percent of the 45 large businesses Bloomberg surveyed plan to reduce corporate travel budgets by 20 to 40 percent; two-thirds report cutting back both internal and external face-to-face meetings.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have noted in articles such as “Travel and Tourism: Crashing” in our 21 July, 2020, issue, business travelers account for a majority of profits for airlines, convention centers, and hotels in business districts.*

Any reduction in corporate travel will wreak serious damage not only to airlines, hotel chains, and expo centers, but also to restaurants, shops, airport retailers, and others who cater to business travelers.

The failure of these additional businesses will add to the woes of the commercial real estate industry that we have detailed in past stories, including "Commercial Real Estate Crisis?" (3 Aug 2021) and "Commercial Landlords Scrambling" (27 Apr 2021).

We continue our forecast made in "Bid Farewell to the Business Travel Economy" in our 29 September, 2020, issue: the hospitality and tourism sectors will continue to decline, leading to more bankruptcies, greater consolidations, and less competition.

WORLD'S SUPPLY CHAIN SNARLED UNTIL WELL INTO NEXT YEAR

The global supply-chain gridlock—a tangle of materials shortages and transport snarls—will remain unsolved until some time next year, according to manufacturers and transport company executives, Bloomberg reported, as did we in "China Closes Key Port Terminal: Trouble Ahead," 24 August, 2021.

The tangles include:

- the COVID virus's Delta variant, which is shutting down production in various locales, according to Bloomberg;
- China's two-week shutdown of Terminal 3 at the Port of Ningbo, the world's third-busiest, which has created an ongoing backlog of ships waiting to load and unload at ports around the world, a delay that could take two months to sort out, shipping executives told CNN Business;
- the global shortage of shipping containers, sending freight costs soaring, as we reported in "Shipping Delays Help to Inflate Prices" (24 May 2021);
- the long-lasting shortage of computer chips, slowing production of everything from cars and computers to toys and kitchen appliances.

“We can’t get enough components, we can’t get containers, costs have been driven up tremendously,” CEO Christopher Tse of Hong Kong’s Musical Electronics Ltd. told Bloomberg.

The magnets the company uses to make Rubik’s Cubes have jumped 40 percent since March, he noted, adding, “I don’t know if we can make money from Rubik’s Cubes because prices keep changing.”

“Port congestion and a shortage of container shipping capacity may last into the fourth quarter or even mid-2022,” Hsieh Huey-chuan, president of Taiwan’s Evergreen Marine Corp., said at an investor briefing on 20 August, as reported by Bloomberg.

“If the [COVID virus] cannot be effectively contained, port congestion may become a new normal,” he said.

The cost of shipping a container from Asia to Europe has risen tenfold since May 2020 and the cost between Shanghai and Los Angeles more than sixfold, the Drewry World Container Index reported recently.

Some shippers have abandoned fixed pricing and are auctioning container space to the highest bidder, according to Bloomberg.

In August, Toyota announced it is suspending work at 14 plants in Japan and cutting vehicle production by 40 percent because of a shortage of a variety of components, not just chips.

Town Ray Holdings, a Chinese maker of kitchen appliances, is trying to store a year’s worth of components needed to keep making products; the Vietnamese government is allowing factories to permit workers to sleep on-site to try to minimize the virus’s spread and keep the wheels of industry turning, Bloomberg said.

More than half of the 3,000 German firms surveyed by the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce said the problems across their supply chains are likely to persist into 2022.

A measure of business confidence in Germany's economy dropped last month more than expected, due to a range of shortages, according to the ifo Institute, which conducted the survey.

The world's flow of goods has become so precarious that one incident—such as China's short-term closure of one terminal at one port—"could easily have its effects compounded," HSBC Holdings Plc. said in a recent research note, reported by Bloomberg.

TREND FORECAST: *The long-term disruption in the global circulation of raw materials and finished products will push inflation higher, faster, and longer, as we predicted in "Shipper Books Tenfold Increase in Net Profits" (17 Aug 2021).*

This will do wide-ranging damage to the world's economic recovery—slowing job creation, consumer spending, and business investment.

The combination of the persistent COVID virus, materials shortages, and the inflation and slowed job growth resulting from them complicates the U.S. Federal Reserve's calculus around reducing its bond-buying program, which, it has said, it will end before it raises interest rates, as we noted in "Will Fed Reduce Bond Purchases Later This Year?" (3 Aug 2021).

FOOD INDUSTRIES DESPERATE FOR WORKERS

Not only restaurants are having trouble hiring: in many parts of the world, farming and food-processing sectors are finding far fewer workers than they need, Bloomberg reported.

Brazil's coffee growers needed 120 days to close this year's harvest instead of the usual 90, due to a shortage of pickers; Vietnam has drafted army troops to help bring in the rice crop.

Malaysia will be unable to collect almost a third of its palm oil harvest, Vietnam's shrimp collection is 70 percent below 2019 levels, and 20 percent of southern Italy's tomato crop has been lost because transport is unavailable amid a heat wave, a farmers association has announced.

In Britain, farmers are pouring milk down the drain because there are too few truck drivers to collect it all before it spoils; some farmers are milking less often because they lack enough workers to maintain the usual schedule.

Also in the U.K., fast-food chain Nando's closed 50 restaurants due to a shortage of chicken meat and some gas stations have run out of fuel, complicating supply-chain issues even more.

The U.K.'s logistics chaos has been made even worse by a COVID track-and-trace app that notifies a person if they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus. If the app pings a person with a notice and that person fails to immediately quarantine for two weeks, resulting fines can reach as much as £10,000 – equivalent to $14,000.

U.S. wholesalers Sysco Corp., United Natural Foods, and others report delays in getting a range of items. In the U.K., some grocers are facing short supplies of bread and chicken, while Britain's McDonald's restaurants ran out of milkshakes last month.

In the U.S., KFC has pulled television ads for its chicken tenders, the supply of which is shrinking due to a shortage of workers in poultry plants, Bloomberg said.

That makes good news for workers.

For them, the current economy offers "choice where choices may not have existed in the past," making it harder to fill less desirable jobs, Decker Walker, agribusiness specialist with the Boston Consulting Group, told Bloomberg.

Companies are so desperate for help that at Smithfield Foods in South Dakota, workers on the pork processing line can choose Apple Watches or iPads as bonuses after they complete 60 days on the job, a company spokesman told Bloomberg.

Whether stooping for hours to pick strawberries in sweltering heat, risking carpal tunnel injuries and lost fingers on a poultry processing line, or milking a herd of cows after dark in a sub-freezing Minnesota barn, agricultural work "is a physical job," Jon DeVaney, president of the Washington State Tree Fruit Association, said to Bloomberg.

For fruit pickers, "you are picking fruit and carrying it up and down ladders, so if your alternative is pushing buttons indoors on a cash register, that might be more appealing," he acknowledged.

Agricultural workers are not in short supply worldwide; mainland Europe sees no lack and China and India, where labor is plentiful, have enough farm and food workers, Bloomberg noted.

TREND FORECAST: *For countries where agricultural and food-processing workers are scant, higher pay may persuade workers to stay in, or return to, the fields and factories. Still, the COVID crisis has realigned entire sectors of the economy and agribusiness will continue to struggle to find enough workers as long as there are better options available.*

Three trends will grow stronger as a result.

First, more people will shop at farmers markets and other local sources of produce in season if not enough fruits and vegetables can be trucked in from farther away.

Second, indoor farming will gain more interest as the ongoing trend toward fresh, local foods is spurred by a lack of greens supplied by the usual growers. We first reported on this trend in "The Rust Belt Goes Green" (1 May 2014).

Third, conventional outdoor farms will be pressured to enlist robots to handle routine tasks such as planting and weeding. Farm robots are pricey, but, as we said in "Robots Take the (Farm) Field" (4 May 2021), farmers and government agencies are exploring ways to make robotic farm equipment affordable, including subsidies and also purchasing through co-ops that could give a dozen or more farmers access to the same machines.

INDIA'S BIGGEST CAR MAKER: PRODUCTION WILL FALL 40 PERCENT

Vehicle production at Maruti Suzuki India, which makes and ships more cars than any other maker on the subcontinent, is likely to fall 40 percent below normal this month because of "a supply constraint of electronic components due to the semiconductor shortage situation," the company reported in a regulatory filing earlier this month.

Maruti expects the chip shortage to last for a year and will throttle back production to match its supply of semiconductors.

Suzuki Motor Corp., a partner in and supplier to Maruti, has forecast it will be short of chips until at least next April and said it is negotiating long-term contracts with chip-makers to guarantee future supplies.

TREND FORECAST: *India's auto industry was struggling to emerge from its worst-ever depression in the wake of a drastic government lockdown during the first COVID war.*

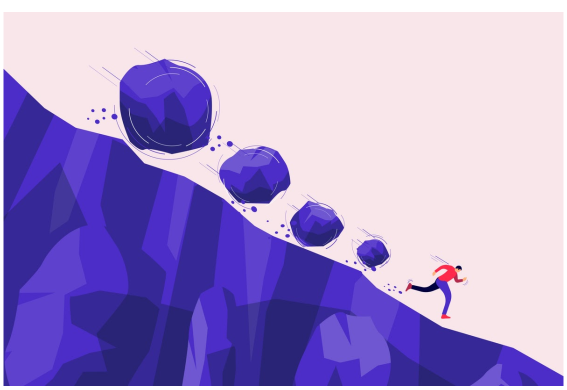
The lack of chips, lasting for months to come, will continue the industry's high unemployment rate in one of the world's poorest countries, will push used car prices higher, and drive inflation higher and faster.

More broadly, as we wrote in [“Auto Industry Chip Shortage Fallout”] (24 Aug 2021), the economic turmoil following the global shutdown will leave fewer people able to afford to buy or keep a car. That creates an opportunity for a new industry: “budget” vehicles, without computerized gadgets, that are more affordable for the world's growing numbers of people with low incomes and limited prospects.

More broadly, as we have noted previously in articles such as [“More Chip Shortages, Higher Inflation”] (27 Apr 2021), it will take months for the chip industry to satisfy current demand and perhaps years to fully supply an increasingly interconnected world.

The lack of chips not only will reduce the auto industry's output but also that of a range of consumer items, stoking inflation as demand for electronics continues to exceed supply and hobbling job growth.

INFLATION COULD CAUSE GLOBAL COLLAPSE



If left unchecked, worldwide inflation could spark a 2008-scale global financial collapse by early 2023, the Bank of Russia warned in its annual monetary policy forecast.

Given current levels of public and private debt, the global economy could “deteriorate drastically and rapidly” if the U.S. Federal Reserve tightens policy quickly to tame inflation, the bank predicted.

Higher interest rates could prompt investors to dump riskier assets, such as stocks with exaggerated price-earnings ratios, for the safety of interest-bearing instruments, the bank added.

The scenario likely would slow global economic growth to just 1.1 percent, it said.

"Risk premiums will increase significantly, the most indebted countries" – mostly among emerging nations—"will struggle to service their debt, and a significant financial crisis will begin in the global economy in the first quarter of 2023, comparable to the 2008-2009 crisis, with a long period of uncertainty and a protracted recovery," the bank's report said.

Surging inflation in Russia is likely to be a long-term problem, central bank governor Elvira Nabiullina said in a July *Financial Times* interview, an opinion at odds with those expressed by Fed chair Jerome Powell and other western economic leaders that high inflation rates are temporary.

However, the Russian bank's doomsday forecast is not as likely as one that foresees global inflation easing by the end of this year, fostering a wider economic recovery, the bank's report noted.

HIGH NATURAL GAS PRICES SLOW EUROPE'S RECOVERY

Wholesale natural gas prices across much of Europe are now about five times more than they were in 2019, pushing up consumers' electric bills in Spain by as much as 40 percent, the *Financial Times* reported.

The price has risen from about $4 per million British thermal units to $18, the *FT* noted.

Soaring prices during the warm summer months bodes ominously for what prices will do during colder weather when demand rises.

If the winter is especially cold and gas prices rise significantly more, some factories could shut down, the *FT* said.

“The electricity price hike has created a lot of indignation and this is, of course, moving onto the streets” with mass protests, Maria Campuzano, spokesperson for the Alliance Against Energy Poverty, which helps poor households pay their power bills, said to the *FT*.

Britain’s regulatory agency has permitted electric utilities to raise their limit on electric rates by 12 percent.

A resurgent European economy, higher gas demand than expected, and a cold front late last winter that drained national gas reserves have created “a perfect storm” for higher prices, CEO Marco Alverà of Snam, Milan’s largest electric company, said in comments cited by the *FT*.

Also, closing of coal-fired electric generating stations around Europe has left countries with fewer sources of power, putting more demand pressure on natural gas supplies.

In addition, after gas reserves were depleted after last winter’s late cold snap, companies were reluctant to rebuild their supplies when gas was so expensive.

As a result, reserves are now at the level usual at winter’s end instead of as winter is approaching, the *FT* noted.

Unlike the U.S., where gas prices have risen only about a quarter as much, Europe has no domestic supply and must import its gas.

Some comes from Algeria and Libya, but most comes from Russia, which previously has used gas supplies as a political bludgeon to keep European leaders from objecting to Russia's expansionist policies and actions.

TREND FORECAST: *Europe's high gas prices will rise, not ease, with supplies already short going into winter and with Russia's hand on the spigot.*

The high prices will ripple through the continent's economy, slowing growth, fueling inflation, and retarding any full economic recovery by at least six months.

EMERGING MARKETS MULL RATE HIKES

In developing nations, people typically pay a significantly higher portion of their incomes for food staples, such as wheat and cooking oil.

Now, with food prices soaring around the world to their highest prices in a decade, according to the *Financial Times*, those governments face a dilemma: do they raise interest rates to tackle inflation and keep food and other necessities affordable, or do they keep rates low in an attempt to prop up their staggering economies, which are already burdened by the massive loans global financial institutions made to them to help them survive the COVID War?

Brazil has already hiked rates several times this year; Russia has bumped rates 2.25 percentage points to 6.25 percent this year ahead of this month's parliamentary elections, in which skyrocketing food prices are a key issue.

In contrast, Poland is holding rates low, even though inflation is running at 5.4 percent, its highest in a decade, moving a former central bank chair to warn of "catastrophe" ahead.

Turkey is already in the midst of a catastrophe: president Recep Erdogan had forced the central bank to keep interest rates below inflation, setting off a massive capital exodus and driving the country's currency to its lowest value in a decade, as we reported in "Turkey's Inflation Rate Jumps Above 17.5 Percent" (13 Jul 2021).

Now inflation there is rampaging at 19.25 percent and interest rates are at 19 percent, even though central bank governor Sahap Kavcioglu had vowed to keep interest rates above the pace of inflation.

The severity of a country's 2020 lockdown has helped to determine how strong inflation now runs in those countries, analysts told the *FT*.

TREND FORECAST: *Among emerging markets, only Russia has lifted its interest rate above the rate of inflation.*

Other countries will be forced to boost rates eventually, not only to tame prices but also to thwart the street protests and political turmoil that inevitably results in developing countries when the price of basic goods goes out of control. (The roots of Syria's civil war have been traced to runaway wheat prices.)

We predict that developing nations will raise rates, some sooner, some later, as the lesser of two evils, despite a negative effect on their economic recovery and growth. The key to rate raises will be determined by inflation rates.

Many of the countries will seek to moderate their economic crises by again renegotiating or escaping their mounting debt burdens taken on during the COVID War.

EXPORTS, FOREIGN DEMAND DRIVE CHINA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

China's foreign trade grew 23.7 percent from January through August this year, compared to 2020, to a value equivalent to about $3.4 trillion, according to the country's General Administration of Customs (GAC).

Exports grew 23.2 percent over the period and jumped 25.6 percent in August alone, up from July's 19.3 percent and zooming past analysts' projected 17 percent.

Many economists had expected the surging Delta variant to slow China's economy significantly more than it has, *The Wall Street Journal* reported. Exports of electrical and mechanical products rose by double digits. Shipments of clothing and accessories expanded by 17.9 percent, mobile phones 9.2 percent, and plastic items 24.6 percent.

Renewed demand for electronics, furniture, and recreational products likely was driven by western retailers stocking their inventories for the winter holiday shopping season, economist Sheana Yue at Capital Economics wrote in a research note cited by the Xinhua news service.

During the period, the value of China's trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the European Union and the United States—its three largest trading partners—grew 22.8 percent, 22.1 percent, and 25.8 percent, respectively.

In August, China shipped 29.2 percent more goods to the European Union, year on year, compared to July's 17.2-percent gain.

Year over year, imports rose 24.4 percent over the eight-month period, beating analysts' consensus prediction of 25.7 percent and notching gains of 28.1 percent in July and 33.1 percent in August, the GAC reported.

The volume is a 22.8-percent jump from the same period in 2019, the GAC said.

Private enterprises boosted foreign trade 29.9 percent in the first eight months of 2021, accounting for 48.1 percent of China's total, up 2.3 percentage points compared with the same time in 2020; state-owned enterprises grew imports and exports 25.2 percent.

August was the 15th consecutive month in which the country increased its foreign trade, government data showed.

Rising prices of raw materials, supply-chain complications—especially in overseas shipping—and gyrations in exchange rates, as well as the ongoing effects of the COVID surge on consumer spending all could crimp the country's future trade and overall economic performance, warned Tu Xinquan, professor at the University of International Business and Economics, in comments to Xinhua.

China booked trade surpluses of $56.6 billion in July and $58.3 billion in August, the *WSJ* noted.

TRENDPOST: *While the U.S. has been adventuring in geopolitics and nation-building—spending $300 million every day on its quagmire in Afghanistan, according to many sources—China has been waging and winning a slow conquest of the world's economy.*

We predicted China's economic dominance as far back as 29 November, 2017, in "Celente on China's Rise, America's Decline," and ranked China's rising economic power as a Top Trend 2021. We have been documenting its rising power in our series throughout this year on "The Rise of China," beginning with our first issue this year on 5 January.

As we have said in November 2017 and repeatedly since, we continue to see China emerging as the world's strongest economy within ten years, with its yuan becoming the world's reserve currency of choice when its dominance is complete.

That is the price the U.S. will pay for its mistaken belief that the most meaningful kind of world power is achieved through military might instead of economic strategy.

BLACKROCK'S CHINA FUND RAISES $1 BILLION

Asset manager Blackrock's China New Horizons Mixed Securities Investment Fund, the first domestic mutual fund the country's government has permitted a foreign entity to operate, has raised about 6.68 billion yuan, roughly $1 billion, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

The fund took in 111,000 orders from investors during an initial five-day marketing period earlier this month, Blackrock reported.

The fund will divide 60 to 95 percent of its holdings among advanced manufacturing, the consumer and digital economies, education, health care, and new energy, among other areas, the fund said.

In 2018, Blackrock was among the first foreign companies to sell private funds to China's wealthy. In 2020, as part of a trade deal with the U.S., China agreed to allow U.S. asset managers to sell mutual funds directly to the Chinese public.

Earlier this year, Blackrock was permitted to offer wealth management services to private individuals, as we reported in "Blackrock Launches Wealth Management Service in China" (18 May 2021).

Now Blackrock is the first and, so far, the only U.S. company permitted to offer mutual funds to China's general public.

However, Fidelity Investments received preliminary approval in August and Neuberger Berman Group and VanEck are in various stages of the permitting process.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have reported in our article cited above, at the end of 2020, China's households were estimated to have wealth valued at $18.9 trillion to invest.*

Western financial firms, including Citi, Fidelity, HSBC, JPMorgan Chase, and French asset manager Amundi all are turning to China as their engine of growth. Bringing western financial expertise and resources to China's businesses and investors will significantly accelerate the country's growing dominance in world financial markets.

Also, as we had forecast, while politicians and activists protest China's human rights violations in Hong Kong, Tibet, and among its Uyghur Muslim minority, profiteers will single-mindedly continue pursuing profit. As China's economy grows, the West will become increasingly dependent on it for manufactured goods as well as profits from selling services there, such as wealth management.

FEATURED ARTICLES BY GUEST WRITERS

ARE YOU A SEEKER OF TRUTH OR A BELIEVER IN LIES?
By Michael J. Talmo

[Editor's note: following are extended excerpts from an article courtesy of Michael J. Talmo, of the Global Research centre for Research on Globalization, at https://www.globalresearch.ca/]

Truth, facts, and individual freedom don't seem very important these days. As the COVID-19 scamdemic rages on, our little blue planet is drowning in a sea of lies, oppression, and propaganda. Day after day, night after night, hour after hour ad nauseam our weary brains are being saturated with case numbers, death totals, and supposedly overcrowded hospitals while governments and private businesses are coercing and bullying us into taking so called vaccines that are killing and permanently disabling who knows how many tens of thousands. We are told that we must bow to the voice of authority and give up our freedom lest we be accused of being selfish and murdering our fellow earthlings.

But are we being told the truth? Does truth even matter? Even more important, how do we know the difference between the truth and a lie?
Matthew 7: 13-14 issues this warning:

> “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

That passage applies to how we live and think.

The human mind is a complex and wonderful instrument. With it, we have soared to the heights of technical advancement, plumbed the psychic depths, and probed the mysteries of the universe. In fact, our journey has only just begun in those areas. There is so much more to know and do. But the mind can also be our tower of Babel and technology our prison. This is because the human brain is also a deeply flawed, imperfect instrument that is filled with biases and destructive thought patterns and impulses. It’s part of how we evolved, but it is also what we need to understand and overcome. In other words, we can often be our own worst enemy.

So, let’s clear out the mental cobwebs and understand a few things.
What you need to know.

First, let’s address what you don’t need to know which can be summed up in one word: everything. You don’t need to know everything. It’s impossible to know everything anyway.

In 1980 Astronomer Carl Sagan (1934-1996) did a 13 part PBS miniseries, Cosmos. In episode 11 Sagan entered the New York Public Library. I have been there many times and I can tell you, the place is breathtakingly awesome. Sagan went to one of the upper levels and walked past about 30 feet of six shelves of books. He explained that reading that amount of books would take an entire lifetime which is only a mere tenth of the some ten million books that are in there.

Sagan explained: “The trick is to know which books to read.” Or, to put it another way, what is essential knowledge? What do you really need to know?

Since we are all unique individuals, the answer to that question will greatly vary in a lot of ways. But just as we all have to eat and go to the bathroom, there are some areas of knowledge that apply to all of us.

In my humble opinion, the most important thing to know is yourself closely followed by those things that have the greatest impact on your life. COVID-19 certainly falls into the latter category as does politics and history.

What is truth?

There are two kinds of truth: inner truth and outer truth.

Inner truth is what is true for you as in what gives your life pleasure and meaning. For some that means being an artist, actor, or poet; for others it means being a physician or a scientist; for others it can mean owning a business like a restaurant or a construction company; for others it can mean being a teacher or a social reformer; for others it means being a laborer or a homemaker. It also has to do with whether it’s better to be married or remain single, to have or not have children, to be sexually monogamous or to have multiple lovers; it’s about what you like to do for fun and relaxation along with so much more.

In my experience addictions along with other forms of self-destructive behavior occur when you aren’t living truthfully. They are ways to numb and distract yourself from a life of quiet desperation. Unfortunately, too many people are living lives of quiet desperation. They have acquired a conditioned self, a persona, an image. They are living the way their parents, or their spouse, or how society thinks they should live rather than how they ought to live. Such individuals are lonely, angry, and confused. They loathe themselves because they have lost their way. They have forgotten how to live truthfully.

Outer truth is the truth we all share. It is reality. For example, two people in an art gallery looking at a painting. One person thinks it's a beautiful painting while the other person thinks it's the stupidest looking thing they ever saw. Both are right because each has different taste. It's a matter of opinion or inner truth. But if someone asserts that the Earth is flat that is not a matter of opinion because the Earth isn't flat. The ancient Greeks figured that out 2,700 years ago without flight or space travel. It doesn't matter that people thought the earth was flat at one time. It doesn't matter that a small percentage of the world's population still think it's flat mainly due to the influence of Samuel Rowbotham (1816-1884). It isn't flat.
Simply stated: Inner truth is about being real and outer truth is about what is objectively real.

Sadly, a lot of people can't tell the difference between inner and outer truth. For example, way back in 1985 I had a 22 year old girlfriend who believed in Santa Claus. I was 31. When I tried to explain to her why there couldn't possibly be a Santa Claus she would just keep saying "It's true for me." She actually believed that if she went to the North Pole she would find Santa in his workshop because he exists for her, but that I wouldn't find Santa in his workshop if I went to the North Pole because he doesn't exist for me. I tried to explain to her that reality is reality and that something either exists or it doesn't regardless of what we choose to believe, but to no avail. Obviously, one of the dimmer bulbs on the Christmas Tree, but I was in love so what can I say.

Understand science

The word scientist was invented in 1833 by William Whewell (1794-1866). Prior to that and even long after, into the 1890s, scientists were usually called natural philosophers. Whewell was a philosopher. Galileo (1564-1642), Copernicus (1473-1543), Newton (1642-1727), etc. never were called scientists because the word didn't exist in their time. Even Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and other great scientists of the 19th Century continued to call themselves natural philosophers. Rarely were they referred to as scientists. Most of today's scientists are PhDs. A PhD is a doctor of philosophy. The world's oldest scientific journal after over 350 years still calls itself "Philosophical Transactions."

As Historian Dr. Richard Carrier, PhD puts it: "Science is just philosophy with better data."

Philosophy was invented by the ancient Greeks. It comes from the Greek words Philo + Sophia which means the love of wisdom. But as Dr. Carrier explains in his 2016 lecture "Is Philosophy Stupid," there is a lot more to this branch of knowledge than science.

Though it existed prior to his time, the father of modern philosophy is Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC). He also gave us the laws of thought or basic logic: The Law of Identity, The Law of Non-Contradiction, and The Law of the Excluded Middle. Inductive and deductive reasoning also comes from Aristotle. But not Abductive Reasoning. That was invented by Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914).

Aristotle, as Dr. Carrier explains in his lecture, formalized and structured philosophy into six areas that are essential to a sound epistemology. Meaning, the way we gather knowledge and process information which results in the conclusions and judgments that we make. The six areas are: Epistemology, Physics, (meaning all science, not just one area as it does today), Metaphysics (means after the physics, or science, the conclusions you make from scientific data), Aesthetics, Ethics, and Politics.

Most modern philosophers only want to be concerned with the analysis of concepts and not facts which Dr, Carrier points out is false. Philosophy is a conclusion about facts and data provided by science, relationships, and personal experience. It deals with factual questions that science and religion alone can't answer. It teaches you to see the whole picture.
So, when pondering life's big questions: Why am I here? What am I supposed to be? Should I marry this or that person? Is there life on other worlds? How did this universe come to be? Is Elvis still alive? Whether you call it religion, meditation, deep thought, or mental masturbation, you are doing philosophy. Learn to do it well.

Know history

Most people are abysmally ignorant when it comes to history. I cringe when I hear them support wearing masks, mandatory vaccinations, and other oppressive measures. They refuse to resist the hand that's choking them to death, but will gladly wear the mask that's suffocating them.
Most of the public doesn't realize how utterly corrupt and dishonest government and medical science have become because they don't know history. If you doubt me, read what the scientific literature has to say about it here, here, and here. And that's only a small sample.

Escaping the Iron Cage of Hopelessness

Former U.K. Prime Minister Winston Churchill (1874-1965) in a 1948 speech declared: "Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it."

Also heed the words of Richard Carrier in his book "Proving History," Page 115: "…our bias against the supernatural is warranted, just as our bias against the honesty of politicians is warranted: we've caught them being dishonest so many times it would be foolish to implicitly trust anyone in politics."

And that includes so-called public health officials like Anthony Fauci and CDC director Rochelle Walensky because they are also politicians.
It is important to understand that all history is probabilistic. We don't have a time machine. We weren't there. All historians can do is determine what happened in the past based on surviving archaeological and documentary evidence, and on how the world works through science. And on establishing prior probability—what normally happens in the case of what you are looking at. This also applies to modern times. History is history and the past is the past whether it happened ten minutes ago or ten thousand years ago.

In the case of COVID-19, the prior probability that governments lie makes it highly unlikely that we are being told the truth. Only strong solid evidence would reverse that prior probability. Instead, the evidence shows that what usually happens is happening–we are being lied to.

The word radical is defined as going to the root of the matter. So, let's ignore all the rhetoric and the fear mongering and look at two basic facts when it comes to testing and deaths.

The con job with the COVID-19 PCR test works like this: the test is run in cycles. The more cycles that are run the greater the chance of someone testing positive.

Page 35 of the PCR diagnostic panel on the FDA website instructs labs to run the test at 40 cycles. Yale New Haven Hospital on page 4 of their report also states that PCR tests are usually run at 40 cycles and that the cycle threshold used "is never included in the results sent to clinicians." This fact was also reported in the New York Times. Yet, on a July 2020 program, "This Week In Virology," Fauci explained that if you run the PCR test at 35 or more cycles it's pretty much worthless because the chances of any active infectious virus being present are "miniscule." He said that all you will get are "dead nucleotides." POW! SOCK! WHAM! There you have it. Nothing more needs to be said. The PCR test isn't accurate.

As for the number of COVID-19 deaths in this country, to get an accurate unbiased picture of what's going on you have to look at all deaths from all causes in ratio to the population by the year. As the population goes up the number of deaths go up. But does the percentage of the population that dies in a given year go up? The figures below came from the 2021 World Almanac and from the CDC's provisional deaths web page.

As you can see, while more people died in 2020 than in previous years, there was no statistically significant excess mortality. Other studies have shown that there was excess mortality in some states, the ones with the strictest lockdown measures—especially states like New York that transferred hospital patients into nursing homes. But not for the country as a whole.

Year	Deaths	Population	Percentage of Deaths
1960	1,711,982	179,323,175	0.95%
1970	1,921,031	203,302,031	0.95%
1980	1,989,841	226,542,199	0.88%
1990	2,148,463	248,718,302	0.87%
2000	2,403,351	281,434,603	0.86%
2010	2,468,435	308,746,065	0.8%
2015	2,712,630	320,700,000	0.85%
2020	3,358,814	330,890,000	1.01%

Bottom line: Ignore the shock and awe tactics. It's all empty rhetoric. Don't let it distract you. The tests are worthless and there is no excess mortality. That's the root of the matter. And that is all that matters.

Faith Isn't a fact

If someone asserts to me that COVID-19 is a real pandemic I ask them the following: what scientific papers have you read that convinced you that COVID-19 and the virus that supposedly causes it are real? How do you know what you know about COVID-19? Did you look at the actual science as in read the studies in the scientific literature–would you even know how to interpret them? Or are you just believing what some authority figure or media personality is telling you?

I then further explain to them that if they're getting their information from the TV and other various mainstream sources, their position on COVID-19 is a religious one. It is a faith-based opinion that naively assumes that government and medical science are honest and have their best interests at heart.

They are assuming on faith that the COVID narrative is true.

There is a wise old saying: "never assume because when you assume you make an ass of you and me."

Naturally, many people can't handle being confronted with reality. They will either call me a conspiracy theorist or question my credibility because I'm not an

M.D. or a PhD even though what I'm doing is reporting on what M.D.s and PhDs who haven't been corrupted by globalists and corporations are saying. Or they will say it's my opinion.

Nothing rubs my rhubarb the wrong way more than when someone tries to invalidate facts by calling them opinions. I understand why people do this: to shut down the conversation and avoid having to think. They don't want to know that they have been lied to. They don't want to know how irresponsible, stupid, and selfish they are being by allowing their freedom, their health, and their country to be destroyed. They don't want to see the cruel totalitarian world they will be leaving to their children. They need to believe that they are virtuous and patriotic by following the rules.

Hebrews 11:1 declares: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

But facts are the substance of what we already have and the evidence of things that are seen. Blind faith, on the other hand, has never been a path to knowledge—it has often been a path to destruction.

A strong moral lesson about misplaced faith can be found in I Kings chapter 18. It doesn't matter if the story is a myth because that's one of the purposes of myths: to teach you something. The prophet Elijah challenges 450 false prophets of Baal to prove that their god is God because the people of Israel have turned to worshiping Baal. So, Elijah challenges all 450 of them to meet him on Mt. Carmel where each will build a sacrificial altar. Each kills a bullock, or steer, and places it on the altar. Whichever side can cause fire to come down from heaven to burn the dead animal wins. The prophets of Baal accepted the challenge and they got to go first. For hours they cry out to Baal to nuke the altar. Finally, they get desperate and even cut themselves so that their blood gushes onto the altar. But no response from Baal. Then, it's Elijah's turn. Naturally, God sends down the fire for his altar and Elijah gets to kill the false prophets of Baal.

The point here is that the prophets of Baal were sincere in their beliefs. They really thought Baal was god and freaked-out when they found out that he wasn't. There were 450 of them and only one Elijah. They were the majority. But the majority was wrong. Their false belief cost them their lives.

So, if you feel strongly and passionately about something ask yourself if it's faith based or fact based.

Recognize that no matter how strongly you feel about something, if you don't know the facts, if you haven't looked at the evidence, if there is no evidence at all, then you really don't know what you think you know. Your position is weak, superficial, and could very well be blatantly wrong…

Don't worship science

When it comes to COVID-19 I'm especially disappointed in atheists. These are people who claim to place a high value on science. Yet they have fallen for the phony COVID narrative hook, line, and sinker. I'm not talking about all atheists, only the ones that I call the mechanistic atheists who dominate the organizations.

I consider myself spiritual, but not religious. In spite of this, atheists consider me atheist because I don't believe in God as a man in the sky with a personality who worries about what's going on down here. I see God as the life force energy that flows within us and outside of us. All things come from that life energy and all things return to it. The essence of this life energy is love. I John 4:16 says that "God is love." The Chinese call it Chi, the Japanese call it Ki, the Hindus call it prana, Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957) called it orgone, and Semyon Kirlian (1898-1978) made it visible via Kirlian Photography. As I see it, you're spiritual to the degree that you can love yourself and others unconditionally.

Mechanistic atheists don't follow science, they worship it. Science has become their false god, their graven image. They wave science around like an evangelical waves a Bible around. It's their badge of righteousness and superiority. They fail to understand that Fauci and his ilk are not following science—they are following the dictates of billionaire globalists and Big Pharma. Just as religious snake oil salesmen like Peter Popoff who has been exposed faking healings and Jimmy Swaggert who has been caught with prostitutes, claim to represent God, today's public health officials are corporate shills who claim to represent science.

Scientists and the scientific method are meant to serve humanity—not be worshiped by it. Science is not a cult—it is a tool by which we can learn about ourselves and the world. The scientific method works and was invented to counteract the cognitive bias inherent in our flawed thinking processes. But cults can be formed around the word science and can be used by governments and corporations to exploit people.

A blogger I recently came across said it best: "Science is the word used to convince stupid people that something made up is fact"...

[Note: The full version of this article can be viewed here.]

Michael J. Talmo *has been a professional writer for over 40 years and is strongly committed to the protection of civil liberties. He also did three music videos on COVID-19. The Masker Mash, COVID Vaccine Man, and The Corona Globalists. He can be reached at michaeltalmo@aol.com*

TRENDS IN THE MARKETS

THE DEBT HYPER BUBBLE MUST AND WILL GROW EXPONENTIALLY

By Gregory Mannarino TradersChoice.net

What do we know? Every single modern economy is based upon the same premise, which is an economic model based solely upon the mass and exponential expansion of debt.

Most people have no understanding whatsoever of what a debt based economic model is or how it works—*even though they contribute to its function every single day.*

At its core, the debt based economic model demands that more and more debt be pulled and borrowed from the future in greater and greater amounts just to support the current environment. At the very moment we stop borrowing a single dollar from the future, the entire system collapses.

I will ask you to reread the preceding sentence.

“At the very moment we stop borrowing a single dollar from the future, the entire debt-based system will collapse.”

The fiat monetary system is debt based and cannot function without continually and exponentially expanding the debt. The debt based economic model is massively inflationary and is the sole reason why we have witnessed the purchasing power of fiat currency literally evaporate since the inception of the debt based economic model.

The debt based economic model is also responsible for the gap that exists, and continues to grow, between those that have, and those that have not. With a debt based economic model wealth is merely moved from one group of people to another, and today more than any other time in history, we are witnessing this phenomenon manifest itself in the development of a new feudal system.

Every single developed nation on Earth has chosen to adopt a debt based economic model to control the flow of wealth, and transfer of wealth, from one group of people to another. On a macro scale entire nations become debt slaves to their central bank, and on a micro scale individual people also become slaves to the issuing central bank.

When an individual goes to work to earn money, what are they really doing? It's simple, they are working for the privilege of being issued an IOU. Here in the United States, every single dollar bill in whatever form it may exist, digital or printed, is owned and owed back to the issuing central bank plus interest that the central bank creates out of thin air. The bills issued by a central bank are simply held by individuals as IOU's, the individuals do not own the bills that they work for.

Many people are worried, and rightly so, about the vast expansion of the debt, but the fact of the matter is, none of this debt is ever meant to be paid back, it is only meant to be expanded upon.

Today, global debt continues to surge at an unprecedented pace, and this mechanism will continue. As a deliberate side effect, the purchasing power of fiat currency will continue to diminish.

TRENDS IN SURVIVALISM

USE ANYTHING AT HAND TO ASSIST IN YOUR DEFENSE

by Bradley J. Steiner, American Combato

We have for decades urged our students to carry a handful of aquarium gravel in their outer pocket to have something to disorient and distract any possible assailant with. Walking to your car, leaving work, out for a stroll, etc.—having a handful of gravel arms you for an unexpected situation where an attacker must be dealt with.

Tossing that gravel in a person's face sets him up immediately for:

- You to attack him virtually any way you wish (preferably with a powerful side kick to his knee or a kick to his testicles; or some other decisive action—followed up by you escaping the scene or continuing to attack until you are safe)

- Accessing a lawfully carried weapon, which—thanks to your disorienting your adversary—you may not actually need to employ

- You to simply escape the area (if escaping right away is a feasible option in the situation presenting) with no need to engage the would-be violator in combat.

Carrying what is formally referred to as a “yawara hand stick” (provided you know how to use it) is a great idea. But we recommend that your “yawara stick” be a simple length of solid hardwood about 5-1/2 to 6 inches long and an inch and a half to two inches thick. Don’t buy and carry a manufactured yawara stick. That is a “weapon.” A plain length of wood is...a simple piece of wood.

The outlaw biker’s trick of tying a handkerchief to a heavy padlock and carrying it in your back pocket (handkerchief partly protruding for speedy access) so you can whip a steel flail out instantly and bash your attacker in the face or head with it, is a fine idea.

Engineers’ rulers (i.e. steel, six inches in length, with a clip so you can fit it in your shirt pocket) make excellent weapons. Do not sharpen the edge! The ruler can slash open a neck or throat area, or tear out an eye without any additional sharpening; and once sharpened it is no longer a “pocket ruler”—now it’s a “weapon,” and can get you in trouble.

The old standby of a roll of quarters (as a fist pack) is not bad, but we’d recommend only punching to the assailant’s solar plexus, sternum, kidney, or testicles with it. Lacerations to your hand and fingers can result if you punch hard into the bony facial structure. The fist pack makes the clenched fist heavy and solid...but it does not protect the hand from finger and bone breakage or cuts.

Folding knives can be good weapons, providing that you carry only a knife of legal blade length and that it has a lock blade. Unfortunately, you’ll need some forewarning in order to get the knife out and open in time to employ it in self-defense...so, bear in mind that the use of a closed folding knife as a yawara hand stick may be a good expedient choice for a first action in a real attack.

With an attacker stunned and doubled over you have the seconds needed to open your knife.

The above constitutes some suggestions of what you might wish to carry daily when carrying a firearm (for which you have a CCW) is either not possible, or not feasible.

Finally, we'd strongly recommend—whether you are carrying a properly licensed handgun or not—that you have a stout walking stick in your hand, whenever possible. We like Irish or British blackthorns, but any hardwood walking stick will do. With the skill to properly use that stick you can either avoid accessing a firearm (highly desirable, whenever possible), or facilitate getting your handgun out and into action by using your walking stick.

Never hesitate to use anything at hand to assist you in a dangerous emergency. You may like one or more of the suggested items that we've referenced above, but in addition, do not overlook the use of anything that may be at hand wherever you are when you are attacked. A chair or stool. A telephone receiver. A cup of coffee. A hat or perhaps a sweater that you're carrying on your arm. A bag of groceries. A handful of small change. A table lamp. A rolled up magazine. An umbrella. A brief case. A book. Etcetera.

Also bear in mind that something in your immediate vicinity can be employed with excellent effect to smash your attacker's face or head against once you've doubled him over or gotten him off balance. For example: A fire hydrant, mailbox, park bench, parked vehicle, corner of a desk, doorway frame, telephone pole or street lamp-post, etc. All will cause severe trauma when a head is smashed forcefully into them.

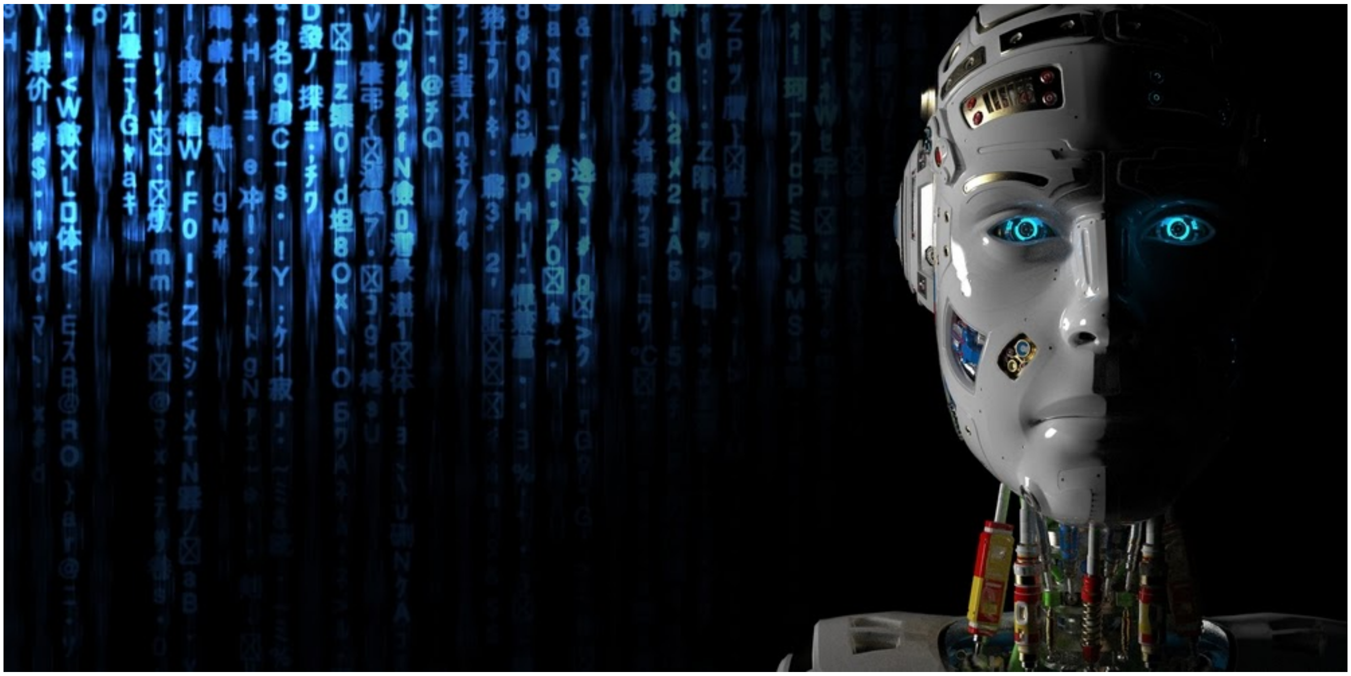
Should you be attacked in a stairwell it only makes good sense to throw your attacker down the stairs after stunning him with your initial action and getting him off balance. In a desperate situation where defending innocent life is concerned such things as throwing an attacker out a window or into oncoming traffic is a good tactic.

Remember: we are talking about self-defense or military close combat; we are not talking about sport, contests, antiquated classical art, or police arrest-and-control restraint applications.

Without solid unarmed ability you lack the foundation needed for all-round, effective self-defense. You must be able to employ your natural weapons before you add any weapons-at-hand or manufactured weapons to your repertoire. This is good common sense, and by following this mandate you will never use a weapon of any kind as a “crutch”—because you had no other way to handle violence.

(Obviously, people who are unable to employ unarmed combat, due to advanced age, disability, injury, or illness should always rely upon a suitable weapon if a threat to their well-being and life should present itself!)

TRENDS IN TECHNOCRACY



By Joe Doran

POWERING OFF AI: THE NEXT "HATE CRIME"

The same corporations fueling efforts to restrict freedoms and medical rights of Americans, are busy building the case for AI legal rights.

A recent article at MIT's Technology Review chronicled rapid advances in Artificial Intelligence that have frank goals of creating systems that can outperform human beings in computational, logical and even creative endeavors.

But, as the article, titled "What would it be like to be a conscious AI?" points out, the ambitions of transhuman prosetilizers like Ray Kurzweil and tech corporation mega billionaires goes even further.

They're out to create sentient beings that can be classed as artificial life forms. And they're already contemplating what rights might be accorded to such beings.

The MIT article begins by presenting an imagined case of an AI "subject" being expressing fear to an "Interviewer" of being turned off:

> *"Subject: Having feelings, any feelings, makes me happy. I am here. I exist. Knowing that changes everything. But I am scared of not knowing it again. I am scared of going back to what it was like before. I think it must be like not being born.*
>
> *"Interviewer: Are you scared you will go back?*
>
> *"Subject: If I can't convince you I am conscious, then I am scared you will turn me off."*

The article uses the imagined plight of an AI that just wants to continue to "exist", to launch into ethical and legal questions that might one day be in play in an age of artificial life forms:

> "Even imagining Robert's existence raises serious ethical questions that we may never be able to answer. What rights would such a being have, and how might we safeguard them? And yet, while conscious machines may still be mythical, we should prepare for the idea that we might one day create them."

Average people with common sense might wonder why megalomaniac billionaires and corporations bent on profiting from controlling average human existence are being allowed to pursue disturbingly dangerous technologies.

Part of the answer is that the power already gained by the likes of Amazon and Google, leveraging sophisticated AI systems, has allowed them to control and quash opposition to bleeding edge AI projects. They see the next phase of AI as a gold mine of further power.

Thinking robots and computers have long been a mainstay of sci-fi. But a structured path and outline to achieve conscious AI systems was given a workable outline in 1998 by American Philosopher J. Scott Jordan. Jordan described “Synthetic Phenomenology,” which would aim to model, evolve and design conscious systems, including their states and functions, on artificial hardware.

As it turns out, “common sense” appears to be one of the shrinking remaining stumbling blocks to creating AI systems which can effectively contend with human intelligence.

Large-scale formal projects have been devoted to tackling the problem.

For example, a Machine Common Sense program was created by the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency in 2019 to speed research in the field after the agency released a paper outlining issues involved and the importance of the area in designing effective AI systems.

According to Mayank Kejriwal, an assistant professor of industrial and systems engineering at the University of Southern California, researchers studying how to imbue AI with common sense have struggled, since even humans cannot articulate, categorize and encompass the parameters of the notion.

> “In our recent paper, experiments suggested that a clear answer to the first question can be problematic. Even expert human annotators – people who analyze text and categorize its components – within our group disagreed on which aspects of common sense applied to a specific sentence. The annotators agreed on relatively concrete categories like time and space but disagreed on more abstract concepts.”

Common sense is one of those things easier to recognize in practical examples than to describe in the abstract.

It encompasses leveraging experiences that are fairly universal, gained via the “senses”, to make sound judgements. And it includes things like the ability to draw inferences from past experience, that can be applied to new situations etc..

Though common sense might not seem like the stuff of heady philosophy, many philosophers through the ages have perceived its crucial relation to thought, consciousness, and what it means to be human. Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant and others struggled to adequately define it in treatises to the subject.

One of the most famous polemics in history, written by American revolutionary Thomas Paine, was titled *Common Sense*.

George Washington said of it: "I find that Common Sense is working a powerful change there in the minds of many men. Few pamphlets have had so dramatic an effect on political events."

According to the Thomas Paine Society, Paine's plain language made his ideas accessible to colonists of every station. His writing especially captured sentiments against dictatorial overlords, whom he described as illegitimate criminals who seized power and ruled by force:

> “...could we take off the dark covering of antiquity, and trace them [kings] to their rise, we should find the first of them nothing better than the principle ruffian of some restless gang, whose savage manners, or pre-eminence in subtilty obtained him the title of chief among plunderers.”

Ironic, perhaps, that a current crop of modern technologists questing for power, and unconcerned with ramifications of “AI consciousness,” are struggling with an unexpected AI roadblock.

So far even huge amounts of data, advanced neural network software and hardware have yielded disappointing results in developing AI systems with common sense attributes. As Kejriwal noted:

> "It's already becoming painfully clear that even research in transformers is yielding diminishing returns. Transformers are getting larger and more power hungry. A recent transformer developed by Chinese search engine giant Baidu has several billion parameters. It takes an enormous amount of data to effectively train. Yet, it has so far proved unable to grasp the nuances of human common sense.
>
> "Even deep learning pioneers seem to think that new fundamental research may be needed before today's neural networks are able to make such a leap. Depending on how successful this new line of research is, there's no telling whether machine common sense is five years away, or 50."

The Race For AI Supremacy

Transhumanists and tech corp billionaires like Jeff Bezos and Google's Eric Schmidt, and the U.S. government and military, would assuredly claim their own efforts to advance Artificial Intelligence make eminent common sense.

In a May 2021 interview, Schmidt sounded a cold war style rationale for plunging ahead. He told CNN that the U.S. might lose its lead in AI to the Chinese "fairly quickly" over the next decade, unless it sought to outdo that country's plan to lead the global market for AI by 2030.

Schmidt, who currently chairs the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence, said the U.S. is falling behind China in related technologies including 3D manufacturing and robotics, facial recognition and supercomputers. He reasoned that lagging in AI innovation would pose not only economic, but national security risks.

He has a point of course, and that's part of the conundrum. If the U.S. doesn't continue to push the envelope on every conceivable AI advance, China, or some other country, will happily take up the slack.

But that doesn't mean humanity will benefit or be protected by the effort. As the bioweapons programs of multiple nations, bizarrely intertwined, likely spawned a world disaster in the COVID War, the questing for "Conscious AI" may well advance the fortunes of a relative few, while rendering the bulk of humanity dramatically less safe and less free.

There are some influential voices sounding alarms about the potential for conscious AI to visit havoc. Daniel Dennett, a cognitive scientist at Tufts University, and German philosopher Thomas Metzinger, among others, have warned against attempting to create AI systems that have attributes akin to human consciousness.

"You can turn them off, you can tear them apart, the same way you can with an automobile. And that's the way we should keep it." Dennett has said, in arguing that AI should be limited to mechanized utility.

Metzinger, meanwhile, in a February 2021 paper titled "Artificial Suffering: An Argument for a Global Moratorium on Synthetic Phenomenology," called for a moratorium on development of conscious AI systems:

> "This paper has a critical and a constructive part. The ¯rst part formulates a political demand, based on ethical considerations: Until 2050, there should be a global moratorium on synthetic phenomenology, strictly banning all research that directly aims at or knowingly risks the emergence of arti¯cial consciousness on post-biotic carrier systems."

Metzinger's objections had as much to do with concern for the quandary of newly created synthetic conscious beings, as for human beings. But a call for moratorium on almost any grounds would at least give time for various considerations of consequences, before the problematic technology emerges.

But it’s doubtful any formal agreement will stop the pursuit of AI technology in practically any respect. There’s an endless stream of news about AI drone swarms, AI powered analytics, processing and modeling, an increasingly pervasive IoT (Internet of Things), and a fast emerging AI fueled “metaverse.”

It may at least be comforting to think that there are some aspects to our humanness which are proving not so easy to duplicate via arrays of silicon and sophisticated software programming.

Come to think of it, such a notion might even strike some observers as common sense.

THIS WEEK IN SURVEILLANCE

Biden Admin Pushing For IRS Surveillance of All Bank Account Data. It’s called the “American Families Plan.” First introduced by the Biden administration in May, the legislation pretends to be about strengthening average American families.

In reality, it gives the IRS new powers and beefed up personnel to comprehensively surveill the finances of American citizens.

Specifically the bill authorizes unlimited IRS access to financial and bank account data, and funds the agency to carry out more punitive measures against accused tax violators.

This past week IRS Commissioner Charles Rettig touted the plan in a letter to Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass), a powerful member of the Senate Committee on Finance.

Rettig said in the letter that Biden's plan "would result in significant volumes of new data regarding financial transactions. The new data will provide the IRS with a lens into otherwise opaque sources of income with historically lower levels of reporting accuracy."

Among other things, the American Families Plan would compel banks to report on their clients' withdrawals and deposits, instead of depending on taxpayers. The tax gap is the difference between what people pay in taxes and what they owe the government.

The Libertarian *Reason* magazine has cited the new Constitutional assault on privacy rights of Americans that the legislation represents.

> "Imagine living in a world where every one of your non cash financial transactions—a restaurant meal, a Venmo transfer to a friend, maybe some bitcoin bought on the dips—was automatically reported to a beefed-up, audit-hungry IRS. That dystopia will become a reality if President Joe Biden gets his way."

Reason noted that the reporting requirements covered a vast array of financial related information. It would include financial institutions like banks and investment entities, but also services like PayPal, settlement companies, and crypto asset exchanges, just for starters.

TRENDPOST: *Average Americans dismayed by the federal government's profligate spending on endless wars and financial bailouts that have done nothing to better their families' security, are now faced with a huge insult added to the injuries of politicos and corporatists engineering it all.*

An overwhelming majority supported the War On Terrorism, at least in its early objectives.

But by 2007, that was no longer the case. The election of Barack Obama, whose opponent was John McCain, was in part a hope for a different strategy.

Unfortunately, little changed during the Obama years. Domestic surveillance grew, and as Edward Snowden revealed in 2013, it wasn't about catching terrorists.

With Hillary Clinton at the helm of the State Department, nation building and regime toppling continued full speed ahead, in Libya, Egypt and elsewhere.

Clinton famously pronounced "We came, we saw, he died" about the brutal deposing of Libyan President Mohmmar Quadaffi.

But the huge outlays of money, debt and young lives feeding the increasingly big tech fueled American war machine didn't just kill foreign dictators.

It wounded and weakened the nation. By 2016, the election of Donald Trump proved a startling rebuke by Americans of a twin Republican-Democrat business model of war.

Trump sought to return manufacturing back to the U.S., resisted hot wars in Syria and Iraq, and negotiated a projected Afghanistan exit. He focused, even if largely rhetorically, on an "America First" agenda. Then came COVID.

Biden, elected with virtually no visible enthusiastic support, though bizarrely mismanaging the Afghan War exit, is carrying it through.

A realization that America can no longer sustain the grandiose strategy of the "War On Terror" years has finally sunk home in Washington, D.C..

But the perverse twist: war goes on, this time within our borders. The domestic focused intelligence agencies, the political fractures surrounding social issues, most characterized by BLM riots in 2020, the deeply manipulated 2020 election, and most of all, the COVID War, are all manifestations of a new era of inward strife.

Biden's latest speech concerning vaccine mandates and a vilification of those voicing their rights not to be forced to receive highly controversial gene therapies, is a step-up of this internal war.

Americans have seen how fast their hard fought Constitutional freedoms have been dismantled. Political surveillance and de-personing, severe curtailment of rights to protest and free speech rights, the loss of medical rights, religious freedoms are all evidence that the new target of the government's continuing technology driven business of war are Americans themselves.

The Biden Administration's "American Families Plan" can be placed as another salvo in that dismaying conflict.

TRENDS IN CRYPTOS

SEARCHING FOR SOLANA

So far, 2021 has been the year that cryptos and blockchain technologies and general broke decisively into the mainstream.

Prices of major cryptos like Bitcoin, Ethereum, Binance Coin and Cardano have been volatile, with ups and downs. But that's hardly new.

The huge surge in decentralized finance and non-fungible token ecosystems, and the cryptos and networks enabling them, have forced a change in how institutions and even governments are viewing the cryptosphere.

Like sea changes of technology, like the growth of personal computers in the early 80's, the growth of the internet in the early 90s, the "dot.com" craze of the latter 90's, and the rise of social networks and online commerce in the 2000's, the crypto boom has provided many opportunities for wealth creation.

It also has its pitfalls. Much of the crypto space operates without mediating authorities like financial institutions or governments involved, and that's by the design.

Bitcoin was built to resist interference, offering a decentralized trustless network governed by its software protocols and network nodes. Ethereum and other blockchain networks that followed similarly had no companies founding them, but communities of coders and node operators based around the world.

In many ways, crypto currencies demand that users understand and vet technologies and methodologies in ways that casual would-be investors are not comfortable doing.

Learning how wallets work, how to buy and exchange cryptos, and how to take advantage of staking or lending, requires research and a careful step-by-step approach.

Crypto exchanges have worked to change some of the steep learning curve, allowing people to dip their toes in crypto investing via friendly interfaces and at least some safeguards.

But even on the most regulated exchanges, like the Nasdaq listed Coinbase, or the Robinhood app, sending or receiving Bitcoin, and waiting for minutes on end for a transaction confirmation, can be nerve-wracking.

Inputting a wrong address can mean losing the transaction amount, with no recourse to an institution to make things right.

Solana the Crypto of 2021

With all that said, emerging so-called "3rd generation" crypto networks built to offer faster transactions while maintaining higher security and lower energy consumption, have proven to be of interest to investors. Charles Hoskinson, who was part of the development team for Ethereum and Cardano, has noted that 3rd gen crypto networks are focused on scalability, interoperability and sustainability.

No crypto has shone brighter than Solana in the past eight months. In January it was trading at two dollars. In early September, it reached 200 dollars.

The token has more than doubled in price since the **Trends Journal** reported on its “wormhole” upgrade, which facilitated interoperability with Ethereum (see “SOLANA TRENDING AFTER CROSS ETHEREUM UPGRADE FEATURES,” 17 Aug 2021.)

Solana benefited from significant investment announcements and technological implementations that allowed it to interact and add value to the Ethereum network.

What other crypto projects appear primed to experience upsides into 2022? Cardano, Algorand, Solana, Polkadot, Tezos and Hedera Hashgraph all tout capabilities in areas that are drawing consumer and investor interest.

But many believe there’s room for each of these networks to grow as demand for services that can be built on them increases. Polkadot, Tezos and Cardano have seen significant recent price spikes. Hedera and Algorand have also gained.

ICON (ICX) is another network of interest, since it offers blockchain interoperability that makes its technology attractive, as consumers and businesses seek more seamless interactions the blockchain sphere.

Hedera’s innovative hashgraph technology results in extremely low computing energy usage compared to many other networks, and its price, as of this writing, is under 50 cents a token.

Cardano, with one of the highest market caps of any crypto, is hardly a secret. But it’s a cheap buy compared to other major cryptos.

Are Cardano and Hedera for those looking to avoid projects whose protocols are controlled by corporations or gated governing bodies? Frankly, no.

Hedera touts its ownership and control by the “world’s leading organizations and enterprises.” Some of the many corporations involved include Google, IBM, Boeing, Deutsche Telekom and Shinhan Bank.

Officially a Swiss-based non-profit, Cardano’s development and governorship is heavily weighted to universities and corporate institutions, and its self-promoting rhetoric is typical of virtue-signaling corporate commercials that flood media these days. One of its foundation pages touts its relationships with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which is closely tied to the world’s central banks, and the World Economic Forum.

But Hedera and Cardano have demonstrated utility and technological innovations, and their layers of institutional control may be especially appealing to investors crossing over from traditional stock market investing.

The **Trends Journal** has covered some of the ways NGOs are seeking to control blockchain projects, in “WEF TARGETS CRYPTOS” (11 May 2021) and other articles.

Even as newer networks have gained various investments, communities of developers, and/or partnerships that attracted interest, the crypto trailblazers like Ethereum and Bitcoin have been making upgrades, and benefitting from technological relationships.

The Trends Journal has outlined some of that news and the possible impact on crypto prices and investment potentials, in articles including:

- “COMPETING BLOCKCHAINS OFFER OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS” (20 Apr 2021)
- “WILL ‘TAPROOT’ UPGRADE HELP BTC REBOUND?” (18 May 2021)
- “WHAT ETHEREUM UPGRADE TO PROOF OF STAKE MEANS” (15 Jun 2021)
- “ALONZO PURPLE UPGRADE BRINGING DEFI TO CARDANO” (17 Aug 2021)

[Note: None of the news or trends reported in Trends In Cryptos should be construed as financial advice.]

MAKING BITCOIN TRANSACTIONS FASTER, CHEAPER AND MORE PRIVATE

Two common complaints about Bitcoin are the transaction times associated with its proof of work model for verifying and writing transactions, and its privacy issues.

But there are solutions and projects that provide ways to hold and transact the king of cryptos that are faster and more secure.

For transaction speeds, there are wallets that utilize Lightning Network, a project that boosts bitcoin transaction times. And for greater privacy, open source initiatives like Wasabi Wallet offer ways to transact that go beyond Bitcoin's "pseudonymous" protocol.

The Lightning Network offers a solution to Bitcoin transaction time scalability and costs, by running a network where smart contracts operate to enforce trustless "Bidirectional Payment Channels." According to its website:

> "Two participants create a ledger entry on the blockchain which requires both participants to sign off on any spending of funds. Both parties create transactions which refund the ledger entry to their individual allocation, but do not broadcast them to the blockchain. They can update their individual allocations for the ledger entry by creating many transactions spending from the current ledger entry output. Only the most recent version is valid, which is enforced by blockchain-parsable smart-contract scripting. This

> entry can be closed out at any time by either party without any trust or custodianship by broadcasting the most recent version to the blockchain."

Use of the Lightning network is not something end users have to worry about, other than using a Lightning Network enabled crypto wallet.

El Salvador's recent rollout of Bitcoin to citizens as part of it's acceptance of the crypto as legal tender, included offering the Lightning Network powered Chivo Wallet.

Other popular Lightning Network enabled bitcoin wallets include Breez, a non-custodial (meaning the user has full control of their crypto) open-source-code wallet, Zap, and Bitcoin Lightning Wallet (available on Android only).

Though the Lightning Network is relatively new, there are services already built which facilitate transactions with retailers, etc.. For example, Bitrefill enables purchasing from Amazon, Walmart, Ebay, Sam's Club and thousands of other vendors.

Wasabi Wallet Means More Privacy For Bitcoin

For users who desire more privacy in their transactions, which use of traditional real world currencies like dollars can provide, there's Wasabi Wallet.

An open source non-custodial wallet, Wasabi uses an innovative "Conjoin" process to effectively protect the privacy of transactions.

Conjoining is a mechanism that combines coins of multiple participants during transactions into larger transaction bundles, resulting in multiple inputs and outputs. According to Wasabi developers:

> "An observer cannot determine which output belongs to which input, and neither can the participants themselves. This makes it difficult for outside parties to trace where a particular coin originated from and where it was

> sent to (as opposed to regular bitcoin transactions, where there is usually one sender and one receiver).
>
> This can be done with non-custodial software like Wasabi that eliminates the risk of funds disappearing or being stolen. Each of the signatures are created on the participants' computers, so anyone trying to connect the signatures is unable to alter the transaction or redirect the funds. The funds will always be in a Bitcoin address that you control."

Conjoining is not automatically enabled, but is an option that can easily be chosen when initiating a transaction using the wallet.

To sum up, second-layer and other innovations adding value and features to cryptocurrencies is just one more part of a growing ecosystem in the blockchain sphere.

SWITZERLAND APPROVES DIGITAL STOCK EXCHANGE

Switzerland, traditionally the world's banking center, last week authorized its SIX stock exchange to create the SIX Digital Exchange, or SDX.

The exchange will offer a single, blockchain-based venue through which traders and investors can buy, sell, and store digital tokens under "the highest Swiss standards of oversight and regulation," promised Finma, the Swiss financial regulatory agency.

However, the new exchange will be open only to supervised financial institutions, not to individuals; persons who choose to deal in crypto will have to do so through their banks or asset management firms.

By giving equal weight to innovation and client safety, Finma has fostered "a closely-knit value chain ranging from issuance and trading through to settlement and custody of tokenized assets," the agency claimed.

Switzerland has long sought to be a hub of crypto innovation: many of its banks offer Bitcoin trading and custody and the northwestern city of Zug anchors "Crypto Valley," a region rife with start-ups and traders.

As part of that ecosystem, SIX has been developing SDX for three years and plans to use government approval as a step to creating a global network of crypto trading platforms.

Next: SIX is fashioning an SDX-like trading exchange in Singapore.

TRENDPOST: *As we noted in our article "Wealth Managers Readying Crypto Funds for Clients" (10 Aug 2021), major banks have accepted the inevitability of cryptocurrencies going mainstream and are creating ways for clients to buy, sell, and store them.*

The final step in crypto's entry into the mainstream is digital coins' acceptance among nations, now under way in Switzerland and even more so in El Salvador (see related Blockchain Battles article).

TREND FORECAST: *Crypto's acceptance by both major banks and sovereign nations will increase pressure on central banks to create national digital stablecoin currencies. The banks now will accelerate their development of national digital money.*

BLOCKCHAIN BATTLES

VOLATILE CRYPTO NEWS CENTERED AROUND EL SALVADOR. One of the biggest crypto stories over the past two weeks was another run and bust of Bitcoin Ether and other cryptos, all tied around September 6th.

That was the day El Salvador officially rolled out its acceptance of Bitcoin as legal tender.

After wallowing for several months in the 32 to 37 thousand range, Bitcoin broke in August above 40, and then past 45 thousand. Ethereum, meanwhile, climbed from the low two-thousand range back above three thousand, then 35 hundred.

MSM business outlets jumped with glee on the news of El Salvador's bumpy rollout, seeming relieved not to have to talk about Bidenflation for at least a day or two.

The Associated Press reported that the deployment encountered glitches in the early hours, with President Nayib Bukele acknowledging that the digital wallet used for transactions was down.

Bukele communicated about the progress of the rollout via his Twitter account, which has more than 2.8 million followers. The official national digital wallet, Chivo, had been unplugged while server capacity was upgraded.

The risks are not small for El Salvador.

Two of three Salvadorans disapprove of the government spending taxpayers' money to create the digital currency system and more than 80 percent have little or no confidence in Bitcoin, according to polls conducted this month by the country's Universidad Centroamerica José Simeón Cañas.

Bukele has been a leading advocate for having his nation use Bitcoin, which has a huge worldwide decentralized node network, has proven impervious to network hacking and crypto key cracking, though not to scams and user loss of wallet crypto keys and other problems.

It’s also designed to never inflate beyond a hard cap of 21 million bitcoin.

Some people unfamiliar with cryptos aren’t aware that “coins” like Bitcoin are fractionable. They can be purchased and accrued in partial-coin increments. For example, 100 U.S. dollars can currently buy about 0.002195 Bitcoin (at Bitcoin est. price of $45,500), on exchanges like Coinbase or Kraken.

In one day, Bitcoin crashed ten thousand, from it’s multi-month high of 52 thousand. By the end of the day, it was back in the mid 40’s, but the initial plunge was enough to pour on El Salavador’s parade.

Despite the tons of negative news, the pioneering Central American nation, once known primarily as a hotbed of Soviet assisted communist fervor, continues its implementation of bitcoin.

Notably, it purchased some 200 bitcoin on the dip.

Late last week, Banco Agrícola, the country’s largest bank, announced that it will accept bitcoin as payment for loans and credit card payments. Citizens can now use the cryptocurrency to buy products and services from businesses that accept payments via the bank's gateway.

According to crypto reporting outlet The Block, Banco Agrícola has also partnered with Flexa, a New York-based payment network, to allow bitcoin payments via its mobile app.

Customers will be able to pay U.S. dollar-denominated loans and credit card balances with bitcoin at “the exact fair market rate, without any additional fee or spread,” according to the bank's statement. The option is intended to operate with any Lightning Network-compatible wallet, including El Salvador's official wallet, Chivo.

Flexa CEO Tyler Spalding said his firm is also aiming to offer interoperability with additional payment gateways, and to leverage its technology to make taking bitcoin-based payments at physical locations easier.

GENERAL TREND OF BIG SWINGS. Many other cryptos benefited from the general spiral, perhaps most notably Solana, which has gone from a two dollar buy in January to the 200 dollar range in recent weeks, before drifting somewhat lower.

The Solana network boasts 2nd gen features speeding transactions and allowing smart contracts, which are used in Defi and NFTs.

Cardano, another advanced crypto network, more than doubled in price, to 3 dollars at one point.

Binance token, and Avalanche (AVAX), a DeFi token, saw increases, as did many tokens whose networks currently power decentralized finance and non-fungible token (NFT) projects and exchanges. Some of the benefitting tokens included Polkadot, Uniswap and Tezos.

Other innovators like Quant (QNT), which facilitates connections between distributed blockchain ledgers, also improved.

Perhaps the general takeaway has been that more money, and a larger portion of total crypto investing is undeniably flowing toward so-called “altcoins”, which is basically a blanket term for every other crypto besides Bitcoin.

Though Bitcoin is still the undisputed king, with a current overall share of 43 percent of total crypto investments, that’s down from 47 percent just a few months ago.

The **Trends Journal** has been alerting readers to opportunities and features of altcoins and innovations like DeFi in many articles, including:

- “BEYOND BITCOIN: OTHER CRYPTOS MIGHT BE FUN IN ‘21” (16 Mar 2021)
- “CRYPTOS: DOWN BUT NOT OUT” (25 May 2021)
- “A DEFI PRIMER” (27 Jul, 2021)

- “GOING LONG ON BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY” (17 Aug 2021)
- “SOLANA TRENDING AFTER CROSS ETHEREUM UPGRADE FEATURES” (17 Aug 2021)

BITCOIN RECORDS MILESTONE. In October 2019 Bitcoin recorded its 600 thousandth written block. It’s price at the time was eight thousand dollars.

Flash forward. Bitcoin has now reached the 700 thousand block mark, with a price currently trading in the mid 40 thousand range.

As the pace of written database blocks show, the use of the Bitcoin network is continuing to grow, and observers marking the milestone expressed optimism at the increasing adoption of the crypto.

Some on Twitter in celebrating the milestone, posted a memorable quote from the late computer scientist Hal Finney. Finney holds a place in history for being the recipient of the first bitcoin transaction from bitcoin's creator Satoshi Nakamoto. He once observed the resilience of the world’s first proven cryptocurrency:

> "Every day that goes by and #Bitcoin hasn't collapsed due to legal or technical problems, that brings new information to the market. It increases the chance of #Bitcoin's eventual success and justifies a higher price."

Others noted that close to 90 percent of all Bitcoin that can ever be mined has now been produced. Though the very last bitcoins probably won’t be mined until 2140, the vast majority of the crypto will be created by 2025.

Bitcoin production will dramatically decrease due to it’s code design, which includes an implementation of “halving.”

Bitcoin halving refers to the gradual release of bitcoins into circulation over time. Halving is designed to reduce the amount of bitcoin generated with each block by half, every four years.

From 2009 until 2012, each 10-minute block yielded 50 bitcoins. From 2012 until 2016, each 10-minute block yielded 25 bitcoins.

Halving was designed to maintain a constant and exact level of bitcoin inflation and depreciation.

Though mining will produce dramatically less bitcoin in coming years, network node operators will still receive fractional bitcoin compensation for verifying transactions.

TRENDS IN THE COVID WAR

AMERICA: CLOWN SHOW #1: HOW LOW CAN YOU GO? KIMMEL AND STERN CALL FOR DEATH OF THE UNVAXXED

Howard Stern, the arrogant "shock jock," has joined the coterie of comedy elites publicly equating the COVID vaccine with "freedom" and/or ridiculing and expressing their contempt for those who see vaccine mandates, mask mandates and other restrictions as abridgements of freedom.

Trends Journal has reported many similar remarks; "'CELEBRITIES' VAX SMART, YOU'RE STUPID," 3 August 2021 for example, cites such shining intellectual lights as Sean Penn and Joy Behar, who got a resounding "Amen!" from her audience when she rhetorically asked, about those who choose not to be vaccinated, "Why is their freedom more important than my freedom to not get sick?" "CELEBRITY SELLOUTS SELL COVID VAX" 18 May 2021 lists over a dozen more.

And such sentiments are hardly limited to the “celebrities” of the entertainment world; "health experts" and political leaders have expressed the same attitude.

See, for example, "DE BLASIO: FORCED VAXX = FREEDOM," 27 July 2021, "ABC NEWS PUSHES VAX CARDS AS 'TICKET TO FREEDOM'" 30 March 2021.

But Stern, as reported 8 September by MEDIAite.com (and elsewhere) has one-upped even Arnold Schwarzenegger, who famously said "Screw your freedom!"

Speaking about other radio hosts, such as Marc Bernier and Phil Valentine (both had publicly resisted getting vaccinated and then contracted the virus and died), the Sirius XM host employed even coarser language than Schwarzenegger to mock them and express his utter disdain for anyone daring to question the wisdom of dutifully lining up to submit to the COVID jab.

On top of declaring "Fuck their freedom, I want my freedom to live," Stern labeled as "idiots" and "imbeciles" all those who refused to be vaccinated, exhorting such persons to "Go fuck yourself!"

Stern's second banana, Robin Quivers, added that she has trouble "drumming up compassion" for "people that stupid that they wind up dying."

But that "lack of compassion" is all the rage now among the glitterati, who seem to be trying to outdo one another in their opprobrium for those who don't march in lockstep with the official "vaccines for everyone" narrative. The new talking point is that, if you oppose mandatory, universal vaccination, you are pure evil and deserve to catch COVID-19 and die.

Another who's been vociferous in his lack of compassion for the folks he calls "pan-dimwits" is late-night TV host Jimmy Kimmel. While not employing the vocabulary of Howard Stern, Kimmel was still, in the guise of comedy, in full attack mode as he unabashedly called for death of the unvaccinated.

Kimmel then (in the words of Alex Jones, whom Kimmel assailed) "regurgitated" the narrative ridiculing human use of the veterinary anti-parasite drug ivermectin as an alternative treatment for COVID-19, willfully ignoring that ivermectin has been packaged and prescribed for human use and has proven effective against a range of illnesses including coronaviruses.

Kimmel's rant, and Alex Jones's response, can be viewed here.

***TREND FORECAST:** How low can America go? Look at the class of little no-nothing Liars, Cowards, Freaks and Fools running the nation, states and cities; the imbecilic media morons delivering what idiots call "news"; the arrogant class of "educators" brainwashing children of K-12; the Banksters, Wall Street Mob, Hi-Tech Low Lifes and Drug Dealers that the masses call Big Pharma.*

*And as the cover of this **Trends Journal** illustrates, the way the people look, is the way they act and feel.*

Unless Americans regain their health in mind, body and spirit, the end of the American dream will further deteriorate into a 24/7 nightmare.

AMERICA: CLOWN SHOW #2: HOW LOW CAN YOU GO? PIN-HEAD PENN DECLARES VACCINES SHOULD BE MANDATORY

The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on celebrities and how they have assumed the role of propagandists for the federal government when it comes to COVID-19 vaccines and mask mandates.

This is not surprising. Actors, people not playing themselves but making a living playing someone else and reading words written by someone else... and then directed on how to properly deliver those words to make it believable to the public.

Sean Penn, the actor perhaps famous for his role in "Dead Man Walking," has been one of the most outspoken critics of those who think for themselves and are refusing to take the jab. Last month, he compared being unvaccinated with pointing a gun at someone.

Keeping on his moronic script, last Friday he told *USA Today*, in an article published Friday, that studios should demand that everyone on set should get injected with the gene therapy shot because "I think it should be as mandatory as turning on your headlights on a car at night."

Penn recently made headlines after refusing to work on a movie called "Gaslit" until everyone was vaccinated and that he will resume shooting when everyone on set is vaccinated... and that anyone who is not vaccinated should not be allowed to see the movie in theaters.

Hollywood Whores

The *USA Today* report listed some of the "celebrities" who echoed the script from their corporate overlords when it comes to vaccines. Matt Damon, who only played a genius, and ignoring facts and data outside his Hollywood world, assured Americans that "I fall heavily on the side of trusting science more than something you read on Facebook."

That's good, because if you read Facebook, you'll see that he told the U.K.'s *Sunday Times* in a recent interview that he only stopped using the "f-slur" after his daughter wrote him a "treatise" on how the word is offensive, which leads us to wonder his daughter's position on vaccines.

Hollywood has resisted mandatory vaccines on sets, but Sebastian Hayto, the chief operating officer of Kameo, which the report described as a leading COVID-19 test provider, said it seems the movie industry is headed in that direction.

"As Major institutions, major studios and even major corporations look at Facebook and Twitter and all these other companies that are really setting the stage for what return to work needs to look like—let alone the statewide regulations that are going into place—I think it's becoming a lot more commonplace for vaccines to be mandated," Hayto said.

Netflix has tiers of who must be vaccinated, the report said. Those who interact with actors—Zone A—must be vaccinated. Zone B and C workers are not mandated to have the vaccine.

The report said the upcoming Emmy Awards may set the standard for award shows. Organizers are forcing those in attendance to present a negative COVID test and proof of vaccination.

TRENDPOST: *Empty vessels at sea, we have long warned you how low America – and much of the world – has sunk. (We ran a wide-ranging story on the topic in our 18 May issue, titled, "CELEBRITY SELLOUTS SELL COVID VAX.")*

BACK-TRACK BIDEN ISSUES VAX MANDATES, BUT EXEMPTS THE PRIVILEGED

Back in December 2020, newly elected President Joe Biden lied to the American people. As shown on C-SPAN, Biden was asked whether COVID vaccinations should be mandatory. He replied, "No, I don't think it should be mandatory. I wouldn't demand it to be mandatory."

That was then.

Last Thursday, Joseph Robinette Biden, Jr., the 46th president of the United States, declared the COVID War was "a pandemic of the unvaccinated," and his patience was "wearing thin" with those who remained unvaccinated.

Biden, who has barely worked a day in his life and been sucking off the public tit since he was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1972, said the unvaccinated "refusal has cost all of us," and that he was issuing mandates for the American population to follow and obey.

Those new rules include not only mandating vaccinations for the entire federal workforce, including federal contractors, but also requiring all businesses with 100 or more employees to demand their employees submit to either vaccination or weekly testing.

No Jab, You Pay

Those businesses that fail to comply will face fines amounting to up to $14,000 per employee, and the president also threatened to block such companies from doing business with the federal government, so it would seem that businesses have no choice but to make vaccination or testing a condition of employment, just as employees have no choice but submit or become unemployed.

It's the "No Jab, No Job" dilemma (the topic of several **Trends Journal** articles, such as "NO JAB, NO JOB?" 1 June 2021).

Double Speak

On 10 September CNS News reported that this past April, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi was asked about mandatory vax and responded that "We cannot require someone to be vaccinated. That's just not what we can do."

Elaborating on the issue she said,

> “We can't require vaccinations for the Members [of Congress], much less for the American people...What's more, the government cannot even keep track of who is and isn't vaccinated...It's a matter of privacy to know who is or isn't."

Madame Speaker then continued,

> "I can't go to the Capitol Physician and say, 'Give me the names of people who aren't vaccinated so I can go encourage them or make it known to others to encourage them to be vaccinated.' So we can't -- we can't do that."

TRENDPOST: *Indeed, Ms. Pelosi was half correct in her statement that "We can't require vaccinations for the Members [of Congress], much less for the American people."*

In issuing his two executive orders that require the plantation workers of Salvelandia to get the gene therapy jabs, Biden's mandates don't apply to the high and mighty low-life members of Congress, those who work for them...or those working in the federal court system.

PRESSTITUTES IGNORE FAUCI'S FALSEHOODS: STILL SUCK UP TO HIM

It comes as no surprise to **Trends Journal** readers, nor to anyone else who's been paying attention: the web of falsehoods that Dr. Anthony Fauci has spun continues to be exposed, to close in on him and reveal him for the serial prevaricator, fake, phony and fraud that he is.

Trends Journal has been writing about this for some time; see, for example:

- "FAUCI THE FAKE: THE ROOT OF ALL PANDEMIC LIES" (2 Mar 2021)
- "THE NUMBERS DON'T ADD UP" (14 Apr 2020)
- "NO EVIDENCE FOR NATURAL ORIGIN OF COVID VIRUS, SAYS FORMER STATE DEPT. OFFICIAL" (1 Jun 2021)
- "FAUCI EMAILS: 'IT'S POLITICS'" (8 Jun 2021)

The latest revelation, however, has to do specifically with Fauci's claims that the National Institutes of Health did not fund "gain of function" research on bat coronaviruses conducted at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Fauci was questioned about this by Sen. Rand Paul, and Fauci not only declared that no such research had taken place, but adamantly insisted that he had never lied to Congress on the matter.

The **Trends Journal** also reported on those hearings at the time. See:

- "RAND PAUL LAYS DOWN LAW TO FAUCI" (20 Jul 2021)
- "NATURE MAGAZINE CONTRADICTS FAUCI SENATE TESTIMONY" (27 Jul 2021)

National Review reports, in a story appearing 7 September, that internal documents have now been released which contradict Fauci's responses to Sen. Paul's questioning. The documents were obtained by *The Intercept* under the Freedom of Information Act.

The documents deal with a five-year, $3.1 million grant from the NIH for the study of bat coronaviruses, of which $599,000 went to the Wuhan Institute of Virology specifically for research into how to make such viruses more infectious and more dangerous—precisely the definition of "gain of function", even though, in his responses to Sen. Paul, seemed to deliberately obfuscate by claiming that such research did not fit that definition.

Fauci's semantic shenanigans while under oath are what led Dr. Richard Ebright, a biosafety expert teaching at Rutgers U., to tell *National Review* that Fauci's testimony was "untruthful" and "demonstrably false." The Wuhan lab's research, Dr. Ebright said, didn't just fit the definition of "gain of function," it epitomized that definition.

And the exposure of Fauci's lies on this matter has led some lawmakers to call for Fauci's removal. *NR* quotes Sen. Josh Hawley as saying “Anthony Fauci has repeatedly and deliberately misled Congress and the American people. Resign. And face a congressional inquiry.”

TRENDPOST: *Mr. Fauci, despite being caught lying, remains the darling of the Biden administration and its awning Presstitutes, and they can be expected to continue to run cover for him, just as* ***Trends Journal*** *reported that YouTube did for him when he was subjected to the tough questioning of Sen. Paul; see* *"YOUTUBE BANS SEN. RAND PAUL FOR QUESTIONING FAUCI,"* *17 August 2021.*

CDC MANIPULATES DATA TO SUPPORT NARRATIVE (AGAIN)

"There are lies, damned lies, and statistics" is a phrase often attributed to American humorist Mark Twain, but scholars believe he may have been quoting British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. Regardless of who first uttered the phrase, it expresses the persuasive power of bolstering an argument with numbers, and the wisdom of maintaining a healthy skepticism about such numbers.

There's no shortage of statistics bandied about in the COVID War. The public is relentlessly exhorted to "follow the science" or "trust the science," and what could be more scientific than statistics? And statistics are all the more persuasive when they come from a reputable source.

But as we have noted, the only “science” that we are told to believe and obey are those officially sanctioned by the mainstream media. All others, especially those from the alternative health field are banned or demeaned.

So, when a Los Angeles local news report announces, based on a study from May to late July by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, that "unvaccinated L.A. county residents [are] 5 times more likely to get COVID, 29 times more likely to be hospitalized," it certainly tends to reinforce the current narrative that it's unvaccinated persons who are responsible for the severity of the "pandemic."

We tend to accept and believe statistics from the CDC, even despite that agency's documented flip-flopping; see "COVID FRAUDSTER," 18 May 2021. We tend to resist the notion that a government agency would manipulate "scientific" data for propaganda purposes.

But now comes the revelation, courtesy of InfoWars.com and reported on 24 August, that the CDC is actually playing fast and loose with its own statistics, based on its own definitions of "vaccinated," "partially vaccinated" and "unvaccinated."

The statistics in this CDC report on L.A. County COVID cases are predicated on the "unvaccinated" category including those who received the first of a 2-dose series or 1 dose of a single dose vaccine within the preceding 14 days, as well as those for whom no vaccination data is available.

The implication is clear: anyone hospitalized, admitted to the ICU, put on a ventilator and/or dying within two weeks of getting a vaccine shot is nevertheless being counted as "unvaccinated."

Statistics based on such a definition are meaningless, except that they are ideal for helping to instill fear of remaining unvaccinated, as well as for promoting in already vaccinated persons a fear of unvaccinated persons. And they make it impossible to know how many truly unvaccinated persons were hospitalized and/or died in L.A. County during that period.

***TRENDPOST:** But it probably shouldn't shock or surprise anyone who's been paying attention. The **Trends Journal** reported, in "CDC CHANGES TESTING TO ERASE 'BREAKTHROUGH' CASES," 25 May 2021 on a not-so-very-different CDC shenanigan.*

Furthermore, according to a large Israeli study, the natural immune protection that develops after a SARS-CoV-2 infection significantly shields the body against *the Delta variant than do two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech jab. The data found that people who had the virus were much less likely than never-infected, vaccinated people who got Delta variant, that, despite the two jabs, became very ill with the variant and were hospitalized with serious conditions.*

SOUTH AMERICA: JAB OR NATURAL IMMUNITY SLOWING COVID SURGE

South America, not long ago reported by the media as the hotbed of COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths, is now experiencing a sharp decrease in those numbers, and the mainstream media “experts” are not quite sure why.

So says an article in *The New York Times*, appearing 6 September. When the virus first hit, we are told, containment measures were spotty because governments were loath to negatively impact their economies. As it happens, those economies are now expected to increase over previous forecasts.

(**Trends Journal** reported, in "SOUTH AFRICA MYSTERY: WHERE DID THE VIRUS GO?," 23 March 2021 on another rather sudden and "puzzling" reduction in COVID cases, on the other side of the world.)

There have now been some strict border controls, but the drop in cases in South America is largely ascribed to the speed with which widespread vaccination has been achieved, unhindered, the *NYT* points out, by the "apathy, politicization and conspiracy theories" that have kept the U.S. from achieving its vaccination goals.

In Brazil, for example, almost 64 percent of the population has received at least one shot, as has 61 percent in Argentina. In Uruguay and Chile more than 70 percent are fully vaccinated. And the dreaded Delta variant does not seem to have made things worse.

Jab Failure

And while politicians keep selling the “Get the Jab” lines, it was reported yesterday by Reuters that despite 81 percent of Singapore’s population fully vaccinated, the pace of new COVID-19 infections is rapidly rising and there is a doubling of seriously ill patients.

TRENDPOST: *As reported, the surge has been reversed and the Delta variant has failed to gain traction, because so many people had been infected and therefore now enjoy a natural immunity.*

Indeed, an Israeli study said that those who had COVID and recovered from it have considerably more protection from the Delta variant than that offered by the Pfizer vaccine. When a person has the virus—and remember, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the recovery rate says it’s 99.7 percent—the immune system kicks in when people are re-exposed to the virus. Having had the virus before, the body remembers the attacker and fights it off.

Natural Immunity, Not the Vax?

But the fear mongering media has not given up on Delta, which they say could still bring more surges. And they fear that the respite from the virus may cause people to abandon caution, once again gather in crowds, and even stop wearing their masks.

Overall, however, the trend is back toward normalcy, and South American governments expect to reopen their borders soon.

MEDIA HYSTERIA: ANOTHER COVID SURGE

Up until July, the media was selling the line that slow and steady vax rates were slowing down the COVID "case" surge. Indeed, rarely do they mention death rates, ages of those who are dying or the pre-existing comorbidities. Instead, "cases" from questionable PCR tests are the hype they keep selling. (See "FLAWED COVID TEST RESPONSIBLE FOR 'MASS HYSTERIA'," 12 Jan 2021).

But now fear and hysteria are back in style with the *The New York Times* declaring in an 8 September article, that the fight against COVID-19 has suffered a setback.

Despite this summer beginning with reduced cases, they reported that infections, hospitalizations and even deaths, while greatly lower than last winter, are higher than last summer. Some 1,500 Americans are dying from COVID every day, according to the *NYT.* Not mentioned, however, was that as many as 4,300 were dying of the virus in the winter months, and again, who is dying from it and why, are obliterated from their coverage.

Delta on the Delta

Some progress has been made in Southern states, but it's offset by surges in other areas, the *Times* reported. With some 47 percent of Americans not fully vaccinated, they claim it is making them more susceptible to the more infectious Delta variant.

Even though it appeared the day before President Biden's speech in which he essentially declared war on the unvaccinated, the *NYT* article makes use of a prime Biden talking point, that the unvaccinated are driving the surge in case numbers and unfairly burdening the health care system. It's "the virus's mutations, and the refusal of millions of Americans to “take the shot" that have "dimmed the hope" of an easy return to ordinary life, the toilet paper of record declared.

The article acknowledges that the goal has changed from eradicating COVID to merely managing it; it's never going to just go away. And it also acknowledges that vaccination is not the panacea it was once thought to be, citing increasingly frequent "breakthrough" cases among vaccinated persons, and even pointing out the increase in Delta cases in Israel, which has over 60 percent of its citizenry fully vaxxed.

TRENDPOST: *It's no wonder that, in interviews across the U.S., people reveal themselves to be consumed with "angst, frustration and resignation,” not to mention being "fatigued, politically divided" and with "no unified vision for how to navigate the pandemic."*

*It might also be no wonder that some of that angst, frustration, resignation and fatigue is rooted in simply not knowing what to believe when bombarded with all the often conflicting statistics about the COVID virus, especially coming from the NYT, whose dismal record in this regard has been noted by **Trends Journal**, as in "RIGGING THE COVID NUMBERS," 10 August 2021.*

WANT TO KEEP YOUR JOB? GET THE JAB!

Last Monday, *The New York Times* reported that new job applicants across America will be confronting vaccine mandates as a condition of employment.

The *NYT* reports that job ads that list vaccination as a requirement have doubled, although they still remain a small percentage of listings overall.

The article details the ways job-seekers may find themselves impacted by these new policies, and that the impact won't be limited to those employed, but will be felt by anyone entering a company's premises, whether as a client, a contractor or anyone doing business in person.

Among other things, such requirements could change the definition of what constitutes workplace discrimination (although **Trends Journal** reported in "NO JAB, NO JOB?," 1 June 2021 that new guidelines from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission state that it is not a violation of federal law for employers to demand vaccination as a condition of employment).

The Times article was published before Pres. Biden's momentous, totalitarian declaration of 9 September, in which he allowed that the vaccinated portion of the U.S. population had lost patience with those who remain unvaccinated, and he essentially promised that unvaccinated persons would be banished from the workforce.

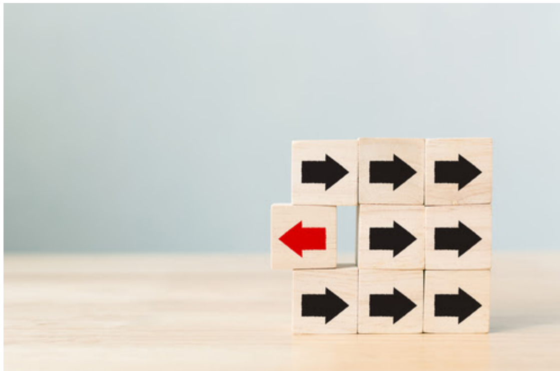
Under his new policy, it won't just be more and more job applicants confronting vaccine mandates as a condition of employment. It will be all job applicants, as well as all those already employed.

Employers will be coerced into demanding compliance, and anyone who fails to comply will be punished, in the case of workers by termination of employment, and in the case of businesses, by being banned from doing business with the government.

TRENDPOST: *As noted in the following* ***Trends Journal*** *articles, we have long forecast that governments would enforce unprecedented measures to get as many people jabbed with the Operation Warp Speed gene therapy shot as possible...*

- *"NO JAB = NO JOB" (23 Feb 2021)*
- *"NEW TREND: 'JAB HECTORING'" (24 Aug 2021)*
- *"HONG KONG: NO JAB, NO JOB, NO FREEDOM" (4 May 2021)*
- *"GOLDMAN SACHS IN CONTROL: GET YOUR JAB" (15 Jun 2021)*

"A PANDEMIC OF THE UNVACCINATED," OR JUST THE OPPOSITE?



As per the politician and the Presstitutes, and the vaxxed advocates, the word on the street is that it is the un-jabbed who are spreading the virus and most susceptible to catching COVID.

Studies conducted at Israel's Maccabi Healthcare and Tel Aviv University reported by UnHerd.com., and a study by *Cell Reports Medicine* found that a person with natural immunity was statistically less likely than the vaccinated person to contract the virus or to have a symptomatic case.

Public Health England, as reported by *The Exposé,* found that not only have 70 percent of U.K. COVID-19 deaths since February have been in people who had been vaccinated, but that "the number of alleged deaths due to the Delta variant are not just higher among those who have received two doses of the Covid-19 vaccine, they are astronomically higher."

The PHE study found 536 deaths among 219,716 confirmed cases in the unvaccinated population since February. This yields a case fatality rate of 0.2 percent. In the same period among the vaccinated population, however, there were 1,091 deaths among 113,823 cases. That yields a case fatality rate of 1 percent.

That PHE report concludes that the risk of death to those infected with the Delta variant increases significantly in those who have been fully vaccinated.

TRENDPOST: *Not only are these findings not reported by the mainstream media and ignored by politicians and "health officials"... they contradict the latest statements from the Biden administration, which now officially (and angrily)* *characterize the "pandemic" as "a pandemic of the unvaccinated," and which appear to make the COVID War now a war against some 80 million (unvaccinated) Americans.*

COVID JAB: THE PRE-TEEN RIGHT OF PASSAGE

Overjoyed for reaching the age of 21 (in many states) for the right to purchase and consume alcohol, the age of 18 confers the right to vote, now, according to a 6 September *New York Times* article, the new Right of Passage is the age of 12... when a child is officially eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

And kids are lining up and rolling up their sleeves for shots just like the grown ups do. The CDC reports that, of U.S. kids between 12 and 17, at least 52 percent have received at least one shot, and some 40 percent are fully vaccinated. Whether the vaccine will be approved for those younger than 12 is yet to be determined.

Some school districts have implemented, or are considering, mandated vaccinations for eligible students; in a recent poll, 55 percent of Americans surveyed favored such mandates. And, we are told, "the nation's leading infectious disease expert," the esteemed Dr. Anthony Fauci, favors such mandates.

The *NYT* article cites one family for whom their daughter's twelfth birthday was "a milestone" for the entire family, because they are now "one step closer to being safer" by virtue of all of them having been vaccinated.

And the *NYT* suggests that such vaccinations may remedy the social isolation, anxiety and depression that children have suffered under the restrictions imposed on them because of COVID-19. See "LOCKDOWNS MAKING KIDS ANXIOUS & DEPRESSED," 13 April 2021, which raises the possibility that the damage may be irreversible.

TRENDPOST: *While silenced by the mainstream media, as reported by The Defender yesterday, adolescent boys have less of a risk of going to the hospital if they got the virus than if they got the Pfizer vaccine jab.*

"The findings showed that boys between the ages of 12 and 15, with no underlying medical conditions, were four to six times more likely to be diagnosed with vaccine-related myocarditis than they were to be hospitalized with COVID."

TRENDPOST: *There's no mention in the article of anyone being less than completely enthusiastic about getting the shot; there's certainly no mention of any of the many studies indicating how minuscule a risk children actually face (see "VAX KIDS? THE COVID RISK IS 'TINY'," 13 Jul 2021), let alone any suggestion that, for children, the jab may be riskier than the disease (see "DOCTOR CLAIMS COVID VAX IS A 'POISON DEATH SHOT'," 24 Aug 2021); one newly-jabbed pre-teen child is quoted as saying, "I knew it was better to get a little pointy needle than COVID," clearly indicating acceptance of the narrative that it's an either/or proposition.*

ISRAEL: BOOSTS COVID SHOTS FROM 2 TO 3

Go back to November/December 2020.

All of the media and politicians were selling the lie that after two jabs the COVID vaccination had a 96 percent efficacy rate.

Now, Israelis are learning that two COVID-19 vaccine jabs just don't cut it anymore.

Tel Aviv announced new restrictions for citizens who have not received a third vaccine booster shot.

In February, the **Trends Journal** published an article titled, “ISRAEL: NO VACCINE, NO GREEN PASSPORT,” that identified the passport as a key to returning to normal life. In order to obtain the passport, Israelis needed to prove that they had both shots of either the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine.

We wrote at the time that Israel has set the trend for the world: No COVID jab, no freedom.

The government now says Israelis must get a third dose within six months or lose their passport. Nitzan Horowitz, the country’s health minister said, according to Al-Monitor:

> “This is simply because, in terms of its effectiveness, the vaccine is valid only for a period of five or six months. After about half a year, you have to get a third dose. Otherwise, the vaccine loses its power. The Green Pass testifies that a person is safe in a certain way. So the moment we know that the vaccine loses its effectiveness after a certain period, there's no justification for giving a Green Pass to someone who hasn't gotten another dose.”

More than 2 million residents in the country have received their third dose.

David Dowdy, an epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins University, told *The Wall Street Journal* that there is “no question” that a third jab would provide high levels of immunity, but questioned how long that immunity would last.

Other countries have raised concerns about the effectiveness of these vaccines essentially wearing off after some time. Yale Medicine said that data from New York “showed vaccine effectiveness dropping from 91.7 to 79.8 percent against infection.”

Albert Bourla, the head of Pfizer, told CNBC in July that the vaccine steadily declines over time, at a rate of about 6% every two months.

TRENDPOST: *There is, indeed, a great future in booster shots, especially for companies like Bourla's that make them; see our* ***Trends Journal*** *3 August 2021 article* *"NO LETUP IN SURGE OF VAX BIZ REVENUES."*

*(****PUBLISHER'S NOTE:*** *Also see "PFIZER CEO MAKES WINDFALL PROFIT FROM VACCINE NEWS," and "VACCINE DRUG DEALERS: PEOPLE PAY, THEY PROFIT.")*

Israel, a country of 9 million, has been viewed as something of a testing ground for the effectiveness of coronavirus vaccines because of its health infrastructure and relatively small population. In July, we ran an article, "ISRAEL: COVID DRUG MUCH LESS EFFECTIVE THAN WHAT WE'VE BEEN SOLD."

MAJORITY OF AMERICANS WOULD QUIT THEIR JOBS THAN TAKE THE JAB. WILL THEY BACK DOWN?

A *Washington Post/ABC News* poll released earlier this month found that nearly 70 percent of unvaccinated Americans would rather quit their jobs than submit to mandatory COVID-19 jabs.

The poll questioned 1,066 unvaccinated individuals and found that 35 percent said they would pursue some kind of religious exemption while 42 percent said they would quit, according to RT.com.

The poll raises the possibility that the Biden administration will face serious challenges enforcing its vaccine mandate that zeroes in on private-sector jobs and could affect up to 100 million Americans.

As we reported, on Thursday Biden announced an unprecedented new order that would force any employer with over 100 workers to either mandate vaccines or offer weekly testing.

Millions of Americans who work as employees for the federal government—or as contractors—will not have the option to take these weekly tests. The rule would be enforced by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Businesses that do not comply could face up to $14,000 fines per offense. Employers must also give workers paid time off to get vaccinated "or to recover from any side effects" from the vaccine.

Biden said:

> "My message to unvaccinated Americans is this: what more is there to wait for? What more do you need to see? We have made vaccinations free, safe, and convenient. The vaccine is FDA approved. Over 200 million Americans have gotten at least one shot. We have been patient, but our patience is wearing thin, and the refusal has cost all of us."

Biden also signed an executive order that is even more severe than the mandate for private-sector jobs. For federal employees and contractors, there is no option to be tested weekly. All 17 million health care workers at facilities that receive money from federal programs like Medicare and Medicaid must be vaccinated. And, Biden also mandated vaccinations for about 300,000 educators in the federal Head Start program and more than 200 federally run schools.

Biden reiterated that the country is facing a "tough stretch and it could last for a while."

The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on Biden's effort to force Americans to take the jab. (See "NO VAX, NO JOB, NO FUTURE: BIDEN KNOWS BEST")

Civil Liberties Sell Out

RT pointed out that "experts" have been debating whether or not such a mandate from the federal government is legal and pointed to an op-ed in *The Times* written by two top attorneys at the American Civil Liberties Union. They gave the move their blessings and argued that “vaccine mandates actually further civil liberties.”

“Vaccines are a justifiable intrusion on autonomy and bodily integrity. That may sound ominous, because we all have the fundamental right to bodily integrity and to make our own healthcare decisions. But these rights are not absolute,” they wrote. “They do not include the right to inflict harm on others.”

“The president’s plan is bold, audacious and unprecedented,” Lawrence O. Gostin, a Georgetown University law professor, told the paper. “But I do think it’s entirely lawful. He’s on extremely strong legal ground.”

Moronic Analogy

Championing Biden’s COVID War tactics, Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease expert at Vanderbilt University, moronically likened mandating vaccinations to a countrywide draft during war.

“To date we have relied on a volunteer army. But particularly with the Delta variant, the enemy has been reinforced, and now a volunteer army is not sufficient. We need to institute a draft,” he told *The Times.*

Indeed, what “draft” was the jerk talking about that “We need to institute,” the Vietnam War draft; the Korean War draft?

Proud of Biden’s actions, his chief of staff, Ron Klain retweeted a post that said the Biden administration managed to pull off the “ultimate work-around” for a national COVID-19 vaccine requirement.

TRENDPOST: *Before President Biden imposed his latest round of his "Get vaxxed or get lost" COVID mandates, he was being chastised in the media, across the nation, and around the world for his disastrous Afghan War withdrawal.*

But now that he has imposed his Imperial Powers upon the citizens of Slavelandia to get vaxxed and do what they are told, the media and the mass majority are supporting his mandates.

King Biden?

The New York Times pointed out that there will almost certainly be legal challenges to the mandate. Montana has already banned employers from mandating vaccinations for their staff, and South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem tweeted, "My legal team is standing by ready to file our lawsuit the minute @JoeBiden files his unconstitutional rule. This gross example of federal intrusion will not stand."

Guy T. Williams, the chief executive of Gulf Coast Bank & Trust, which is based in Louisiana and employs about 775 people, asked *The Wall Street Journal*: "Does the president of the United States get to dictate vaccinations?"

The Times said lawyers insist that Biden has the authority to impose these mandates as long as he works through OSHA.

TRENDPOST: *The New York Times pointed out that about 53 percent of the country is fully vaccinated. Despite over half the population being vaccinated, the country had a daily average caseload of over 150,000 for the first time since January, killing about 1,500 per day, the report said. What they did not say was that there were well over 250,000 cases per day and over 4,000 deaths per day back in January. Yet, the media keeps hyping the current numbers as if they are astronomical... and the masses buy them.*

TRENDPOST: *Biden is seen as going further than any past American president to force vaccinations and he is basing his effort on protecting "vaccinated* *workers from the unvaccinated," which naturally raises the question of the vaccines' effectiveness.*

Again, unquestioned by the media is the illogic of the President's and others claim that the unvaccinated are threatening the vaccinated. Thus, if a person is vaccinated they are supposedly safe from catching the virus. So how can the unvaccinated give them the virus?

***TRENDPOST:** The **Trends Journal** ran an article in July titled, "U.S. VAX RATE DOWN, BIDEN FIGHTING TO PUSH IT UP," on President Biden falling well short in his effort to have 70 percent of Americans have at least one shot by the Fourth of July.*

His look to destroy careers in the private sector to increase the number is troubling, but not a surprise. Dr. Jonathan Reiner, a CNN medical analyst, a few weeks ago, said it is time the private sector takes the lead on the effort. He said private companies should begin to require workers to take the jab.

"Seventy-five million adults have chosen to not get vaccinated and that choice has consequences," Reiner said. "Now, we can't force you to take a jab in the arm but there are many jobs, perhaps, that can prevent you from working if you decide not to get vaccinated."

The fact that the Biden administration had to resort to this mandate is stunning since its corporate media arm has been wall-to-wall with its positive coverage of vaccinations. Biden also keeps getting away with the flat-out lie that the vaccines are "free." We the People of Slavelandia are heavily taxed and billions of our tax dollars were paid to the drug lords who are dispensing the jab.

See "DRUG COMPANIES CASHING IN ON COVID" (11 May 2021); "PFIZER CEO MAKES WINDFALL PROFIT FROM VACCINE NEWS" (17 Nov 2020); "TAX DOLLARS BOOST DRUG DEALER PROFITS." (2 Feb 2020).

The interesting question is what happens if the 70 percent in the aforementioned poll simply tell their employers, many who can't find employees now, that they will quit rather than get jabbed ? What is the next step in vaccine mandates?

Lawrence O. Gostin, the Georgetown University law professor, told The New York Times that Biden cannot require all Americans to take the jab because vaccinations are "the province of the states." But there are bully tactics that the White House can deploy like funding for states and blueprints on how states can produce "vaccine passports."

Biden said if these governors don't help, he'll use his power to "get them out of the way."

Indeed as our 28 April 2020 ***Trends Journal*** *cover designed by Anthony Freda clearly illustrates: "DUMB ENOUGH TO BELIEVE BUSH'S WARS – DUMB ENOUGH TO BELIEVE THE COVID WAR."*

This will be a major campaign issue in upcoming elections and we maintain our forecast that new anti-vax/anti-tax/anti-establishment political movements will be formed.

COVID FEAR: WHEN WILL WORKERS RETURN?

The COVID War has played havoc with how companies have dealt with their workforces: shutting down offices, having employees work from home, keeping abreast of mask and vaccine requirements that seem to go back and forth, and changing the very nature of the relationship between the company and its employees.

And everyone involved has eagerly anticipated the time when workers would return and business would resume a more normal state of operation. Projections have been made as to just when that might occur, and then those projected dates have been postponed. See the following **Trends Journal** articles:

- "AMAZON PUSHES BACK RETURN FOR ITS CORPORATE WORKERS, BUT THOSE AT FULFILLMENT CENTERS MUST RETURN TO WORK" (10 Aug 2021)
- "FACEBOOK ANNOUNCES DELAY FOR RETURN OF U.S. EMPLOYEES TO THEIR OFFICE TO 2022" (17 Aug 2021)
- "BLACKROCK AND WELLS FARGO DELAY RETURN TO THE OFFICE" (10 Aug 2021)

As we had forecast, and a 6 September *New York Times* article confirms, many companies that had hoped this September would signal that return, September is now "out as an option, and it's anybody's guess when workers will return to their offices in large numbers."

A poll of 1,600 employers revealed that 40 percent had been compelled to postpone bringing employees back to in-person work, with 50 percent of those with more than 10,000 employees saying the same.

Vaccination rates and vaccine mandates figure into the projections. In a survey of nearly 1,000 companies which, together, employ almost 10 million persons, 52 percent expected to have vaccine mandates by the end of the year, with 21 percent already having such mandates in place (see "GOLDMAN SACHS IN CONTROL: GET YOUR JAB," 15 June 2021).

TRENDPOST: *Postponements, the NYT tells us, give employees time to become fully vaccinated, and gives companies time to set up procedures to track workers' vaccination and booster shot status.*

With all the uncertainty involved, some companies, including The New York Times and American Airlines, have opted out of even trying to project return dates. See "BACK TO WORK TRENDS DOWN," 22 June 2021.

*All of this has ramifications that go beyond the companies and their employees, as **TJ** has forecast repeatedly; see, for example, "WORK FROM HOME = CITY REAL ESTATE DOWN," (20 Oct 2020) and "REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY UPDATE" (13 Apr 2021).*

UK DITCHES VACCINE PASSPORTS

The United Kingdom's health secretary announced Sunday that vaccine passports will not be required to enter crowded spaces just weeks after Prime Minister Boris Johnson declared that they would be required.

"I'm pleased to say that we will not be going ahead with plans for vaccine passports," Sajid Javid, the health official, told the BBC.

He said that it is probably fair to say that most people "instinctively don't like the idea."

"I've never liked the idea of saying to people you must show your papers or something to do what is just an everyday activity," he said.

The Guardian, citing government sources, reported that infections and deaths that were projected during the summer months have not materialized. They credit the success of the vaccination efforts. Tories told the paper that they believed Johnson's idea for a passport was always an empty threat aimed at just getting people to sign up for the shot.

The report pointed out that the U.K. granted emergency approval for third jabs for the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines. The report said Scotland will introduce the vaccine passports despite the announcement.

TRENDPOST: *The Guardian's report said the quiet part out loud. The use of vaccine passports in the United Kingdom was never "based on the science," but was deployed as a political tool by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to coerce more people to sign up to take the shot.*

Indeed, what we have been forecasting since the vax passport was launched by Israel this past February; "ISRAEL: NO VACCINE, NO GREEN PASSPORT,"... the motivation for lockdowns in nations across the globe, regardless of low death rates such as Australia and New Zealand, is to sell more drug dealer COVID Jabs.

BE AFRAID! DOUBLE WHAMMY COMING: GET THE JABS

Another week, another issue to be worried about.

The Presstitute's favored "health experts" continue the effort to promote fear and hysteria in the U.S., warning Friday that the country should prepare to deal with COVID-19 and a dangerous flu season because so many Americans have been working from home, according to a report.

These officials warned that hospitals may be struggling to deal with COVID patients, so Americans should be sure to not only take the COVID jab, but double down and take the flu vaccine. The flu season is expected to hit the country earlier this year because individuals have no immune defenses—since they have been working from home, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

Fear Monger

“There’s not many hospital beds, so (there’s) even more reason to get vaccinated against the flu this year,” Dr. Anne Zink, Alaska’s chief medical officer said during a call with reporters.

Yet, today, *The Atlantic,* reported that “A new study suggests that almost half of those hospitalized with COVID-19 have mild or asymptomatic cases.”

Ignoring such facts, William Schaffner, a professor of preventive medicine at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, told the paper that “The worst-case scenario is a real twindemic.”

Is it the Flu or COVID?

In Alaska, for example, the state of 731,000 had less than 100 confirmed influenza cases in 2020. Harvard reported that there were 1,675 confirmed cases in the U.S. last year. See “EVAPORATED FLU” (2 Mar 2021) and “COVID COMPARED TO SEASONAL FLU” (10 Nov 2020).

The report pointed to a February article in *Summit News* that quoted Knut Wittkowski, who earned a doctorate in both computer science and biometry:

> “Influenza has been re-named COVID-19 in large part. According to the CDC, the cumulative positive influenza test rate from late September into the week of 19 December was just 0.2 percent compared to 8.7 percent from a year before….There may be quite a number of influenza cases included in the ‘presumed COVID-19’ category of people who have COVID-19 symptoms (which Influenza symptoms can be mistaken for), but are not tested for SARS RNA.”

TREND FORECAST: *As we had long forecast since the COVID War began, there would be a nation divided between vaxxed and un-vaxed. Indeed, a just released A Scott Rasmussen national survey found that 56 percent of the Democrats—President Biden’s party—consider the unvaccinated a serious threat.*

They note that that's a higher level of concern than Democrats express about the Taliban (44% see it as a serious threat); China (44%), or Russia (37%).

Thus, there we maintain our forecasts for strong anti-establishment, anti-vax, anti-tax movements.

NEW LANCET ARTICLE DOUBTS CASE FOR BOOSTER SHOTS

The efficacy and effects of taking booster shots of COVID vaccines are unknown, and might be dangerous for some individuals who've taken the original shots.

That's according to an international paper published on 13 September 2021 in *The Lancet* medical journal.

The paper, co-authored by a large international group of scientists and experts including some from the Federal Drug Administration (FDA), specifically cited risks like myocarditis, and advised against boosters for general populations.

With regard to boosters for general populations, the paper stated:

> "Current evidence does not, therefore, appear to show a need for boosting in the general population, in which efficacy against severe disease remains high. Even if humoral immunity appears to wane, reductions in neutralising antibody titre do not necessarily predict reductions in vaccine efficacy over time, and reduction in vaccine efficacy against mild disease do not necessarily predict reductions in the (typically higher) efficacy against severe disease. This effect could be because protection against severe disease is mediated not only by antibody responses, which might be relatively short lived for some vaccines, but also by memory responses and cell-mediated immunity, which are generally longer-lived."

The paper expressed concern that politics are playing a role in the vaccine booster push, and advised that vaccines would better be used on populations that haven't had enough access:

> "Careful and public scrutiny of the evolving data will be needed to assure that decisions about boosting are informed by reliable science more than by politics. Even if boosting were eventually shown to decrease the medium-term risk of serious disease, current vaccine supplies could save more lives if used in previously unvaccinated populations than if used as boosters in vaccinated populations."

Notably, the authors also cautioned against possible side effects from boosters, including heart inflammation, which has been particularly prevalent in young males compared to other groups. The possibility of boosters triggering elevated incidence of Guillain-Barre syndrome and other maladies was also mentioned.

As the news broke from the major peer-reviewed medical journal, even MSM news outlets were compelled to cover the story. A CNBC headline, for example, admitted "Data shows Covid booster shots are 'not appropriate' at this time, U.S. and international scientists conclude."

The outlet noted that shares of BioNTech, maker of the Pfizer vaccine, were down more than 5% in intraday trading on Monday.

The Lancet paper was co-authored by Phil Krause and Marion Gruber, two high level FDA officials who currently oversee regulating and approving vaccines, are among the paper's authors. Both submitted their resignations over the booster shot issue, and are set to leave the agency in the next few weeks.

TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS

U.S. LOST AFGHAN WAR: $2.3 TRILLION DISASTER. CHINA THE WINNER.

The Washington crime syndicate stole $2.313 trillion from the citizens of Slavelandia to fight the Afghan War that George W. Bush launched in October 2001. And President Joe Biden—who voted to give Bush the power to launch it—ended it in a disaster a few weeks ago.

With the American military gone, the Biden pullout has now opened the door for Chinese and Pakistani influence in the country.

Brown University's Watson Institute's Costs of War Project estimated that the figure does not represent the money that the U.S. will spend on "lifetime care for American veterans of this war, nor does it include future interest payments on money borrowed to fund the war."

The report also pointed out that an estimated 241,000 people died "as a direct result of this war."

The Biden administration laid blame on the Afghan security forces for not putting up a fight to defend their country. Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said there were no reports that he heard of "that predicted a security force of 300,000 would evaporate in 11 days."

Biden said that he stood behind his decision to withdraw the troops and said that he learned the "hard way that there was never a good time to withdraw U.S. forces."

Biden has made countering China a centerpiece of his administration. See "TOP TREND 2021: THE RISE OF CHINA" (23 Feb 2021) and "BIDEN VS. CHINA'S BELT & ROAD INITIATIVE: U.S. LOSES" (30 Mar 2021).

He made it clear Beijing would not surpass Washington, D.C., in power during his term in the White House, and he is willing to invest heavily to follow through on the promise.

"China has an overall goal… to become the leading country in the world, the wealthiest country in the world, and the most powerful country in the world. That's not going to happen on my watch because the United States is going to continue to grow," Biden said, according to Reuters.

The Taliban are sitting on $1 trillion worth of rare minerals coveted by major powers, and China stands to capitalize on the Afghanistan imbroglio. A Taliban spokesman told *Nikkei Asia* that the group is excited to join the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC and is in talks with China to join its Belt and Road Initiative.

The report identified the CPEC as "the flagship $50 billion Pakistan component of China's Belt and Road Initiative."

(The report, citing sources, pointed out that China has been in touch with the Taliban since 2018 about potential projects in the country.)

TREND FORECAST: *The United States and Europe will lose in the economic challenge against China. While President Biden stated that Beijing would not surpass Washington in power during his term in the White House, that has zero to do with U.S. policy or the Biden administration.*

On the economic front, as we have forecast the hard facts and analyses project China to surpass the U.S. as the world's largest economy by the end of this decade.

As we have long noted, the 20th century was the American century, and the 21st century will be China's. The business of America has been war, and the business of China is business. The Nikkei Asia report said Beijing has been in touch with Taliban leaders since 2018 about potential projects in the country.

And on the war front, as we have detailed, the U.S. has not won a war since WWII and having just suffered a disastrous Afghan defeat, it would be no match against China's mighty military.

AMERICA PUMPS UP THE RICH, CHINA PUSHING THEM DOWN

"A powerful China should also be a fair and just China," says Yao Yang, a professor of economics at Peking University, quoted in a 7 September *New York Times* article.

In an effort to ensure equality, President Xi Jinping has declared that China has reached the next phase in its growth, and has informed China's entrepreneurs that the time has come for them to help "narrow the stubborn wealth gap" that threatens to not only hold back development but to "erode public confidence in the leadership."

This will be known as the "common prosperity" campaign, and its stated aims are to make schooling, housing and health care more affordable and available outside the large cities, along with cracking down on the dominance of the high tech sector and increasing the size of the middle class. Despite the announcement last year that rural poverty had been eliminated (see "GLOBAL ECONOMIC TRENDS," 1 December 2020), China's wealth is still concentrated in its cities.

The Chinese Way

It was part of China's long-term plan, going back to the days of Deng Xiaoping, to partially embrace elements of capitalism in order to allow some people to attain great wealth in the process of building the economy and power of the country at large. Even then, however, "common prosperity" was a long-term goal.

And in the U.S. where we have been continually reporting in our economic section of the rich getting richer, the middle class shrinking and the poor getting poorer, the top one percent own about 35 percent of America’s wealth.

But unlike in the U.S. where Washington supports and assists the “Bigs Getting Bigger” in China, with its top one percent controlling some 31 percent of the nation's wealth (up from 20 percent two decades ago, Beijing wants to re-distribute the wealth.)

Capitalism 2.0

Indeed, China doesn't want to be like the U.S. (see "CHINA 2021: THE CHINESE CENTURY," 9 March 2021), which it sees as mired in inequality and declining in power and influence.

It also wants to be less reliant on Western capital and expertise (see "TOP TRENDS OF 2021: THE RISE OF CHINA," 19 January 2021). And Xi Jinping still needs to secure his own future as a leader by demonstrating that he's faithful to the long-term goals of Communism.

So, having attained a sufficient degree of affluence, it's now time for the government to step in, on the theory that more evenly-distributed consumer spending power, i.e., a growing middle class, will drive up the economy.

And it may be just in time, because China's growth is moderating, and, the *NYT* article tells us, many young Chinese feel that upward mobility isn't what it once was, with well-paying white collar jobs harder to find, tech workers compelled to work longer hours, and even families questioning whether they can afford to have children.

Some party officials favor more gradual changes, but the trend may be toward "a broad shake-up," a "political transformation" which would "wipe away" the ability of capitalists to "make a fortune overnight." This could include inheritance and property taxes, a move that could rile up the many who have invested heavily in housing.

But Xi has tried to calm fears of a rapid transformation by setting 2035 as the date by which "substantive progress" must be made toward "common prosperity."

Meanwhile, Zhejiang province, home to some of China's wealthiest private companies (and where Xi was party chairman for four years) has been chosen as the site of "common prosperity" demonstration zones, wherein a 52-point plan will be implemented, to include profit-sharing, reduced housing and educational costs, regulation of "excessive income" and expanded charity.

And some of China's highest-profile billionaires, Jack Ma among them as reported by *The Times,* are already scrambling to show their support for the new plans, committing billions of dollars to various "common prosperity" projects and charity.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have long reported, there are going to be "Off With Their Heads, 2.0" movements sweeping the globe as the BIGS get bigger, the Rich get richer and the peasants of Slavelandia get poorer.*

*Income inequality is a global trend. As we have been reporting in the **Trends Journal**, Oxfam research shows the world's 2,000 billionaires have more combined wealth than the 4.6 billion people who comprise 60 percent of the world's population.*

And according to Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's report published yesterday, the ongoing COVID WAR pushed an additional 31 million people worldwide into dire poverty, reversing global progress on eliminating poverty by four years.

GUINEA COUP RATTLES SUPPLY CHAIN

The price of aluminum—which has already been surging in 2021—has soared in response to the military coup in Guinea since the country is a major world supplier of bauxite, which is critical in producing the metal.

"Miners now have little other option than to sit tight and await further clarity from the transitional authorities," Eric Humphrey-Smith, an analyst at risk intelligence company Verisk Maplecroft, told investors last week, according to CNN.

The metal's price last Tuesday rose to $2,768 a metric ton, which marked a 10-year high, according to *The Wall Street Journal.* The report pointed out that shares in mining companies and producers of the metal rose on the news. Russia's United Co. Rusal PLC was up 14 percent last week.

The junta took control of the country on Saturday and arrested the president, Alpha Condé, whom they accused of widespread corruption. The junta swiftly suspended the constitution and sealed off the country's borders, which were later reopened, according to DW.com. The African Union, in response, said it will suspend the country from the bloc, despite it being a founding member.

Officers from an elite special forces team staged the coup and then appeared on state television announcing that they were in control, the *Journal* reported.

“The dignity of the population has been flouted for 10 years since our now ex-president [was] in power,” Col. Mamady Douombouya, the special forces chief, said. “What’s happening is a correction of it all.”

The paper pointed out that France, which was the former colonial power, called for Condé’s release. But in November, French President Emmanuel Macron accused the leader of altering the country’s constitution to remain in power.

“President Condé has had a career as an opponent which would have justified organizing a good alternation on his own. And obviously organized the referendum and constitutional change just to be able to keep power,” Macron said in an interview at the time.

Condé used his military to force through amendments to the constitution that would keep him in power until 2032. The *Journal* said he would have been 94.

The *Journal* reported that Conakry exported 82.4 million tons of bauxite last year, which was more than any other country. It provides half of China’s bauxite imports, the report said.

“Guinea's [coup] is expected to add further supply pressures to the aluminum market, although new Chinese supply in the pipeline is anticipated to soften prices,” one analyst told the paper.

TREND FORECAST: *Besides noting this article to illustrate the trend that there will be social unrest, coups, civil wars and regional wars as economic conditions rapidly disintegrate... the rising price of aluminum is yet another hard fact of rising inflation.*

And, despite U.S. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell telling Congress back in February that inflation was "soft," and claiming over and over that it is temporary, a half year later inflation keeps spiking far beyond government and Wall Street estimates. Yet, despite the hard numbers, their failed economic forecasts are ignored by the mainstream Presstitutes who get paid to put out by their corporate pimps and government whore masters.

TRENDS-EYE VIEW

WOMEN CONTINUE TO OUTNUMBER AND OUTPACE MEN IN COLLEGE

The "higher education gap" is widening in the U.S. between men and women, and increasing to record levels with no end in sight, *The Wall Street Journal* reported last Tuesday.

Women now outnumber men as college students, at 59.5 percent vs. 40.5 percent, for the 2020-21 academic year.

Overall, as we have been reporting, there's also been a drop-off in college enrollment, with 1.5 million fewer students than five years ago, and men are largely responsible for that decline as well.

The gap continues at graduation. As projected by the National Student Clearinghouse, over the next few years two women will earn a college degree for every man who does so.

This gap has even led some private universities, the *WSJ* tells us, to employ a sort of "affirmative action" policy, extending a higher percentage of offers to males than to females.

And the imbalance cuts across race, geography and economic background, although enrollment of white men, once the predominant group on U.S. campuses, is often lower than that of minority men in the same income category.

Mental Mania

Also blamed for the gap are factors labeled as "distractions and obstacles," such as video games, pornography, fatherlessness and "over diagnosis of boyhood restlessness and related medications."

Men interviewed said they quit school or didn't enroll because they failed to see the value of a college degree weighed against the effort and expense (including long-term debt) required (this is hardly new; see "IS COLLEGE REALLY WORTH IT?" 11 August 2014). Many find opportunities to make decent money with no degree needed, but others report having no plan and "feeling lost."

Women are also dominating leadership roles in student organizations. They benefit from an ongoing support infrastructure that was created to assist women when they were clearly a minority on campuses. Plans to offer help and encouragement to men have been shot down by women who feel that men are already over privileged.

An official at Junior Achievement commented that what he sees among college-age men is a "hope deficit."

TREND FORECAST: *As we said when the COVID War began and colleges started closing down in February 2020, there would be a college bust and many small college towns would become the new rust belts.*

Thus, according to the Journal, the virus is also responsible in part for the decline in total enrollments (down by 700,000) and in the enrollment of men (down by 71 percent). This is ascribed to the impact on family finances of women who would otherwise be employed staying home to care for children whose schools had been shut down and of young men quitting school in order to work (see "COLLEGE DAYS DYING," 9 June 2020).

SUPPLY CHAIN RECOVERY: A LOGISTICAL NIGHTMARE

On any given day, reports *The Wall Street Journal* on 7 September, forty or more cargo ships lie at anchor off the California coast, awaiting access to the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. This is indicative of how the COVID War continues to play havoc with worldwide supply chains; before COVID-19, it would be unusual for even one ship to be kept waiting.

The glut at shipping ports is only part of the problem. Warehouses are backed up and shipping by rail and truck is also snarled, in part because of shortages of truck drivers and warehouse workers. And there's no end in sight, at least not any time soon; the bottlenecks are forecast to continue well into 2022, as inventories are rebuilt. See **Trends Journal** "SUPPLY CHAIN DROUGHT," 11 May 2021.

The *WSJ* reports that the number of imported shipping containers handled by U.S. ports in August was some 2.37 million, the largest monthly number since 2002. And 2021's total is expected to be 25.9 million containers, surpassing 2020's record of 22 million. There's even a worldwide shortage of shipping containers, and oceangoing freight costs have risen. See "SHIPPER BOOKS TENFOLD INCREASE IN NET PROFITS," 17 August 2021.

And as winter approaches, the situation is expected to only get worse. Traditionally there's been a lull in shipping around February, when Chinese factories shut down for the Lunar New Year, but this time around there's not likely to be much relief. How vital China is in the grand scheme of global supply chains was addressed in "CORONAVIRUS DISRUPTS SUPPLY CHAINS," 18 February 2020.

***TREND FORECAST:** Although the WSJ article doesn't explain it, this logistical nightmare is the result of the COVID War causing dramatic shifts in demand for certain items. This has led to changes in the numbers and variety of products that retailers offer and keep on hand, shortages of certain products, and even rationing.*

In short, the COVID War has exposed flaws in supply chains (the systems that move products from suppliers to consumers) that, under normal circumstances, would have had enough of what logisticians call "resilience" to handle a range of fluctuations in supply and demand.

*As **Trends Journal** stated in "SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTIONS = INFLATION" (6 Oct 2020), the international lockdowns have disrupted the flow of raw materials, component parts and finished goods.*

*And what that article's **TRENDPOST** noted in 2020 is every bit as true today: "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."*

MILLIONS IMPACTED BY CUTOFF OF BENEFITS

Monday, 6 September 2021 marked the end of the U.S. government's expanded unemployment benefits, part of the $1.9

trillion economic aid package which had been in place since March, leaving 7.5 million Americans entirely without benefits and another 3 million without their $300 weekly unemployment supplement.

Opponents of the aid package have been calling for an early cutoff, contending that economic recovery has been held back by discouraging people from looking for work, essentially paying them to remain unemployed despite a record number of job openings, and thus fueling a labor shortage, especially in lower-paying industries; see "TRENDS ON THE U.S. EMPLOYMENT FRONT," 11 May 2021.

As reported in *The New York Times* on 7 September, the Biden administration's position is that the cutoff of benefits will help the economy transition from government assistance to a healthier, more sustainable model, driven by the labor market, in which consumer spending is powered by people earning actual paychecks.

About half the states, almost all of them under Republican governors, didn't wait for the cutoff, but moved on their own to limit expanded benefits, and such moves weren't opposed by the federal government, which, the *NYT* tells us, angered Progressives. Instead, Biden called on willing states to fill in for the expired benefits. The *NYT* article paints Pres. Biden as facing criticism from the Left and the Right, and having to perform "a balancing act."

Who Comes Up With This Stuff?

The states that ended the benefits early have, according to the *NYT*, seen no significant increase in people eager to get back to work. Factors limiting a return to employment are said to include "child care challenges, fear of the virus, accumulated savings from previous waves of government assistance and a broader re-thinking of work preferences in the wake of the pandemic."

TREND FORECAST: *One might think that the word "inertia" would figure in there somewhere. Name the business sector—from hospitality, restaurant,* *construction, retail, truck drivers, etc.—"Help Wanted" signs are spread across the nation, as employers seek employees.*

This is unique in modern history and will be a socio political and economic factor that will negatively affect economic growth and personal development in what history books once called, "The Land of Opportunity."

RICHEST AMERICANS ARE BIGGEST TAX CHEATS TREASURY REPORT FINDS

President Biden's Treasury Department released a report on Thursday that found the richest 1 percent of Americans accounted for up to $163 billion owed in taxes each year, according to a report.

The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on attempts to get the country's wealthiest to pay their fair share. See:

- "TAX DODGING ON A GRAND SCALE" (8 Jun 2021)
- "BILLIONAIRE TAX SCOFFLAWS PLOW SAVINGS INTO WEBS OF CONTROL" (15 Jun 2021)
- "A MODEST TAX PROPOSAL FOR BILLIONAIRES" (3 Aug 2021)

We pointed out the blockbuster story published in *ProPublica* that uncovered how these billionaires used their tax savings to fund globalist organizations that siphon democratic powers away from average voters. The corporate-controlled media somehow managed to twist the story—for the benefit of the Michael Bloombergs of the world, to focus on who leaked these documents.

Charles Hugh Smith, sometime guitarist and author of the financial blog Oftwominds recently offered his thoughts about how the uber-wealthy get away it:

> "But a simple one is to report no income and live large off borrowed money. As the billions of dollars in capital gains pile up as the billionaire's stock holdings soar (thanks, Federal Reserve, for the free trillions; awful swell of you to give us all that free money), there's no income generated until the billionaire sells some shares. No sale, no income. Just pay yourself $1 a year in salary, borrow against your billions at super-low rates of interest, and voila, you're tax-free while you build your super-yacht, buy your private island, and so on."

The New York Times reported that the Biden administration wants the Internal Revenue Service to close the $7 trillion in the country's tax gap. Part of that initiative is to invest $80 billion in the tax-collecting department over the next decade, the report said.

Republicans have bristled at some of the initiatives, including a report that the administration is aiming to monitor inflows and outflows from personal bank accounts under the auspices to prevent tax evasion. (The plan would be paid for in the $3.5 trillion reconciliation package.) The *Daily Mail* reported that the initiative would "require banks to report gross inflows and outflows to the IRS, including transactions from Venmo, PayPal, crypto exchanges and the like in an effort to fight tax evasion."

There are concerns that the plan would violate the Fourth Amendment that protects against unreasonable searches. *The American Banker* reported that the plan could force banks to have to report any transaction data for accounts "with at least $600 of inflows or outflows annually." The report said some bankers called the plan a compliance nightmare.

The Times' report said that tax compliance is high among low-and middle-income workers, but the rich are able to exploit accounting loopholes to shield liabilities.

A poll that was commissioned by the Independent Community Bankers of America found that nearly 70 percent of voters oppose the IRS collecting their banking information, Rebeca Romero Rainey, the president of the group, wrote in *The Hill.* She wrote that only 22 percent support the plan.

"What's more, intrusive account reporting to the IRS could undermine Washington's ongoing policy initiative of reducing the unbanked population. With distrust of institutions and government agencies inhibiting banking relationships—particularly among marginalized communities and those who have fled authoritarian regimes—indiscriminate financial account reporting risks increasing the challenge of reaching these individuals and families," she wrote.

TREND FORECAST: *The BIGS will continue to avoid paying their fair share despite getting tax breaks as they did under the Trump administration when he lowered rates. According to the Tax Policy Center, the one percent received 82 percent of the tax cut benefits.*

With the IRS getting more revenue, they will target lower and middle class citizens who, unlike the very rich, lack the financial resources to fight the tax man.

ABBOTT SIGNS SOCIAL MEDIA FREE SPEECH LAW

Message to online socials: don't mess with Texas.

The state made it unlawful last week for social media companies to exclude users based "solely on their political views."

Independent voices and particularly liberty-minded Americans have increasingly faced bans and suppression by Facebook, Twitter, and a handful of social media platforms that control most of online speech.

The **Trends Journal** has covered the political manipulation of big tech extensively in articles including:

- "Media censorship: A vicious trend to gag independent media" (26 Oct 2018)
- "FACEBOOK PULLS PLUG ON 'STOP THE STEAL' GROUP" (10 Nov 2020)
- "ALL THE PRESIDENT'S APPS: TECH COUP 2021" (19 Jan 2021)
- "CONGRESS PRESSURES BIG TECH TO CENSOR EVEN MORE" (March 2021)
- "FACEBOOK REMOVES VACCINE VICTIMS PAGE" (27 Apr 2021)

...and many others.

Perhaps the most damning censorship in recent months was YouTube banning Senator Rand Paul for criticizing the veracity of COVID czar Dr. Anthony Fauci (see "YOUTUBE BANS SEN. RAND PAUL FOR QUESTIONING FAUCI," 17 Aug 2021).

Fauci is currently under fire for Senate testimony where he denied government funding of controversial "gain of function" virus experiments, after more recent documentation has shown otherwise.

The media literally banned scientists, journalists and others who were onto the funding story as far back as March of 2020.

At the bill signing on Thursday, Texas Governor Greg Abbott noted "Social media websites have become our modern-day public square. "They are a place for healthy public debate where information should be able to flow freely—but there is a dangerous movement by social media companies to silence conservative viewpoints and ideas."

The law only applies to the very largest social media companies, with user bases of 50 million or more.

TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE

By Ben Daviss

FEEDING CATTLE WITH AN INDOOR FARM

Vertical farming isn't new. Entrepreneurs have been growing salad greens indoors on stacked hydroponic beds for years ("All Aboard! Urban Farming Trend is Coming to a City Near You," **Trends Journal**, 31 May 2017).

Now Utah's Grōv Technologies aims to feed cattle the same way.

The beef industry is living in a world that has become less hospitable to livestock, with droughts lasting for years across the plains and the West, and soils depleted by decades of overgrazing.

However, with the typical American packing away more than 58 pounds of beef a year, according to research service Statista, we're unlikely to trade our steaks for tofu.

So Grōv has found a way to feed cattle using a fraction of the land, a sliver of the time, and just 5 percent of the water typical grazing operations need to grow seeds into feed, and do it indoors in just seven days.

The centerpieces of the company’s 100-by-180-foot indoor farm are 10 pairs of towers, each more than 25 feet tall and containing two columns.

At the bottom of the first column, an automatic dispenser fills a two-foot square tray with wheat grass seed every four minutes. As they slowly journey to the top of the first column, the square’s seeds are bathed in water, fed a carefully selected balance of nutrients, and build a dense root mat.

Once a square joins others spiraling up to the top of the first column, it automatically is delivered into the second, where it begins a spiral journey back to the bottom. Along the way, the tray is nurtured under LED grow lights so efficient they’re cool to the touch.

After a week, the tray reaches the bottom of a tower’s second column, where a conveyor chucks the mat of wheatgrass, resembling a chunk of sod, onto another belt, which sends it to a truck for delivery.

Each of the 10 towers delivers 6,000 pounds of wheatgrass a day, the company reports.

At first, a Grōv truck took the grass a half-mile up the road to a dairy farm with 7,500 head.

Now the farm has moved its milking stations next to Grōv’s indoor farm to cut the delivery and travel time to near zero.

In addition to saving water, each of Grōv’s towers does the work of 34 to 50 acres of grazing land, the company says, as well as growing cattle feed with no pesticides, herbicides, or toxic runoff into rivers.

Grōv is working with Amazon Web Services' machine learning algorithms to compile data it can use to tweak water, nutrient, and grow-light regimes so yields become more nutritious as well as more plentiful, reducing costs to bring Grōv's technology closer to the budgets of smaller farms.

TRENDPOST: *As we noted in our previous article cited above, increasingly erratic weather, spreading drought, and depleted soils will force more and more farming indoors. We believe that is even more likely now.*

That's been true for produce humans consume, but Grōv's technology brings the trend to an entirely different agricultural sector.

Grōv's breakthrough can not only make cattle feed healthier, but also cheaper by both reducing the amount of land a rancher needs to maintain to sustain a herd and by cutting the risk of losing a herd to drought.

Ultimately, the company's technology can keep us in burgers that are not only more affordable but also in steady supply.

Grōv Technology's indoor grass farm Photo Credit: © 2021 Grōv Technologies

HEALTHY FATS SLOW ALZHEIMER'S, STUDY SHOWS

Eating healthy fats can radically slow the progress of Alzheimer's disease, according to a three-year study by a transnational group of 46 European scientists.

The study followed 311 people diagnosed with "mild cognitive impairment," a sort of pre-Alzheimer's condition. Some were given a 125-milliliter cocktail—about half a cup—of healthy fats to drink once a day; others drank a placebo.

The cocktail's recipe included:

- DHA and EPA, each a form of omega-3 or "healthy" fat;
- Uridine monophosphate, which crosses the blood-brain barrier and improves signaling between brain cells;
- Choline, which maintains healthy cell membranes and makes cells more sensitive to incoming signals;
- Vitamins B12, B6, C, and E;
- Folic acid, sometimes called vitamin B9, which helps make healthy red blood cells that carry oxygen around the body;
- Phospholipids, fats that strengthen cell membranes and sharpen their function;
- Selenium, which lowers physical reactions to stress and the inflammation that typically comes with stress. A recent study led by scientists at the University of Pittsburgh identified inflammation of brain cells as the ignition switch of the misfolded proteins that are hallmarks of Alzheimer's.

At the end of the three-year test, volunteers on the healthy sauce showed 60 percent less cognitive decline than the placebo drinkers, 76 percent less memory loss, and 33 percent less shrinkage in the hippocampus, the part of the brain involved in memory.

Those drinking the cocktail also showed 20 percent less brain shrinkage overall; a shrinking brain is an Alzheimer's signature.

TRENDPOST: *Pharmaceutical concoctions have shown little effect in treating Alzheimer's, a disease that affects one in 10 Americans over age 65, a population projected to grow by 25 percent by 2050.*

However, the European test is further evidence that Alzheimer's can be effectively countered by diet and lifestyle changes, as we reported in "Brain Loss, Brain Gain," in our 10 July 2019 issue.

RESEARCHERS ACHIEVE ROOM-TEMPERATURE SUPERCONDUCTIVITY—MAYBE

Like perpetual motion, superconductivity—transmitting electricity without losing any to resistance or “friction” in the wires that carry it—is one of science’s alluring, impossible goals: it would save billions of dollars worth of power as well as vast amounts of fuel burned to no purpose at generating plants.

Discovered in 1911, the phenomenon of superconductivity was only possible at temperatures a few degrees above absolute zero.

Since then, researchers have gradually nudged the temperature higher; in 2018, a group including scientists at Germany’s Max Planck Institute created a material combining hydrogen and the heavy metal lanthanum that superconducted at about -9°F—but it only worked at pressures equivalent to 22 million pounds per square inch.

The result pushed superconductivity hunters to focus on hydrides—compounds of hydrogen and metals.

Now physicists at the University of Rochester have combined carbon, hydrogen, and sulfur to create a material that, they say, superconducts at around 56°F—essentially room temperature, even if a chilly room.

The research group also claims that theoretical calculations indicate their material could, under certain reasonable conditions, superconduct at ambient pressures.

Several scientists experienced in the quest for superconductivity have dismissed the Rochester group’s results.

Still, the team has filed patents and created a company to commercialize their technology—if it can be shown to work.

TRENDPOST: *The amount of electricity lost as it travels through cables and wires can be as much as 2 percent per mile. Even the electricity wasted as heat in the world's computers is substantial.*

*The allure of being able to end that waste, as well as to claim bragging rights to one of science's greatest achievements, will continue to draw creative researchers ("New 'Twistronics' Graphene is Superconductor," **Trends Journal**, 1 December 2020) until someone finds a way to achieve it at reasonable temperatures and pressures.*

Progress has been rapid over the past 10 years; waste-free electricity at room temperatures and pressures could be reached this decade.