TRENDSJOURNAL.com | FORECASTING SINCE 1980 | 5 OCTOBER 2021

TRENDS JOURNAL

Put your money where your mind is.®

VAX MANDATES

VAX PASSPORTS

CENSORSHIP

LOCKDOWNS

MASKS

TYRANNY

LIES

FEAR

LIFE WAS HARD
THEY MADE IT EVEN HARDER!

TRENDS JOURNAL
HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS®

5 October 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

THEY MADE LIFE EVEN HARDER

Welcome to this week's **Trends Journal**: LIFE WAS HARD. THEY MADE IT EVEN HARDER!

We have all lived through the ups and downs of life. And when they are added up, the really "high" times are greatly outweighed by the daily strife of going to work, dealing with family matters, health concerns, financial issues, etc.

And as if life was hard before, now, thanks to government tyranny and dictatorial mandates, "THEY HAVE MADE IT EVEN HARDER!"

As we had forecast, and is now reality, their launching of the COVID War some 19 months ago has destroyed the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people of all ages.

Murder rates are skyrocketing, poverty rates are climbing, middle class is shrinking, children are being raised in fear, young people who want to feel free are chastised for partying–the list goes on–and now, NO VAX, NO JOB, NO FREEDOM.

We are at a socioeconomic and geopolitical precipice, the likes of which we have never witnessed.

Once again, this **Trends Journal** provides trends analysis, forecasts and strategic opportunities, like no other magazine on the planet. We are doing all we can to help you avoid the dangers ahead and seize the current and future trend opportunities.

Wishing you all the best,

Gerald Celente and the Trends Journal Team

COMMENTS

FED A CREATURE OF CONGRESS
I still don't see why the US Congress isn't ultimately at fault.

The Federal Reserve is a creature of Congress, is it not? Congress therefore can eliminate the Fed.

Congress is the ones spending the money, no? They write the checks and the President signs them.

According to former employees of the San Francisco Fed, the reality is that the Fed Chairman takes his direction from the US Treasury. The Treasury takes their orders from the White House.

With the possible exception of Paul Volcker, the last independent Fed Chairman was William McChesney Martin. Martin had no problem giving Congress the bird, and Volcker had support already to tame inflation any way he saw fit.

Powell is everyone's favorite punching bag for some reason. Maybe they're afraid of offending AOC?

Eagle11

THE WAGES OF OPEN BORDERS
Immigrants entering the USA will be competing with the local population. Employers will offer less in wages and

immigrants will accept the low wages. This will promote conflict between locals and immigrants. Of course this is intentional. In the Fraudulent "state" of Hawaii, this happens all the time.

Larry Inn

VAERS SYSTEM = LOUSY SCIENCE
VAERS [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System] only reports between 1 and 10 percent. In actual fact, it is probably closer to 1% because most doctors cannot even make the reports and a significant number are not even aware of the reporting system.

The whole thing is a sham. Last, but not least; the way they count adverse events associated with the jabs are completely misleading or downright false. Unless the death or adverse reaction occurred within minutes of the injection…they aren't typically considered jab related.

Kellie Auld

NO VAX, NO FREEDOM
This is nuts. You have to believe these fucks in charge give a shit about the hth and well being of the world's population. FDA is just another corrupt entity along with WHO,CDC,BigPharma. I will continue to post online about the false narrative and the people around me. This must stop.

Joey F.

RE-THINKING OCEANIA
This article makes a lot of sense, but the key phrase, I believe, is the President Teddy Roosevelt style zest. TR had some heavy weight corrupt individuals to deal with, but he had the weight of the American people behind him. Through subversive activities promulgated by the UN this country has been attacked time and time again, since it's inception, so that now corruption spews from almost, if not all, of our institutions of government and the NGOs, the nonprofits may be the worst. I guess I'm saying that it will be very difficult to get the same weight of the people behind policy makers to clean this mess up. The corruption needs to be dealt with as well as the subversion and the long entrenched powers that be will fight like hell to keep their status quo.

a1achiropractic

ERIC KNOWS HOW TO ROLL
I'm a musician who is currently suffering the backlash of the scamdemick. Getting harder and harder to make a living as such. The planet is becoming one large police state! I fully back Eric [Clapton] for his courage to stand up to the bought and sold lying scums in the MSM.

Rolling Stone is absolute garbage. I wouldn't bother to wipe with it! On other news, I give props to Megadeth founder Dave Mustaine for having the balls to stand up for freedom against mandate tyranny at one of his latest concerts. You go brother! Stand up for your rights friends! We need to take the power back!

Orion Paul

TRENDS ON THE U.S. ECONOMIC FRONT

U.S. MARKET OVERVIEW

Stock prices slid on Tuesday, 28 September, bumped through Wednesday, and fell again on Thursday, September's last day, while the best bond yields in months also lured investors away from tech stocks.

Alphabet, Facebook, Google, and Microsoft, all of which have outperformed the broader market this year, each dropped at least 3.5 percent during the selloff, which shrank share prices in every S&P sector except energy.

Bond yields climbed on news that the U.S. Federal Reserve expects to wind down its stimulus programs and raise interest rates next year.

The return on the 10-year treasury note moved from 1.482 percent to 1.534 on 28 September, its highest since late June.

Higher bond yields burnished the dollar's value, which gained 0.4 percent to mark a five-week high against a range of other currencies, according to the Dow Jones Dollar Index.

Until the September slide, the worst since March 2020, the S&P was up some 21 percent. Now as we continue to note, market strength will be tested as the Fed turns down the supply of cheap money. Again, with inflation rising and the Fed finally admitting to it, the Banksters will start raising rates... and The Street knows it.

Indeed, current inflation rates have not been seen this high in decades which is hampering economic growth amid shortages of materials, workers, and reliable supply chains.

Market Stumble

U.S. equities stumbled on the third quarter's last day, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average shedding more than 500 points on reports of losses by a range of major companies from Caterpillar to Home Depot.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index lost almost 52 points, or 1.2 percent; NASDAQ held its loss to 0.4 percent.

A variety of new data from the labor market, consumer confidence surveys, and other sources shows an economy still trying to find its footing.

Analysts are paring down their estimates for fourth-quarter and annual GDP growth as inflation, supply line jumbles, and the Delta virus persist.

Citigroup's Economic Surprise Index, which measures by how much the economy over- or underperforms estimates, has sunk to its lowest level since June 2020, *The Wall Street Journal* noted.

Still, the S&P index has grown by 15 percent this year and remains close to its record close after managing a sixth consecutive quarter of gains.

Yet the index was off 4.8 percent last month, with 10 of its 11 sectors showing losses, and the Dow posting its worst month since March 2020.

This year, companies have usually managed to show strong profits despite rising costs and labor shortages; earnings for S&P 500 corporations have beaten analysts' predictions by double digits every quarter since 2020's second quarter, according to Morgan Stanley.

However, from June through September, 224 of the S&P 500 expressed concerns about inflation during earnings calls, FactSet noted, the highest number since the data service began tracking the number in 2010.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have been forecasting, with inflation, materials shortages, unreliable supply chains, and scarce labor, the business sector will not sustain their past growth momentum. Thus, lower corporate earnings will drag markets lower.*

TREND FORECAST: *Now that the Fed has signaled its intent to stop spiking the financial fruit punch, investors will proceed more cautiously. The weeks of setting record high after record high are over; with the Fed getting ready to let the markets down gently, investors' outlooks now must factor in the combination of surging inflation, interrupted supply lines, commodities shortages, and unfilled jobs.*

Investors hoping to profit will need to be much more selective now and in the months ahead than they have been since summer 2020.

TREND FORECAST: *The markets' wobbles are bearing out a forecast we have made repeatedly, for example in "Market Madness" (12 Jan 2021) U.S. Market Overview: stock-buyers have been stoned on cheap money doled out by central banks' artificially cheap monetary methadone.*

We repeat our forecast made so often in the past: we are approaching a dramatic market selloff that will slam stocks, the housing market, and jobs, and spread the Greatest Depression ® far and wide.

Then and Now

Yesterday, the Dow dropped more than 300 points, the Nasdaq Composite slumped 2.1% for its sixth negative day in seven, and the S&P 500 fell 1.3 percent.

Today—despite the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta reporting that "The GDPNow model estimate for real GDP growth in the third quarter of 2021 is 2.3 percent on October 1," a steep drop from 2 August when the forecast was for 6.3 percent growth—the Dow rose 311 points, the Nasdaq was up 1.25 percent and the S&P climbed 1.05 percent

So what's moving the markets and why? Gregory Mannarino provides some unique insights in his article, "Understanding Risk in The Stock Market."

Racket Squad

Overall, as we see it, the equity markets are a racket that have no relation to economic fundamentals.

The facts are indisputable.

Since March of 2020, when equities were plunging, the Bankster mob began to flood the markets with massive amounts of monetary methadone to keep the money junkies on their high. They lowered interest rates to near zero and began their $120 billion a month bond buying scheme that effectively poured money back into the markets.

Then there was the trillions of dollars of government stimulus that has artificially stimulated the economy and equities... and now that too is drying up.

And so overvalued are the artificially pumped up equities, they are trading at dot.com bust multiples. And speaking of the dot.com bust, nonfinancial companies have issued the most amount of speculative-grade loans to pay dividends in 2021, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence's LCD that is well above the 2000 market bust levels.

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our forecast that when the Fed raises rates and cuts back on its bond buying scheme, equities, the economy and the real estate markets will dive. Thus, the higher rates rise and the less bonds they buy, the deeper they all fall. And as inflation keeps rising, so too will interest rates.*

On the housing front, for example, home affordability has hit its lowest point in years. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, the median U.S. household needs 32.1 percent of its income to pay for a home mortgage.

Ringing back the dot.com bubble bust years, that is the highest level since 2008 when the mortgage outlay rate hit 34.2 percent.

We note this to continue to illustrate the "Bubble Reality" that is ready to pop.

Also, when interest rates go up, even less people will be able to afford to buy a home, thus further pushing up the home rental market.

Over There

Last week, in Europe , the continental Stoxx Europe 600 slid 2.2 percent, marking its third losing session.

Ignoring why and how Wall Street slumped yesterday, today, the pan-European Stoxx 600 closed up 1.2 percent, with the Bankster sector spiking 3.4 percent while tech stocks jumped 2.1 percent.

Over in Japan, the Nikkei 225 fell 3.5 percent during trading hours today and closed down 2 percent, dragging the index into correction territory... down more than 10 percent from its September high.

Concerns of rising inflation, disappointment with its new government, concerns over China Evergrande Group's debt woes and worries of overall global economic growth have alarmed the market players.

GOLD/SILVER: The up and down bounce continues, with both precious metals still trading in the week's long lower range. Pushed down as the value of the dollar went up, today gold was down $7, closing at $1,760 per ounce and silver was flat closing at $22.62 per ounce. Thus, the higher the dollar index rises, the more expensive it is to buy dollar priced commodities such as gold and silver.

However, we maintain our forecast that when the Fed raises interest rates, despite the dollar getting strong, inflation will still persist, which will in turn drive up gold and silver prices.

Moreover, when the flow of cheap money dries up, equities will dive and the economy will sink into deep recession. Thus, there will be strong demand for safe-haven gold and silver assets which will spike prices back to the yearly highs... and higher.

OIL: Been to the gas pump lately? Inflation worries? Prices are rapidly rising. Following the oil cartel's agreement not to increase oil production, Brent Crude has hit a three year high and West Texas Intermediate rose to a seven year high. Today both were up, closing at $82.61 per barrel and $78.99 per barrel respectively.

TREND FORECAST: *Go back to the Panic of '08. As the economic collapse accelerated back then, oil prices spiked.*

Once again history is repeating itself. We have long warned, when oil prices rise solidly above $80 per barrel, inflation will accelerate, the Fed will raise rates, markets will sink lower and consumer spending will decelerate.

BITCOIN: As we have been reporting, China banned all activity in cryptocurrencies and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission continued

to explore a possible regulatory framework for them. Last week it was reported that the U.S. Treasury was drafting a report on stablecoins amid rising concerns that they could disrupt traditional money systems.

Bitcoin's price fell below $43,000 after China imposed its ban but now has rallied back, at $51,443 as we go to press, even in the face of governments' toughened stances.

Sales of Bitcoin and other non-fungible tokens peaked on 29 August at $267 million, then fell through September, totaling just $18 million on the 29th of the month.

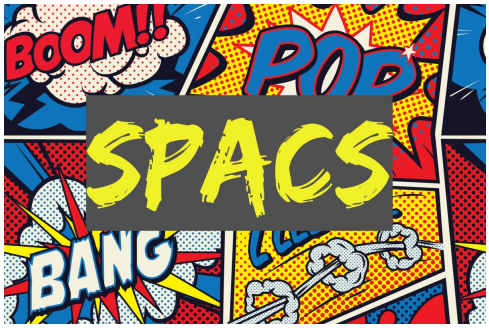
TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our forecast for Bitcoin to dive deeply if it goes below $25,500 per coin and rise sharply if it breaks strongly above $50K per coin and steadily maintains the above mid-$50K range.*

It is now moving toward that 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.

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

SPAC CRASH



Investors are fleeing special-purpose acquisition companies (SPACs) in record numbers, pulling as much as 90 percent of the cash from SPACs'

trust accounts, in some cases, data service Dealogic reported.

SPACs, the hottest investment vehicle on Wall Street last winter, raised as much as $250 billion, by some estimates, before too many bad deals left a sour taste.

A SPAC or "blank-check company" is a special category of company that goes public, typically at $10 a share, even though it has no assets. When it has stockpiled enough capital in a trust account, the SPAC buys and merges with a promising company that is not ready to go public.

After the merger, the SPAC disappears, and its shareholders then own shares in the company the SPAC bought.

Because SPACs' takeover targets are private companies that have not filed papers to make a stock offering, they can make unsupported, blue-sky financial projections about their future, which companies planning to go public are banned from doing.

As we have reported in "Gamblers Dump SPACs" (25 May 2021), several companies that came public through SPACs have failed to live up to their promise.

Share prices for Joby Aviation, a flying-taxi venture; electric-vehicle battery company Microvast; and 23andMe, the genetic testing business, were down 30 percent or more in May after going public in January.

Just two of 23 SPACs that announced deals in May were trading above their initial offering price in June, according to SPAC Research.

Now SPACs' tailspin is accelerating.

In this year's first quarter, 10 percent of SPAC backers redeemed cash, followed by 21.9 percent in the second quarter.

In this year's third quarter, the average SPAC lost 52.4 percent of its cash, Dealogic said.

This year's first quarter "will go down as the 2000 Internet bubble for SPACs," an unnamed Wall Street investment banker told the *Financial Times*.

"There was a unique confluence of factors that drove that insane, risk-seeking behavior, particularly at a retail investor level," the banker said.

Those factors included record savings rates among people bunkered against the COVID virus, giving them cash sitting in bank accounts at near-zero interest rates; and enthusiasm drummed up by social media.

SPAC promoters also claimed that young companies had a better chance of making a successful public offering through a SPAC than by navigating the conventional route through the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Experience proved that to be a spurious claim in too many cases.

From the date of its launch, a SPAC must complete an acquisition within two years or return investors' money.

The pace of SPAC deals slowed over the spring and summer after the most promising companies had made deals and those that remained were riskier prospects.

TREND FORECAST: *Because SPACs are losing their capital at a breathtaking rate, SPACs face two alternatives, both dismal: they can make bargain-basement deals with sketchy companies desperate enough to take them or the SPACs can return all their investors' money and disappear.*

We predicted SPACs' demise in "SPACs: Here Today, Gone Tomorrow?" (8 Jun 2021) and again in "SPACs: Danger Ahead" (29 Jun 2021) and said that they would be hit among the hardest when markets corrected.

They also are being hit among the earliest.

It will be years, perhaps decades, before SPACs come back into favor as anything other than a rare tool used under special circumstances.

WORLD'S BOND MARKET SUFFERS WORST MONTH SINCE MARCH

Investors jumped out of bonds last week after the Bank of England and U.S. Federal Reserve signaled a willingness to hike short-term borrowing costs to combat inflation, the *Financial Times* reported.

Bond prices fell at the fastest rate in seven months.

Also, soaring energy costs across Europe and the U.K. are leading investors to believe that inflation will persist longer than expected, the *FT* said.

"Central banks have been trying to convince us that inflation is transitory," bond fund manager Dickie Hodges at Nomura Asset Management told the *FT*. "Given the circumstances, I think they've been in denial.

"If you can show me one thing that's cheaper today than it was before" the COVID virus arrived, "I'd be surprised," Hodges said, "so I think a reassessment has been overdue."

Europe's bond selloff was sparked by growing concerns that inflation will last longer than predicted, which would shrink the value of bonds' fixed-rate returns.

A poll of consumers' inflation expectations for the rest of this decade has risen to 3.85 in the U.K. and 1.81 in Europe, the highest in 12 and six years, respectively.

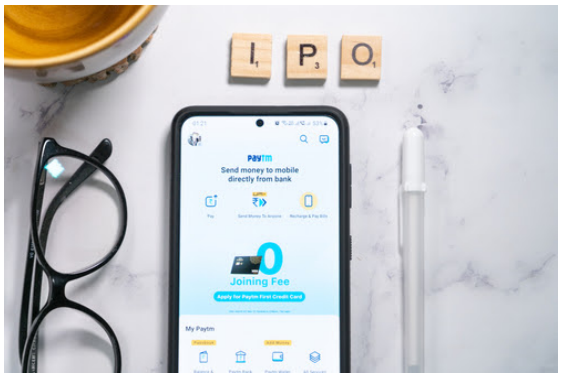
The U.S. Federal Reserve also has raised its inflation expectation, pegging 2021's overall rate at 3.7 percent at the Fed's meeting last month; in June, it had forecast 3 percent.

The Fed also boosted the 2022 inflation forecast from 2.1 percent to 2.3.

TREND FORECAST: *For more than a year, we have been forecasting that when the Fed tightens up its cheap money policies, markets will dive. Bonds' and stocks' reaction to the inevitable news that central banks will raise rates at some unspecified time—which may be sooner rather than later—confirms our forecast.*

Thus, when U.S. interest rates reach near 1.5 percent, the equity and commercial real estate markets will snap into a severe downturn. And even before reaching that interest rate level the markets and economies will continually decline.

IPOs MOVE TO DIGITAL PLATFORM



After decades of transactions handled through phone calls and handwritten notes, initial public stock offerings (IPOs) are going digital.

Capital Markets Gateway (CGM), as the new online platform is called, will list which new deals are pricing when, the terms, and will allow firms to place orders through their existing relationships with their bankers.

Once IPOs are priced, fund managers can log on to see if they have been allotted any shares instead of waiting until the next morning to learn the news over the phone.

CGM also monitors IPO and follow-on stock sales, block trades, commissions owed, lists of underwriters for each new issue, and offers data and analytics on activities.

CGM's creation was backed by several banks and investment funds, including Fidelity Investments, Franklin Templeton, Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan Chase, and Morgan Stanley, among others.

Although the old system is outmoded, whether bankers and traders will adopt the new platform remains to be seen, *The Wall Street Journal* noted.

This year has seen more than $110 billion in IPOs, more than $100 billion in SPAC deals, and $480 billion in stock trades, straining the old system to its human and technical limits. (See "IPOs Poised for Record Year," 22 June 2021.)

An average of 20 IPOs a week have been priced this year, but the number has sometimes reached 40.

"It used to be that fund managers looked at IPOs and follow-ons," CMG Michael Wilcox said to the *WSJ*.

"Now they're looking at IPOs, follow-ons, private investment in public equity, SPACs, and crossover investments.

"The only way to truly be able to focus on investment decisions is to utilize technology," he said.

TREND FORECAST: *From smartphones to virtual reality, from digital sports to digital music, the digital world platform is the New Abnormal. Thus, digital will continue to expand, thus pushing out the antiquated world of phone calls and handwritten notes.*

SPOTLIGHT: THE "BIGS" KEEP GETTING BIGGER

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

BUYOUT LENDING SOARING

Facing a possible hike in capital gains tax rates proposed by President Joe Biden, companies are scurrying to conclude mergers and acquisitions ahead of it—and lenders are accommodating them with billions in cheap loans, enabled by the U.S. Federal Reserve keeping its base interest rate barely above zero.

This year through September, lenders made $119.8 billion in leveraged loans, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence, close to the record $124 billion doled out in the first three quarters of 2007.

When software firm Cornerstone OnDemand went on the market this summer, Clearlake Capital Group rushed a $2.2-billion loan from JP Morgan Chase and put in a successful bid before a planned auction could happen, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

Three private equity firms are now shopping $7 billion in loans from Goldman Sachs among potential investors willing to help the trio buy Medline Industries.

"I've signed eight deals since June and in a typical summer I average one per month," partner Elizabeth Cooper at law firm Simpson Thacher & Bartlett said to the *WSJ*.

The frenzy has pushed selling prices higher.

In 2007's record year, the average deal carried $2 billion in debt and equity; this year, the average is $2.5 billion, a 25-percent increase.

With prices climbing and debt loads returning to near-record levels, some economists worry that when the economy slows and interest rates rise, debtor companies will be unable to make their payments.

However, 2022's default rate will be only about 1 percent, S&P Global Ratings has predicted, compared to the historical average of 2.68 percent.

TREND FORECAST: *That low forecast does not speak to what might happen when interest rates spike nor the default rate in 2023 and beyond. Whatever the risk will be, it will be shared more widely than in the past and we forecast, at higher failure rates.*

In 2007, investment banks made and held loans for leveraged buyouts.

After the Great Recession, new regulations made it prohibitively expensive for the banks to hold the loans on their balance sheets for an extended time.

Now investment banks still arrange and close deals, but quickly sell them to pension funds, insurance companies, and private equity firms.

Increasingly, the deals also are sold to investment vehicles called "collateralized loan obligations," relatives of the mortgage-backed securities that fell apart in 2007 and ignited the Great Recession.

In 2013, the U.S. Federal Reserve cautioned banks to avoid deals in which debt would exceed six times a company's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITA). Deals that year hovered around 5.41 times EBITA, according to S&P.

This year, the Fed has offered no guidance and the ratio has edged up to 5.67 times EBITA.

At last month's Fed meeting, staff economists rated deal valuations as "elevated" and ranked vulnerabilities in the U.S. financial system as "notable," an unusually strong signal of concern, the *WSJ* said.

TREND FORECAST: *Once again, history is repeating itself. In 2007, Gerald Celente, seeing the destructive economic future ahead, took out the domain name, Panicof07.com*

The signals were all there. Among them, $124 billion of leveraged loans were doled out in the first three quarters of 2007.

In our 27 April 2021 ***Trends Journal*** *article "Leveraged Mega-Buyouts Back in Fashion," we not only highlighted the rising buyout frenzy but also issued this warning: as interest rates rise, market for debt-fueled takeovers will cool and the higher rates move, the more difficult it will become for a growing number of borrowers to meet their payments.*

The default rate will rise with interest rates.

CONOCOPHILLIPS BECOMES SECOND-LARGEST U.S. OIL PRODUCER

ConocoPhillips has paid $9.5 billion to buy Royal Dutch Shell's 225,000 oil and gas producing acres in the West Texas portion of the Permian Basin.

When the deal closes in this year's final quarter, the purchase will make Conoco the second-largest oil and gas producer in the contiguous 48 states, *The Wall Street Journal* reported, lifting it ahead of Chevron, EOG Resources, EQT Corp., and Occidental Petroleum.

In January, amid an oilfield cash crunch and wave of consolidations during the COVID War, Conoco traded $9.7 billion in stock to buy Concho Resources, a large Permian independent producer pumping 319,000 barrels a day of Permian oil. (See "Industry Giants Merging Amid Industry Turmoil," 27 Oct 2020.)

The Concho deal boosted Conoco's Permian production to about 1.5 million barrels daily.

Adding Shell's 200,000-barrel daily Permian output brings Conoco closer to catching ExxonMobil's million-barrel daily production in the lower 48 states.

TRENDPOST: *Most of the oil majors are still driven by the growth mindset, sailing against the growing headwind of public opinion and private investment that is balking at the idea of an energy future dominated by fossil fuels.*

Shell unloaded its Permian holdings to have more cash to invest in clean energy, a strategy we documented in "How and When Electric Vehicles Will Go Mainstream" (21 Sep 2021).

In contrast, Conoco is playing the same risky game we noted in "Oil Majors Withhold Investment in New Production" (3 Aug 2021): they need to expand their reserves to please Wall Street and their shareholders, a strategy that could lead to billions of dollars in "stranded assets" if and when electric vehicles and renewable energy for buildings reaches a critical market mass.

We reported on this prospect in "Fossil Fuels: $6T in Worthless Assets?" all the way back on 9 June, 2015.

By amassing more and more reserves, Conoco is betting against the trend.

NETFLIX BUYS ROALD DAHL'S LIFE WORK

Streaming service Netflix has bought the Roald Dahl Co., the firm that controls rights to the British author's copyrights governing "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," "The Fantastic Mr. Fox," and other renowned stories that have shown appeal to children as well as adults.

More than 300 million of Dahl's books have been sold worldwide.

Netflix plans to use Dahl's stories and characters as source material for animated films, theatrical productions, and consumer products, the company said.

Terms of the sale were not made public.

Netflix is adding Dahl's content as part of a wave of conglomeration within the entertainment industry.

In May 2021, Amazon bought MGM Studios for $8.45 billion, calling it a "treasure trove" of old and classic films that would attract viewers to Amazon's Prime Video subscription service.

In 2019, the Walt Disney Co. paid $4.05 billion for LucasFilms, the company that created the Star Wars franchise.

TREND FORECAST: *We continue to note, as the Bigs grow bigger without limits, there is little need for advancement and innovation since there is no competition in the fight for market share.*

And indeed, the so called "entertainment industry" clearly exemplifies the boring stagnation and cultural void of a soulless and passionless Big industry.

Thus, across the spectrum there will be OnTrendpreneur® opportunities to fill market gaps in business sectors the "Bigs" won't see, feel or touch as they can only be interested in the bottom line.

MAJOR TALENT AGENCIES MERGE

Creative Artists Agency (CCA) has signed an agreement to buy ICM Partners, formerly International Creative Management, for an undisclosed amount.

ICM represents clients in all fields of entertainment as well as podcasting and politics and its' book division will feed content to CAA's movie and television businesses, the agencies said in a joint statement announcing the deal.

"The strategic combination of CAA and ICM bolsters our collective resources, expertise, and relationships to deliver even more opportunities for our world-class clients to build their careers and their brands across multiple disciplines and platforms in an evolving marketplace," CAA's co-chairs Kevin Huvane, Richard Lovett, and Bryan Lourd said in a joint statement.

"Our strong financial position enables us to continue to expand and diversify our businesses," they noted.

The deal leaves talent representation dominated by the "Big Three" of CCA, the United Talent Agency, and WME, which resulted from the 2009 merger of Endeavor with the William Morris Agency, Pollstar reported.

TREND FORECAST: *Again, as we continue to note, with the Bigs in control, the bottom line—not creativity, soul, passion, style, grace and culture—is their*

primary focus. Thus, with the Bigs in control of both the talent pool and industry, the future of entertainment will be more of the same and worse.

However, as we note, there are OnTrendpreneur® opportunities to fill the market gaps with a Renaissance style that will lift the spirits of a downtrodden society.

NEW AMAZON CAMPUS IGNITES GROUNDSWELL OF OPPOSITION

Amazon's plan to establish a 20-acre campus near popular Table Mountain in Cape Town, South Africa, has fired opposition by local groups.

The planned development includes housing, running and cycling tracks, 20 acres of public parkland, and office space, in which Amazon will be the chief tenant.

The new campus is projected to create 6,000 permanent jobs and another 14,000 during construction, the developer has said in public statements.

The country's severe COVID-era lockdown pushed unemployment to 44 percent and shrank the economy 6.4 percent, *The Wall Street Journal* noted.

Amazon already has offices in Cape Town but plans to use the new, expanded space as a regional headquarters to grow its presence on a continent where technology and logistics services are lagging but smartphone use is growing.

The new development is opposed by ethnic, historic, and civic groups that complain about irregularities in zoning for the project, environmental concerns, and the site's historic value to indigenous peoples.

Negotiations among the parties produced 276 separate versions of the site plan, the developer said.

Images published in September of Amazon's giant new depot built in a Tijuana, Mexico slum, sharpened resentments about Amazon's wealth and the issue of growing inequality, the *WSJ* reported.

TREND FORECAST: *There will be citizens' groups opposing Amazon's continuing takeover of global retailing—building distribution centers closer and closer to every home, indenturing larger shares of the workforce, and putting small business retailers out of business.*

Despite local opposition, politicians who get paid off with bribes (imbeciles call it "campaign contributions") will permit Amazon expansions.

In Africa, which has sunk into a deep economic abyss, the promise of jobs and shiny new real estate developments will lead politicians to approve the project; the promise of regular wages and indoor work will appeal to many Africans who now struggle to survive and who long to have money to buy the same gadgets as Westerners own.

U.S. BANKS MERGING AT A STAGGERING PACE

U.S. banks have announced or completed $54 billion in mergers and takeovers during the first nine months of this year, according to data firm Dealogic, compared to just $17 billion for the same period in 2020.
The deals are fewer than in 2019, but more regional banks are up for sale, so the collective value of the deals is greater.

The pace puts the industry on track to notch the most combinations since 2008, when many banks sold themselves to avoid collapse during the Great Recession.

Today's economy isn't at a point of collapse, but interest rates are low, bank profits are meager, and many banks are putting themselves on the market rather than face a cloudy future, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

The average net interest margin, a gauge of banks' profitability, sank to a record-low 2.5 percent in this year's second quarter, the *WSJ* reported, adding to smaller and regional banks' difficulties in creating the online powerhouses that bigger banks have set up.

"Neither potential sellers nor buyers wanted to do a transaction last year because of the uncertainty"—in the form of bad loans—"that could be on folks' balance sheets," Kevin Riley, CEO of Montana's First Interstate BancSystem told the *WSJ*.

However, the expected wave of COVID-era defaults failed to materialize and the merger market has come back to life.

"Banks are no longer fearful of the bottom falling out," analyst Nathan Stovall at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said to the *WSJ*. "They are no longer looking at a deal like trying to catch a falling knife."

In September, Riley's First Interstate BancSystem agreed to take over Great Western Bancorp, an acquisition that will swell First Interstate's assets to $32 billion. In the same month, U.S. Bancorp announced plans to buy MUFG's retail banking business, expanding U.S. Bancorp's West Coast footprint.

Citizens Financial Group is in the process of buying Investors Bancorp, which abandoned merger discussions with another institution last year when COVID came along.

Tacoma's Columbia Banking System is buying Bank of Commerce Holdings in Sacramento; in Denver, First Western Financial has agreed to acquire the parent company of Rocky Mountain Bank.

"For a $300 or $500 or $700-million bank, it used to be that you could have a nice little business that could go on for a long time," Scott Wylie, CEO of First Western Financial, said in a *WSJ* interview.

"These days," he added, "that's really hard."

TREND FORECAST: *Once-upon-a-time, the Big Banksters that destroyed the lives of millions with their criminal activities leading up to the Panic of '08 were going bust. But, being that they are of a higher level than We the People of Slavelandia, it was declared by Presidents G.W. Bush and Barack Obama that they were "Too Big to Fail."*

Thus, between December 2007 to July 2010, the Federal Reserve Gang pumped in $29 trillion secretly into the banking system to bail them out.

As detailed, it was the deregulation of the financial industry that allowed speculation on derivatives backed by cheap, junk-issued mortgage back securities, available to even those with rotten creditworthiness, that was the primary cause of the 2008 financial crash.

So, once again, when the next market crash happens, the economy dives and the commercial real estate market tanks, in America, where the one percent controls the nation, the Bigs will again get bailed out.

WALMART WILL HIRE ANOTHER 150,000 WORKERS

Walmart, the U.S.'s biggest employer with 1.6 million Americans on its payroll, hopes to add 150,000 workers in advance of the holiday shopping season, the company announced.

However, most of the new jobs will be long-term, not seasonal, Julie Murphy, chief people officer for Walmart U.S., said in comments quoted by *The Wall Street Journal*.

Walmart also aims to hire 20,000 additional warehouse workers, Murphy said.

To entice more workers into the company during today's tight labor market, Walmart raised its base pay from $11 an hour to $12 late last month. The company's average wage is $16.40, the retailer claimed.

Walmart hired 500,000 additional people in 2020 to cope with the COVID-era surge in online shopping, according to the *WSJ*.

Walmart faces competition for workers from Target, which wants another 100,000 employees.

Amazon said last month that it plans to take on another 125,000 "associates" and matched Target's promise to pay the cost of college tuition and books for some employees.

TREND FORECAST: *As we indicated in "Hiring, Wages Rise in June" (13 Jul 2021), an average hourly wage of $16.40 or raising pay from $11 to $12 an hour is not an income that will allow people to survive.*

Many workers remain off the job not because they are lazy or getting fat on $300 a week in federal unemployment checks. A growing number of people are simply refusing to return to Slavelandia.

To attract and keep workers, more companies will have to offer the kinds of incentives that Amazon and Walmart have, such as help with college tuition to help people lift themselves into skilled or semi-skilled jobs. But overall, these "rewards" will prove minimal.

TREND FORECAST: *We continue to note that as the Bigs grow bigger without limits, there is little need for advancement and innovation since there is no competition in the fight for market share. Overall, with a few selling the most, there are less consumer choices for wide varieties of products and services that would be available if there were more businesses in the sectors.*

Therefore, from sounds and style, to health and wellbeing, from hi-tech to heavy industry... across the spectrum there will be OnTrendpreneur® opportunities to fill market gaps in virtually every business sector of society that the "Bigs" won't see, or will be too small for them to invest in.

SPOTLIGHT: INFLATION SPREADS

FED'S KEY INFLATION GAUGE HITS 30-YEAR HIGH

The Core Personal Consumption Expenditures Index, the U.S. Federal Reserve's preferred measure of inflation, rose to 3.6 percent in August from a year earlier, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reported, the number's biggest jump since May 1991.

The index excludes the costs of energy and food.

The increase edged past Dow Jones' 3.5-percent forecast and rose 0.3 percent from July.

The more-publicized Consumer Price Index climbed to 4.3 percent year on year, a rate unmatched since January 1991.

The 12-month spike reflected a 2.8-percent increase in food prices and a 24.9-percent leap in energy costs.

The numbers reflect the price of used cars rising once again, oil and natural gas costing more, and supply chain chaos continuing, leaving many staples in short supply, *The New York Times* noted.

Inflation's climb is likely to last longer than policymakers had expected (see related story), stoking fears in Washington and on Wall Street that more workers could press demands for higher pay, setting off an inflationary spiral that would be hard to rein in.

Most price increases have been caused by supply chain disruptions, officials say, meaning that upward price pressures will ease as logistics snarls untangle.

However, shipping companies expect the backlog of container ships stuck waiting for port space will continue into next year, as we reported in "Shipper Books Tenfold Increase in Net Profits" (17 Aug 2021).

In addition, rents are climbing relentlessly, the semiconductor shortage shows no signs of abating, and Chinese factories are cutting production in the face of persistent electricity outages (see related story).

Those inflationary factors are unrelated to problems in the transport industry.

While consumer prices increased, so did consumers' positive outlook: the University of Michigan's index of consumer sentiment edged up to 72.8 in September, compared to 70.8 the month before.

Real income in August increased just 0.2 percent, signaling that consumers' cost of living is rising way faster than their earnings.

Partly as a result, the personal savings rate slipped from 10.1 percent in July to 9.4 percent in August.

Savings peaked in April 2020 at 33.8 percent of income, just after the economy shut down.

Manufacturers also produced more again last month.

September's ISM Manufacturing Index registered 61.1, the percentage of companies expanding production. Ratings above 50 represent growth; the larger the number, the more robust the activity.

Manufacturers' costs are still rising, the survey found, with 81.2 percent of those responding reporting increases, compared to 79.4 percent in August.

"Supply chain concerns are growing beyond electronics and chips into most other commodities," an electronics industry executive said to the *NYT*.

"Lead times are extending, shipping lanes are slowing, and we will not see an end to this in 2021," the executive predicted.

Consumer spending rose 0.8 percent in August against a downwardly revised -0.1 percent in July, highlighting "only a scant gain" in individual spending during the third quarter, compared to more than a 10-percent gain during the first six months of this year.

Economists polled by Bloomberg predicted overall consumer spending would progress by 2.2 percent last month.

Spending on services rose 0.3 percent in August after slipping 0.7 percent in July; spending on goods rose 0.6 percent after stumbling by 2.6 percent last month.

The Fed foresees the Core Personal Consumption Expenditures Index averaging 4.2 percent during this year's final quarter, no longer the 3.4 percent it had predicted in June, and settling at 2.2 percent at the end of 2022.

TREND FORECAST: *The greater the supply chain jams which are not expected to ease, the higher inflation will rise. Also pushing up supply chain worries are the lack of truckers and concerns that overworked laborers at snarled ports may start to rebel, thus causing the jams to last longer.*

And as we noted, today, the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta reported that "The GDPNow model estimate for real GDP growth in the third quarter of 2021 is 2.3 percent on October 1," which is a steep drop from 2 August when the forecast was for 6.3 percent growth. Thus, considering the overall stressful economic conditions, the "Biden Bounce" that we had forecast back in January would happen—but be temporary—is coming to an end. (See, "THE BIDEN BOUNCE, THE WORST IS YET TO COME")

ANALYSTS WRONG. NOT STAGFLATION, IT WILL BE DRAGFLATION

Rampant inflation and a shortage of goods are colliding with signs the world's economy is slowing.

The result, according to mainstream media economists, could be stagflation, when prices continue to rise as wages and overall economic growth stagnate.

Stagflation last reared in the early and mid-1970s, when interest rates shot up to double digits and U.S. unemployment topped 8 percent.

Now the ingredients for stagflation are coming together again.

- The world's economy is losing momentum, with Chinese factories facing blackouts and tangled supply lines leaving consumers and manufacturers short of essential items.
- Oil prices shot past $80 a barrel on 30 September as shortages loomed across Europe and other parts of the world.
- Central banks in Europe and the U.S. are preparing to join those of Brazil, Pakistan, Russia, and other nations in raising interest rates at a time when economies are losing steam.

The U.S. Federal Reserve's announced plan to begin winding down its economic support programs prompted a sharp bond selloff, which spilled over into equity markets during September's last days.

The signs are particularly grim in the U.K., with gasoline prices spiking and a shortage of drivers to deliver it to gas stations. The government has mobilized soldiers to deliver the gasoline.

Labor shortages and supply glitches, not only in energy markets but across the economy, could power inflation for months to come, Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey said in a statement cited by the *Financial Times*.

"If it is stagflation, central banks are in a bind," James Leaviss, who directs fixed income investments at M&G Investments. "Hiking [interest rates] will reduce demand a little bit and strengthen the currency," he pointed out, "but will have no impact on supply chain issues [or] bring back lorry drivers."

Mohamed El-Erien, chief economic advisor at Allianz, agreed.

"Central banks will be torn between reacting to the 'stag' and the 'flation'," he said in comments quoted by the *FT*.

"That's a world where investors' confidence in policymakers is shaken and the backstop they've had over the past decade isn't there any more."

TREND FORECAST: *We disagree. As we had forecast back in June 2020, DRAGFLATION TO HIT HARD , prices will rise, wages will not keep up with inflation and the economy will decline.*

TREND FORECAST: *We surfaced the prospect of stagflation in our 11 February, 2020, article "China Fights the Virus With Money." Since we first raised that warning, more and more factors are converging to prove us correct.*

The risks of dragflation are growing rapidly and governments and central banks are out of tools to both control it and keep economies chugging ahead.

SEPTEMBER PRICES IN EUROPE INFLATED FASTEST IN 13 YEARS

In September, Eurozone consumer prices rose faster than at any time in the last 13 years, adding evidence that inflation will run higher and last longer than policymakers had expected, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

Consumer prices rose 3.4 percent year over year last month, the highest since September 2008 and more than the European Central Bank (ECB) had expected, the *WSJ* said.

The cost of services was up 1.7 percent

The rate also exceeded August's 3 percent price rise.

Energy prices drove the price spike, exploding 17.4 percent year on year.

However, oil and gas prices a year ago were abnormally low, due to slumps in travel and manufacturing forced by the global economic shutdown.

Therefore, a portion of the price jump is simply a matter of costs returning to normal, economists point out, an effect that will settle out of the economy in the months ahead, they say.

Persistent inflation increases the risk of a self-fueling inflationary spiral, in which workers demand higher pay to reverse their shrinking purchasing power, leading businesses to pass higher costs to consumers now able to afford it because they make more money.

That may be under way: Germany's formidable IG Metall union has threatened an October strike if certain companies refuse to raise wages 4.5 percent.

Galloping inflation challenges the European Central Bank's (ECB) steadfast policy position of maintaining economic supports, including negative interest rates, at least through the end of this year and possibly another year beyond that.

Most economists believe that at its December meeting, the ECB will decide to end its €1.85-trillion bond-buying program in the face of higher inflation.

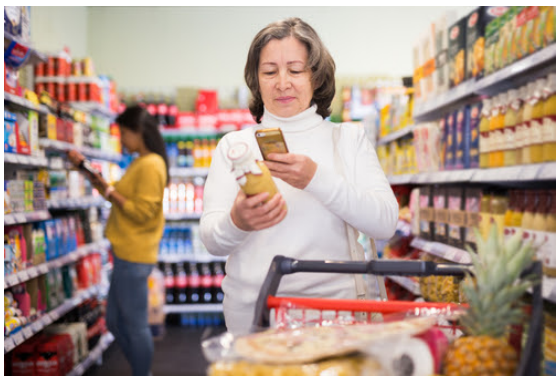
The bank also has said it plans to leave its negative interest rate untouched through 2023.

Economists have said that price pressures will ease as chaos in supply lines eases, a scenario unlikely to come to pass for months, as we have reported in "Shipper Books Tenfold Increase in Net Profits" (17 Aug 2021).

TREND FORECAST: *With Europe's inflation rate setting records month after month, the ECB does not have the luxury of waiting more than two years to raise its base interest rate from the -0.5 percent where it has been for the last five years.*

Europe's economic recovery remains weak, despite a recent bump in consumer spending (see related story). The bank will be forced to edge rates up, but will do so in small increments, well spaced, with plenty of advance notice so markets can adjust to the gradual, but steady, return to realistic rates.

GERMANY'S INFLATION WORST IN 29 YEARS: WILL INTEREST RATES RISE?



Germany's 4.1-percent inflation rate in September was the highest since 1992, the *Financial Times* reported.

Energy drove the increase, notching a 14.3-percent price jump. Food costs rose 4.9 percent, goods were up 6.1 percent, and services 2.5 percent.

"In the past, producers absorbed higher costs by profit margin squeezing," Carsten Brzeski, ING's research chief, said to the *FT*.

"This time around, they seem to be willing to pass on higher costs to consumers," he added.

"The worst is yet to come," Jorg Kramer, chief Commerzbank economist, told the *FT*.

Even if inflation eases somewhat next year, "in the long term, we expect an inflation problem for Germany and the euro area," he said.

Spain's inflation of 4 percent in September marked a 13-year high; France's 2.7-percent inflation during the month was the worst in 10 years.

Germany's inflation could reach 5 percent this year before settling down, the country's central bank said, but also foresaw "upside risks" regarding price gains.

Economists predict 3.3-percent inflation across the Eurozone, while the European Central Bank has forecast a 2.2-percent rate this year, slowing to 1.7 in 2022.

TREND FORECAST: *The European Central bank says it is due to revisit its forecasts in December. Because of concerns of a slow economic recovery, the ECB had said it was willing to let inflation run a bit hot. They said its key rate at minus 0.5 percent (where it has languished since June of 2014) won't go higher until inflation moves near its 2 percent target.*

We disagree. As inflation spikes and the Euro begins to tank, interest rates will rise.

MONTHS OF INFLATION AHEAD, FOOD COMPANIES WARN

General Mills, the Minneapolis-based purveyor of grain products worldwide, has said that rising costs of raw materials, fuel, and labor, added to logistics tangles and a shortage of truck drivers and other workers, will hike the prices that consumers pay for its products over the next several months.

"Our prices are going to go up for the remainder of the year," CEO Jeff Harmening said in comments quoted by *The Wall Street Journal*.

Overall, the company expects its input costs to rise by 8 percent this year.

At the same time, shortages and supply chain disruptions will drag down its services to retailers to the 80th percentile range instead of the company's goal of the high 90s.

Food prices are riding the worst wave of inflation in a decade, the *WSJ* reported, a trend we noted in "Inflation Ripples Through the U.S. Economy" (11 May 2021).

Campbell's Soup Co. has raised prices and said earlier this month that the rising price of steel likely will force additional hikes in the weeks ahead.

Conagra Brands, the conglomerate that owns Duncan Hines, Marie Callender's, and Birdseye foods also has raised prices.

Many makers have cut back on discounts, sales, and coupons, while others have left prices the same while reducing the amount of product in the package, a tactic known in the industry as "shrinkflation" ("Prices for Consumer Goods Set to Rise," 4 May 2021).

TREND FORECAST: *As we have noted many times, inflation is not "transitory" or "temporary" but will continue rising well into 2022. At best, its pace will not slow until supply chain disruptions begin to be repaired, a task that will in itself take months.*

Even then, shortages of materials and workers will continue to push prices higher. In addition, as inflation goes higher and currencies drop lower, it will still cost yet more to buy products.

LUMBER PRICES CLIMBING AGAIN

After falling by almost half in August, year on year, lumber prices have bounced back.

Futures prices spiked almost 40 percent last month, with the closely-watched framing composite index from data service Random Lengths gaining 27 percent.

Key futures contracts were pricing at $625.10 per thousand board feet (mbf) last month, near their pre-COVID highs, *The Wall Street Journal* reported, but down from their peak above $1,700 reached last spring, which we reported in "Lumber Prices Add $36,000 to Cost of New Home" (4 May 2021).

However, prices need to rise before suppliers will be ready to meet demand, analysts told the *WSJ*—bad news for builders and others hoping that prices would settle back to the equivalent of the $357 per mbf average that prevailed from 2015 through 2019.

"Over the next few years, on average, prices are going to come off but they're going to remain high relative to history," lumber analyst Paul Jannke at Forest Economic Advisors told clients of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in a late September presentation cited by the *WSJ*.

As to the current price uptick, "we're not done yet," he said.

Lumber's climbing prices are due, in part, to the wave of wildfires across western North America.

Sawmills in British Columbia began to cut production in July because the fires reduced their supplies of logs.

Even though the price of lumber dropped in July and August, lumber the mills could have bought from government supplies was priced based on last spring's record prices.

As a result, some mills in western Canada—one of the continent's chief lumber-producing centers—will remain shut until supplies return to a reasonable price; others will operate at a loss for some period, the *WSJ* said.

Until British Columbia's mills are back in full operation, lumber dealers could fail to meet demand, as they now hold less wood in reserve than at any time since the last century, according to Forest Economic Advisors.

Lumber prices also are part of the broader hike in the cost of commodities generally, as we reported in "Commodities Supercycle Underway?" (11 May 2021).

Oat futures are trading now at or near record prices; the cost of natural gas shot up 61 percent in the second quarter.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have noted, home affordability in the U.S. is at its highest rate since just before the Panic of '08 struck. Thus, the more expensive houses become, they will be out of the reach of first time buyers which will instead rent homes. And as rental demand outstrips supply, rent prices will increase.*

DARDEN STRUGGLES TO HOLD THE LINE ON MENU PRICES

Darden Restaurants, which owns 1,500 restaurants and eight chains, including Olive Garden and Longhorn Steakhouse, projects sales in 2022 of $9.4 to $9.6 billion, compared to $7.8 billion this year.

The chain is trying to ensure that the higher number doesn't come about solely by raising menu prices.

"We want to make sure consumers we service can still come to our restaurants and get an extremely great value for what they have to pay," CEO Eugene Lee said in a conference call last month with reporters cited by *The Wall Street Journal*.

"At some point, your average consumer could get priced out of casual dining," he said.

Darden saw commodities inflation of 5.5 percent for its quarter ended 29 August, the company reported, and had to shop more on the spot market where prices are higher; even then, some foods were in short supply, company officials said.

Like all restaurants, Darden is looking for internal efficiencies and cost reductions before raising menu prices.

Also like all restaurants, Darden is struggling to keep its eateries staffed.

Due to a lack of waitstaff, Olive Garden stores are closing one or two seating sections most nights, cutting off revenue from six to eight tables, Darden said.

Darden is exploring ways in which automation can replace humans no longer willing to work in a physically demanding job that pays low wages and depends on tips.

Other restaurants, such as the Toast chain, are installing digital systems that allow diners to use tablets to order and pay from their tables, eliminating human servers, as we reported in "Virus Speeds Automation: Bye Bye Workers" (21 Sep 2021).

Darden's share price has risen about 34 percent so far this year and closed on 23 September at $159.40.

TREND FORECAST: *The restaurant business is hard In the best of times, as we noted in "Worker Shortages, Virus Hobble Restaurants' Recovery" (14 Sep 2021).*

The current, continuing wave of inflation will force Darden and other dining businesses to raise menu prices, shrinking the number of customers able to afford to eat out. The loss of business will lead to more eateries closing, more low-wage workers jobless, and more mindless jobs eliminated.

We repeat what we said in the article cited above: after the COVID wars are over, there will be fewer restaurants employing fewer workers, leaving fewer ways for teens and unskilled workers to find jobs.

DHL WILL HIKE FREIGHT PRICES 5.9 PERCENT

As of 1 January, logistics company DHL will increase prices 5.9 percent for U.S. parcel shippers, matching FedEx's recently announced price bump.

DHL, which has limited domestic service within the U.S., raised prices 5.9 percent last year and an average of 4.9 percent this year.

In September, DHL announced plans to spend $360 million to add and upgrade facilities in the Americas and to expand its freighter fleet.

"You have general inflation" for fuel, labor, supplies, and other costs, "as well as added infrastructure, such as planes, trucks, and facilities," Michael Parra, DHL's CEO for the Americas, told *The Wall Street Journal*.

"We've got to cover for that," he said.

Competing shipper UPS has not announced changes to its price structure for 2022.

TREND FORECAST: *We note this article to again emphasize the scope and depth of inflation that is spreading through virtually every business sector. Thus, as prices rise, demand will decrease. And when the flow of cheap money begins to slow, a general economic slowdown will persist.*

HOME PRICES CLIMB AT FASTEST RATE ON RECORD

U.S. home prices rose at a 19.7-percent annual rate during the 12 months ending 31 July, according to the S&P CoreLogic Case-Shiller National Home Price Index.

The pace was the greatest 12-month surge the index has recorded since it began in 1987 and edged past the 18.7-percent rate notched during the 12 months ending in June.

The index measures average home prices in major U.S. metro areas.

Prices in Phoenix rose fastest, the city's 26th straight month at the head of the list, with a 32.4-percent rise; San Diego's 27.8-percent sprint ranked the city second.

Case-Shiller's 10-city index registered a 19.1-percent gain; the 20-city index showed a 19.9-percent leap.

However, the rate of price increases eased slightly in Cleveland, Detroit, and Washington, DC.

The number of people planning to buy a house in the next six months fell for a third consecutive month, according to the Conference Board's September consumer survey.

TREND FORECAST: *The housing frenzy is playing itself out, as we predicted in "Fed Policies Continue to Fuel Housing Frenzy" (22 Jun 2021).*
Those able to afford today's record prices and who have cash to put down on a property already have done so, leaving fewer prospective buyers able to afford a home.

Fewer houses are up for sale than at the height of the boom, which also indicates that a number of current owners are waiting to sell until prices ease, and they can afford to buy another home.

The growing number of Millennials and younger adults interested in buying will keep home prices high, as will the lack of available land on which builders can put up enough new homes at a selling price that can meet demand.

For the foreseeable future, home prices will remain unaffordable for many and homes will remain scarce for those able to buy, as we reported in "Housing Shortage Will Last for Years, Goldman Says" (1 Jun 2021).

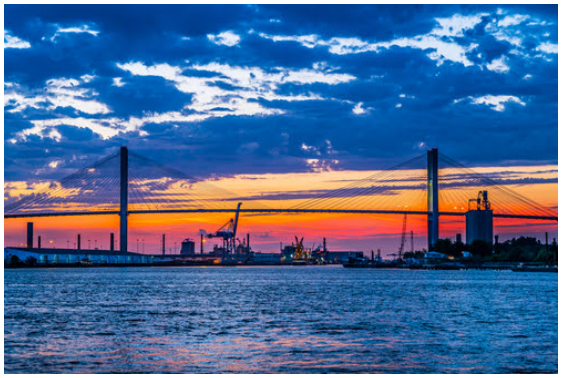
TREND FORECAST: *We have been reporting on the private equity groups such as Blackstone's already considerable presence in the U.S. housing market, both directly and through its Invitation Homes subsidiary and others. (See "Invitation Homes to Buy $1 Billion Worth of Houses This Year," 1 June 2021.)*

With Blackstone, Cerberus Capital Management, and other private equity firms snapping up houses—sometimes buying them out from under individual families who have made offers—home prices will not only remain elevated for the indefinite future, but also fewer families will realize the dream of home ownership.

Instead of fulfilling their American dream, more families will remain tenants of private equity masters and other Bigs who leverage their ever-growing wealth to

gather more money for themselves at the expense of ordinary people and families.

CARGO TRAFFIC STACKING UP: INFLATION RISING HIGHER



The port of Savannah, Ga., the U.S.'s fourth busiest, had 24 ships anchored outside and waiting for dock space on 28 September, twice as many as two weeks earlier, as noted in our article "Ships Clogs = Inflation" (14 Sep 2021.)

Imports exceeded 1.8 million loaded containers from January through August this year, 30.1 percent more than during the same period a year earlier.

The time a container waits to be taken inland from dockside has grown from an average of four or five days to as many as 12 at one point, Griff Lynch, executive director of the George Port Authority, told *The Wall Street Journal*.

The average time now was 9.2 days at the end of September, he noted.
The containers stack up, in part, because trucking companies are unable to find enough qualified drivers to move them.

Savannah's is the most crowded U.S. East Coast port, with jams at Chinese, European, and, to a lesser extent, U.S. ports having follow-on effects around the world as companies seek alternate routes to get their goods ashore.

Ports at Long Beach and Los Angeles have had as many as 73 ships stacked up waiting in recent weeks, compared to 44 a month earlier that we reported in "Backlogged Ships: New Abnormal" (28 Sep 2021).

The number had edged down to 66 on 28 September, the *WSJ* said, still in record territory.

The demand for containers has raised the cost of moving a loaded container between continents from about $2,000 before COVID to as much as $16,000 or more now, as we reported in "China Closes Key Port Terminal: Trouble Ahead" (24 Aug 2021).

The Savannah terminals have been besieged by shipments for retailers trying to lay in stock before the Christmas shopping season, Lynch said.
"We have seen this transition from just-in-time in supply lines to just-in-case, and that is significantly changing our environment," he said.

"Because of all this extra freight being imported, it's creating a backlog from the ship side to the dock side to warehouses and across the whole supply chain."

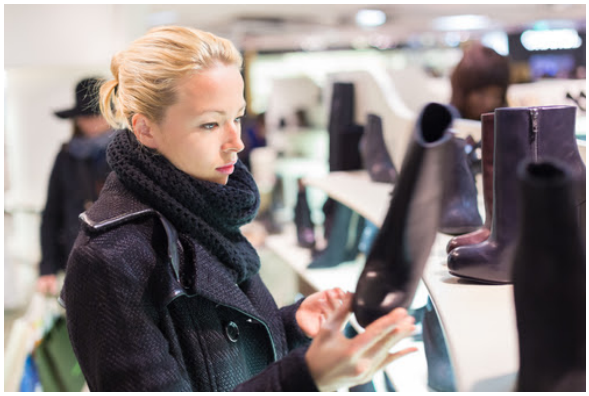
TREND FORECAST: *In this and other* ***Trends Journal****s we emphasized that the backlog at ports will make for a holiday shopping season that disappoints both retailers and their customers with rising prices and less profits.*

And never mentioned in the media is the importance of having a self-sustaining economy and producing and manufacturing products at home rather than relying on foreign nations to fill the food and product supply chains. (See "Supply Chain Recovery: A Logistical Nightmare," 14 Sep 2021).

And, as forecast, supply lines likely will remain disrupted well into next year's first quarter, and perhaps beyond, keeping pressure on inflation. (See "Shipping Delays Helping to Inflate Prices," 25 May 2021.)

(Note: this concludes Spotlight on Inflation)

CONSUMER SPENDING: UP OR DOWN?



U.S. consumers spent 0.8 percent more in August than in July, after July's figure was revised downward to -0.1 percent, the U.S. Commerce Department reported on 1 October.

As we had forecast the more fearful people became of the Delta virus, the less they would spend. Thus, the variant fear had slowed consumers' consumption mid-summer but with school starting again, and a bit of pent up spending urge, the rate increased, although slowly in some sectors.

Vehicle purchases slid 10 percent in August from July, due to a variety of shortages and supply chain disruptions keeping parts from reaching factories... and the high vehicle prices that many cannot afford.

Also, spending on hotels and restaurants was flat in August after rising through several previous months.

The good news: credit and debit card use during the week ending 25 September was up 19.8 percent over the same week in 2019, Bank of America figures showed, almost twice the 10.1 percent during August's final week.

People spent more on airfare and entertainment activities, indicating that there was a bit of leisure bounce back.

Personal income edged up just 0.2 percent for the month... due to rising wages and distribution of the federal government's child tax credits.
However, income gains were blunted by the end of the federal $300 weekly unemployment benefit for several million jobless workers, *The Wall Street Journal* noted.

TREND FORECAST: *On the negative side, cooler weather is approaching, which could bring another wave of virus infections. And, should politicians and the bureaucrat "health officials" start spreading COVID Winter Fear, it will dampen consumer spending.*

Because consumer spending comprises 70 percent or more of the U.S. economy, it always is a key indicator of the economy's future health.

TREND FORECAST: *In "Consumer Sentiment Tanks" (17 Aug 2021), we predicted accurately that as the COVID War 2.0 ramps up, the U.S. and world economies will decline during the last half of 2021 and financial organizations will reduce growth-rate forecasts for the fourth quarter of this year, and perhaps longer, for the U.S. and the world.*

This resulted, in part, because consumer sentiment dropped in July as the Delta variant fears surged ("Inflation Rate Top Concern for U.S. Consumers," 29 July 2021)

Depending on how high COVID fears continue to rise, and with the vaxxed not wanting to party with the unvaxxed or spend holidays together... it may well translate into a weak holiday selling season, slowing the economy while justifying consumers' current gloomier outlook.

TREND FORECAST: *The Street's forecast that U.S. GDP will grow at rates "well above the long-term trend for two or three years" is not realistic. Shortages, unemployment, and skills gaps, inflation, virus fears and restrictive government COVID mandates will continue to put downward pressure on the economy.*

ECONOMISTS: HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN

After lowering their growth forecasts for this year's third and fourth quarters, many economists see a brighter 2022 ahead, *The Wall Street Journal* found, with analysts expecting production and spending delayed by this year's Delta virus and supply chain tangles to appear next year instead.

There are early signals that things are looking up, analysts claim.

During the week ending 28 September, restaurant seatings were down just 8 percent compared to the same week in 2019, a less severe difference than early last month; hotel occupancy was 63 percent in the week ending 18 September, trending up again after dipping during the two weeks before, data firm STR reported.

Room and restaurant reservations at Colorado's Boulderado Hotel are now 5 to 10 percent above 2019's levels at this time of year, the *WSJ* said.
Air travel lulled in late August but showed signs of recovery during the last two weeks of September, figures from the U.S. Transportation Security Administration showed.

In June, the U.S. Federal Reserve projected 3.3 percent GDP growth in 2022; last month, it raised its forecast to 3.8 percent.

U.S. economic output will be 4.2 percent in the third quarter, 6.5 percent this quarter, and 5.1 percent in 2022's first quarter, Allen Sinai, chief economist and strategist at Decision Economics, has predicted.

During the spring and summer, consumers sated their pent-up demand for long-lasting goods such as cars and appliances, economists told the *WSJ*.

This will ease demand and allow supply chains, manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers time to catch up with demand, especially after the holiday shopping crunch, they predict.

A recent rise in the number of building permits issued may indicate that contractors are able to find materials again, a sign that shortages and supply chain issues in that industry could be easing, Aneta Markowsa, Jeffries' chief economist, suggested in a *WSJ* interview.

"The consumer is in great shape," she said. "They have the firepower. They have the ability to spend."

TREND FORECAST: *Some consumers may have money to spend, but it does not buy as much as it used to. Inflation is eating up consumers' purchasing power and shortages of a range of materials, worsened by the supply chain crisis, is giving them less to spend their money on.*

Economists raising their expectations for the first quarter of next year are not factoring in the months it will take to untangle the supply chain knots we reported in "World's Supply Chain Snarled Until Well Into Next Year" (14 Sep 2021).

They also leave no room for inflation to continue unchecked, not only while supply chain tangles are worked out but also while key shortages last, especially of computer chips and essential minerals.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a club whose members include the world's richest countries, has forecast that prices in 2022 will rise more than most analysts are expecting, as we reported in "Inflation Still Inflating" (28 Sep 2021).

Also, the Asian Development Bank has forecast China's economy to slow next year, as we reported in "Development Bank Trims Asia Growth Forecast" (28 Sep 2021).

As the world's second largest economy, a slowdown in China will drag down global economic output as well. Therefore, we forecast U.S. economic growth to remain subdued through at least the first quarter of 2022.

MAJOR COMPANIES STORING CASH IN REAL ESTATE: WIN OR LOSE?

Publicly-traded U.S. companies are holding a record $2.7 trillion in cash, cash equivalents, and short-term investments, an increase of 90 percent from 2011's fourth quarter, according to S&P Global.

For example, Alphabet Inc., Google's parent company, had $135.9 billion in cash at the end of this year's second quarter, S&P said.

With interest rates at record lows near zero, "that cash is just sitting there in a not particularly productive way," Brian Kingston, head of real estate for Brookfield Asset Management, a private equity firm, said to *The Wall Street Journal*.

To make a return, many of the companies are putting that spare cash into commercial real estate, the *WSJ* reported.

The timing is right: commercial real estate prices crashed to bargain prices during the COVID War, as we have documented extensively in articles such as "Remote Work = Commercial Bust" (2 Jun 2020) and "New York Office Vacancies Set Record" (13 Jul 2021).

The price of office space in Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and other traditional business hubs is significantly lower than it was at the end of 2019, the *WSJ* noted.

Cash-rich corporations are taking advantage.

Google will pay $1.2 billion for a Manhattan office building, the company announced last month. In 2020, Amazon spent $978 million to buy the former Lord & Taylor department store, also in Manhattan. Facebook put up $378 million to buy an office campus in Bellevue, Wa.

Alphabet owned $47.9 billion in property at the end of 2019, compared to $5.8 billion in 2011, the WSJ said; Amazon owned $57.3 billion worth, second only to Walmart.

Publicly-traded U.S. companies now own $1.64 trillion in property, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence, 38 percent more than in 2011.

Tech companies increasingly are joining conventional retailers such as McDonald's and Walmart in owning the buildings they occupy.

Ownership spares them the tedious dealings with landlords, negotiating leases, renovations, and upkeep. Paying cash also saves the interest costs of a mortgage and often allows the transfer of ownership to happen faster.

However, owning the properties also puts the companies at risk if commercial real estate prices fall, which they did precipitously during the COVID War, as we noted above.

TREND FORECAST: *With Facebook releasing its entire workforce to be remote and other companies adopting hybrid workplace structures, a few cash-rich companies buying buildings here and there will not rescue the commercial real estate market, which we have long predicted will permanently shrink not only in size but also in value.*

As we noted in "Commercial Real Estate: Boom or Bust?" (25 May 2021) office buildings could lose as much as 40 percent of their value. This is most likely in conventional business centers such as Chicago, New York City, and San Francisco.

Values will decline less, but still decline, in newly popular business hubs such as Charlotte, Austin, and Minneapolis.

We also have stated numerous times that as commercial real estate loses value, cities lose tax revenue, their residents either lose services or pay more for them, and the quality of urban life is damaged, persuading more people to live elsewhere. See, for example, our forecast in "As Forecast: NYC Commercial Real Estate Crisis Worsens" (24 Aug 2021).

CONSTRUCTION SPENDING FLAT IN AUGUST

August's continuing boom in home construction offset the continuing decline in other sectors of the building industry, leaving construction spending flat for the month.

"Nearly every nonresidential spending segment has deteriorated from already inadequate 2020 levels during the first two-third of this year," Ken Simonson, chief economist for the Associated General Contractors of America (AGCA), said in a statement announcing August's results.

"Meanwhile, soaring materials costs mean that fixed public budgets even buy less infrastructure than before," he noted.

August saw total construction spending at an annualized rate of about $1.58 trillion, essentially unchanged from July, although the figure is 7 percent above 2020's for the same period.

Residential construction spent 0.4 percent more in August, year over year, and is up 26 percent for the year through August.

In contrast, nonresidential building's budget slipped 0.4 percent from July's and is down 6.7 percent from January through August, compared to the same time in 2020, the AGCA said.

So far this year, roadway construction is off 3.4 percent for the eight-month stretch, building related to public transport 6.5 percent, public water systems 1.8 percent, oil and gas projects 3.6 percent, education 10.6 percent, manufacturing 1.8 percent, office structures 10.1 percent, retail-warehouse-farm building 1.7 percent, and conservation and development down 18 percent.

TREND FORECAST: *A sharp commercial real estate decline will occur when interest rates rise. And, as we said in "Urban Malls Next to Fall" (25 Mar 2020) when COVID War was declared, bad mall situations would worsen.*

Now, with employees working at home and consumers shopping online, demand for new commercial construction has been permanently reduced. The industry's focus will shift from building new structures to renovating and remodeling existing ones, especially while high prices for building materials continue.

"BIGS" WILL STILL PAY NO TAX UNDER BIDEN REFORM

President Joe Biden has decried the current tax structure that enables 55 of America's richest and most successful companies to pay no income tax and has promised that his tax reform plan, now working its way through Congress, will plug that hole.

The list of so-called "zero tax" companies, compiled by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, includes DTE Energy, Sealed Air Corp., and VeriSign; until recently, Amazon also was on the list.

However, there still will be zero-tax corporations even if the current bill becomes law, several analysts told *The Wall Street Journal*.
The proposed plan would boost the highest corporate income tax rate from its current 21 percent to 26.5 percent and cut incentives for companies to book profits in low-tax foreign countries.

However, the bill does nothing to reduce corporate deductions for accelerated depreciation of investments or expenses for research development, two of the main write-offs that corporations use to negate their tax liability.

The current proposal also does not include the idea of a minimum income tax that would require all companies to pay at least something.

In addition, the bill includes new credits for green energy and low-income housing, designed in a way that could let businesses use those venues to avoid taxes.

"Corporations that don't pay any taxes are still going to be able to go on paying no taxes and, in some ways, might even be able to get a bigger refund," Frank Clemente, executive director of the nonprofit Americans for Tax Fairness, told the *WSJ*.

The bill Congress has in hand chooses to allow some zero-tax companies in exchange for rewarding those that engage in activities Democrats see as socially beneficial, the *WSJ* noted.

"It is remarkable that there is no talk about this in Congress," Clemente said.

TRENDPOST: *As we have been reporting for decades, the Bigs get a free tax ride while the Little People of Slavelandia are taxed the fullest. We also noted in last week's* ***Trends Journal*** *that "AMERICA'S RICHEST 400 FAMILIES PAY A TINY PERCENT OF FEDERAL INCOME TAX COMPARED TO THE WORKING CLASS."*

And, despite President Donald Trump's bullshit that his 2017 tax cuts would be "helping the folks who work in the mailrooms and the machine shops of America, and "The plumbers, the carpenters, the cops, the teachers, the truck drivers, the pipe-fitters, the people that like me best... as we reported, 82 percent of President Trump's 2017 tax cuts enriched the one percent according the Tax Policy Center.

PWC: 40,000 WORKERS, WORK FROM HOME

All 40,000 U.S. employees of International accounting and business services firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) who work in client services are free from now on to work at home and live wherever they please, the firm has announced.

The catch: those workers need to be available to come to a central office three days a month, at most, for trainings, team meetings, and meetings with clients, Reuters noted.

"We have learned a ton" during the COVID War "and working virtually, as we think about the evolution of flexibility, is a natural next step," Yolanda Seals-Coffield, PwC's deputy chief of human resources, told Reuters.

Accounting giants Deloitte and KPM also have relaxed rules about office time, breaking a long-standing norm among large accounting and consulting firms that workers put in long days at the office.

Another catch: employees who move to locations with a lower cost of living will see their salaries reduced proportionately, Reuters reported.

Despite releasing 40,000 workers to toil remotely, the company has no plans to reduce its office space but said they will use the spaces differently and "in more collaborative ways," Reuters said.

In June, PwC said it will hire an additional 100,000 workers to help clients report on issues related to diversity and climate.

PwC now employs about 284,000 people, with headquarters in London and a U.S. base in New York City.

TREND FORECAST: *For now, a few cash-rich corporations may prop up the commercial real estate market in some locales at a time when investors are avoiding it. However, we maintain our forecast for a commercial real estate bust in many major cities, as we predicted as far back as "Remote Work = Commercial Bust" (2 Jun 2020).*

PwC's decision is only the latest sign confirming another of our forecasts made in articles such as "Corporations Continue to Shed Office Space" (13 Jul 2021): as the shift to working at home becomes the New Abnormal, it will redefine economic ecosystems, especially in urban centers.

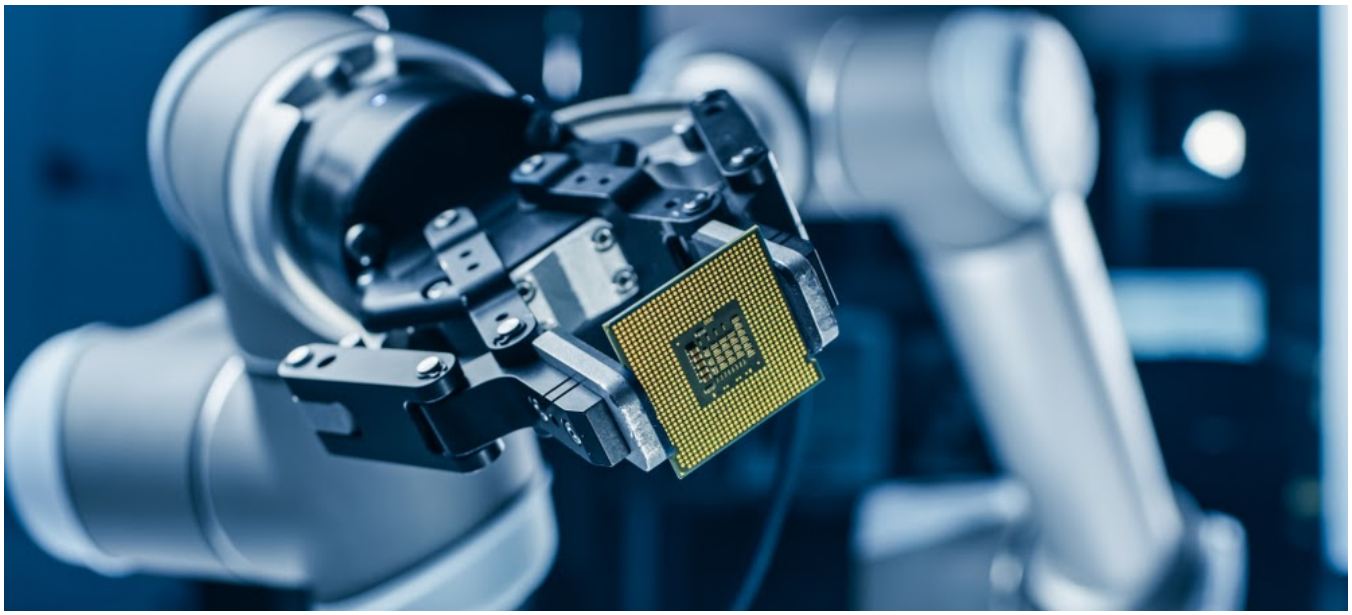
Commuters will return to offices, but not in the numbers that can support the pre-2020 economic ecosystems that depended on them.

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.

The crash in property values will, in turn, crash city budgets, leaving cities unable to fund past levels of services in police protection, firefighting, education, and trash collection, among others. (New York City gained 40 percent of its pre-2020 revenues through property taxes.)

TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT



GLOBAL CHIP SHORTAGE TO COST AUTO MAKERS $210 BILLION THIS YEAR

The global auto industry will build 7.7 million fewer vehicles this year, costing the companies $210 billion in sales, according to research firm AlixPartners, which had forecast a loss of only 3.9 million vehicles earlier this year.

The persistent shortage of computer chips has led the firm to nearly double its previous estimate of lost sales, it said.

“The barrel is empty,” Dan Hearsch, AlixPartners’ managing director of automotive and industrial practice, told Bloomberg. “There’s nothing left to scrape.

“Sales hadn’t suffered [more than they have] because there was enough inventory to draw from,” he added. “It’s not there anymore.”

Making the situation worse, major chip makers in Southeast Asia have been shut down by governments attempting to curb the spread of the COVID virus's Delta variant.

Vehicle makers are having to wait a record 21 weeks, on average, to have chip orders filled, according to Bloomberg.

Auto industry executives say the shortage could last for years.

Chips will remain scarce at least through late 2022 and possibly into 2023, Daimler CEO Ola Kallenius said at Munich's auto show last month.

Herbert Diess, head of Volkswagen, thinks the shortage will play out longer.

"Probably we will remain in shortages for the next months or even years because semiconductors are in high demand," he said in a Bloomberg interview. (See, "India's Biggest Car Maker: Production Will Fall 40 Percent," 14 September, 2021.)

"The Internet of Things is growing and the capacity ramp-up will take time," he noted. "It will be probably a bottleneck for the next months and years to come."

The shortage pushed the average U.S. price of a new car a record $43,355 in August, research service Cox Automotive said, leaving some dealers having to rent cars to have something to put in their showrooms, according to Hearsch.

AlixPartners predicted in January that the shortage would rob the industry of $81 billion in sales this year, then upped its estimate to $110 billion in May before bumping it now to $210 billion.

"It's just not getting better," Hearsch said. "This is going to take much longer than we all thought."

TREND FORECAST: *It's not only auto makers who are out of chips. Manufacturers of all kinds are scrambling to find supplies, as we detailed in "Chip Shortage Hampers Global Manufacturing" (23 Mar 2021).*

Chips will remain in short supply at least through 2022, creating shortages of a range of consumer and business products, as we predicted in "Auto Industry Chip Shortage Fallout" (24 Aug 2021). That shortage will keep upward pressure on prices, helping to sustain inflation and sharpen the prospects of an inflationary spiral or, even worse, dragflation, as we noted in this ***Trends Journal*** *article,* ANALYSTS WRONG. NOT STAGFLATION, IT WILL BE DRAGFLATION.

WILL EVERGRANDE DIVE CRASH CHINESE MARKETS?

Major investors, including Blackrock, Bridgewater Associates and Pacific Investment Management, are shrugging off the financial crisis that has struck Evergrande, China's largest property developer, and sent a wave of anxiety through global financial markets earlier this month, according to *The Wall Street Journal.*

Evergrande announced earlier this month that it might not be able to repay its $300 billion in debt, which we reported in "China's Real Estate Market Teeters on Evergrande's Debt" (21 Sep 2021) and, on 23 September, missed a $83.5-million interest payment on a dollar-denominated bond

Market players expect China's government to let Evergrande default on at least some of its debts owed to foreign bondholders but will shield domestic investors, creditors, and the people waiting for Evergrande to finish the homes they already have bought, the *WSJ* said.

On 29 September, Evergrande promised to make a scheduled payment due the next day to domestic creditors. However, the debt holders said they received no payment on the due date.

“In the short term, there is clearly a lot of potential for uncertainty and volatility,” Christian Strake, chief credit researcher at Pimco, said in a *WSJ* interview.

“But, longer term, this is something that needed to happen and ultimately will be good for the Chinese credit market,” he said.

Bridgewater concurred in a note to clients.

“The narrative of this being ‘China’s Lehman moment’” – referring to the collapse of Lehman Brothers in September 2008, a trigger for the Great Recession – “doesn’t make sense,” the note read.

“The lack of a quick bailout likely will serve notice to investors that they need to do their due diligence and enforce accountability on debtors,” Bridgewater wrote.

However, others are pulling back from Evergrande.

Allianz Global Investors and French asset manager Amundi have sold off significant portions of their Evergrande bonds in past months, the *WSJ* reported, and Blackrock is not currently adding to its Evergrande holdings, insiders told the newspaper.

The troubles of one company should not worry investors, Andrew Lo, Invesco’s chief of Asia Pacific operations, told the *Financial Times.*

“For those who have been investing in China for a long time and have seen the ups and downs,” he said, “the case for investing in China continues to be very much intact.”

TREND FORECAST: *As we have long noted in stories such as "China 2021: The Chinese Century" (8 Dec 2020), this century's economic future will be controlled by China.*

That also is China's conviction. Therefore, Beijing will unwind Evergrande's mess in a way that does no long-term damage to the country's financial or real estate sectors. The government may administer some tough love but not enough to derail the economy or permanently drive foreign investors away.

TREND FORECAST: *We have looked beyond Evergrande to China's larger economic environment. For a decade or more, the housing boom has created a massive bubble that has been long ready to pop.*

Also, other speculators are pulling back their money or betting against the country's continued rampant growth, citing its recent tough regulatory stance on the tech industry, cryptocurrencies, and property developers, The Wall Street Journal reported.

Twelve percent of the more than 200 asset managers and investors polled by Invesco last month plan to reduce their investments in China, three times more than the same survey found in 2019.

In last month's poll, 64 percent responding said they plan to invest more in China, compared to 80 percent in 2019.

In 2019, China began to welcome foreign investors by dismantling barriers blocking their activities.

The government dropped quotas on foreign institutional investment; last year, Beijing began allowing offshore investment banks and asset managers to own 100 percent of domestic funds and financial businesses.
China's government also has cracked down on the construction, financial, and tech industries, spooking investors and reminding them that the Chinese Communist Party can impose draconian measures on business without warning.

However, China will remain the world's growth engine for the foreseeable future; investors seeking returns beyond the limits of central banks' rock-bottom interest rates will have to include China in some way.
Although China's economy is seen by The Street as "sputtering" we maintain our forecast that minus a wild card event, such as suddenly crashing equity market, a major terror strike, etc., the country will post around an 8-percent GDP growth in 2021... which will be far higher than other major economies.

POWER SHORTAGES CUT CHINA'S FACTORY OUTPUT: HOW BAD IS BAD?

Widespread power outages across China, the worst in more than a decade, forced the first contraction in the country's manufacturing center last month since February 2020.

The government has imposed power quotas on many factories, forcing them to operate part-time as Beijing seeks to manage short supplies of electricity while also cutting back its infamous smog-causing emissions, *The Wall Street Journal* said.

By 29 September, 22 of China's 34 provincial administrations had seen at least some degree of power cutbacks, the *WSJ* reported.

As of 1 October, factories in the manufacturing hub of Guangdong will be charged up to 25 percent more for electricity they use during peak hours.

The shortages are affecting areas known to be hubs for semiconductor manufacturing, a commodity already in critically short supply among the world's factories.

China's manufacturing purchasing managers index (PMI), the country's official measure of factory activity, slid to 49.6 last month.

Rankings below 50 indicate contraction.

China has long struggled to meet its growing power demands.

Demand for China's manufactured goods soared through 2020 and continues today, though at a slightly lower pace, challenging the country's electric grid to its limits.

Also, the price of coal has risen in the midst of domestic production shortfalls and reductions of imports from Australia and Mongolia.
Beijing stopped importing coal from Australia earlier this year when Australia's government backed the idea of an independent commission to look into the origins of the COVID virus.

Imported coal had made up about 10 percent of China's annual supply.
At the same time, demand for coal expanded by as much as 20 percent earlier this year, though now has settled into single-digit growth.

Although coal prices have soared, the government tightly controls electricity prices and many coal-fired generating stations have cut power output rather than operate at a financial loss, the BBC reported.

Worsening the shortage, the hydropower-producing province of Yunnan has been dealing with a drought and winds have been quiet in the normally breezy northeastern part of the country, curtailing wind power production.

"The power supply shock in the world's second biggest economy and biggest manufacturer will ripple through and impact global markets," Ting Lu, Nomura's chief China economist, told the *FT*, "very likely" resulting in inadequate stocks of holiday gifts in stores this November and December, he said.

Power cuts worsened an already weakening economy, beset by troubles in China's real estate sector, scattered shutdowns amid outbreaks of the Delta

virus, and harsher government controls over the construction, financial, and tech industries, as we reported in "China's Economy Slowing?" (28 Sep 2021).

The sub-50 PMI should sound an "alarm" among government officials, Zhiwei Zhang, chief economist for Pinpoint Asset Management, said in comments quoted by the *Financial Times*.

"Economic growth in the fourth quarter likely will slow further without a change of government policies," he said.

On 28 September, Goldman Sachs lowered its 2021 forecast for China's growth from 8.2 percent to 7.8; Nomura already had cut its forecast to 7.7 percent.

China's power troubles could increase retail prices of Chinese-made consumer goods in the West by as much as 15 percent by next spring, according to Michael Beckham, CEO of Oklahoma-based manufacturer Simple Modern.

China's economic planning agency has pledged to boost coal imports and domestic production, produce more natural gas, and pass higher costs through to end-users, at least in part.

Meanwhile, Han Zheng, China's vice-premier, has ordered officials to control amounts of energy consumed by heavy users such as steel plants and cement factories.

China's energy crisis has led Beckham to consider returning production to the U.S. because doing business in China has become less dependable.
"The [Communist] party in China always prioritizes its objectives," he told the *WSJ*.

"As an outsider, it's often hard to understand their motives," he said.

TREND FORECAST: *China's domestic energy crisis is mirrored around the world, as oil prices passed $80 a barrel and the cost of natural gas in Europe now costs five times what it did a year ago, CNBC has reported.*

The global energy crisis, coupled with China's internal shortages and rising power costs, is slowing the country's economic expansion as much as government crackdowns and overleveraged companies.

EUROZONE CONSUMER RISING: WILL IT LAST?

Despite supply chain chaos and a pending energy crisis, citizens of the 19-country Eurozone are spending at a rate not seen since the COVID virus arrived, the *Financial Times* reported.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's real-time data tracking system showed spending at or above pre-COVID levels in most Eurozone countries, the group reported.

Schools have reopened and workers are returning to their offices, according to Apple and Google mobility data.

Data on shopping, traveling, dining out, and other activities "remain consistent with a decent pace of recovery," economist Davide Oneglia at consulting firm TS Lombard told the *FT.*

An increase in leisure activities also "suggests consumers are now more confident," analyst Marion Amiot at the S&P ratings service, added.
The confidence is largely borne of a successful vaccination campaign that has left two-thirds of the region's qualifying residents fully vaccinated, the *FT* said.

Consumer spending made up more than 85 percent of the Eurozone's second-quarter growth, Nomura economist Chiara Zangarelli said to the *FT*, a number that has prompted the bank to expect a 2.3-percent GDP expansion for the quarter just ended.

The region's overall economy, not just consumer spending, will return to 2019 levels by the end of March 2022, Jeffries economist Marchel Alexandrovich said, which would allow the European Central Bank (ECB) to shrink its support programs, as Denmark, Norway, and Sweden already have.

However, several factors could slow Europe's rebound.

China's slow growth could damage Europe's export industry, air travel remains 30 percent below 2019 levels, and fouled supply lines continue to hobble manufacturers, the *FT* cautioned.

Europe's economy may be "back from the brink but not completely out of the woods," with key elements, such as semiconductors and shipping containers still restraining economic activity, ECB president Christine Lagarde said on 29 September in a panel discussion with other central bank leaders (see related story).

TREND FORECAST: *Consumer spending is always a fragile indicator and can abruptly sour when bad news appears. The fact that it made up 85 percent of second-quarter growth indicates just how fragile Europe's "recovery" is.*

China's economic slowdown, shortages of goods, the Delta variant, and steadily rising prices, which now include an inflationary energy crisis, will blunt consumer spending and further delay Europe's economic recovery, which already lags behind that in China and the U.S.

The expectation that Europe's overall recovery will be completed next March – less than six months from now – is wishful thinking at best.
And, with inflation rising, as we have noted, the European Central Bank will raise interest rates. As rates go higher the economy will go lower.
Moreover, the strict vax mandates will limit tourism, entertainment, travel, hospitality, conventions, trade shows etc., which will in turn bring down GDP growth as well as consumer spending.

CENTRAL BANKERS WARN OF LONGER-LASTING SUPPLY DISRUPTIONS

Supply disruptions will last longer than initially thought, according to the heads of four of the world's largest central banks, who spoke at a 29 September panel discussion.

Jerome Powell, chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve, expressed frustration that logistics tangles were hampering the world's economic recovery and helping to drive inflation "well above target," he said.

"We expect that it will continue to do so in coming months before moderating as bottlenecks ease," he added.

"How long it will take these bottlenecks to fade out is a question we are monitoring very closely," Christine Lagarde, president of the European Central Bank, said, noting that global bottlenecks can be pinpointed to certain factors, such as shortages of semiconductors and shipping containers.

As a result of such shortages, including a critical scarcity of natural gas, the U.K.'s economy will return to pre-pandemic "a few months later" than expected, Andrew Bailey, governor of the Bank of England predicted.

"What people didn't see coming was the supply-side constraints," Powell said. "That was a total surprise."

"It's not that our inflation models were wrong," he was quick to add, "but just the scope and persistence of the supply-side constraints were missed."

While the central bankers continue to insist that inflation will weaken as supply systems unclog, many economists point to shortages of key materials and

products that could endure far longer, keeping inflation high, the *Financial Times* noted.

Central banks in Brazil, Hungary, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, and Russia all have raised rates to tamp down inflation in their countries.
The Fed will take action if inflation proves to be more "substantial" than the central bank now expects, Powell said.

Haruhiko Kuroda, the Bank of Japan's governor, also participated in the discussion.

TRENDPOST: *The Central Banksters have either lied about, or failed to see, the severity or longevity of the current inflation crisis; now they are promising that once the supply-chain mess is resolved, inflation will settle down.*

We disagree. It is more than just supply chain issues. There are fundamental supply and demand issues that are not supply chain related.

And, as the value of currencies decline, the cost of goods increase, thus pushing up inflationary pressures.

WORLD SUPPLY CHAIN "CRUMBLING," BUSINESS GROUP WARNS

The COVID War's travel bans and other restrictions have had an "enormously detrimental effect on the wellbeing and safety" of the world's transport workers, with such "mistreatment" further straining "crumbling" global supply chains, the International Chamber of Shipping and several other transport industry groups wrote in a letter to the United Nations General Assembly meeting last week.

Shortages of electronics, food, fuel, medical supplies and other necessities will worsen going into the year-end holiday season if the world's leaders fail to take "decisive and coordinated action" at once to correct the situation, the letter said.

The letter was delivered as the British government prepared to deploy military personnel to deliver petrol to the nation's gas stations amid a shortage of truck drivers.

During the depths of last year's crisis, 400,000 members of ships' crews were confined aboard, with some forced to work 18 months beyond their initial contracts' limits, the letter said, noting that aviation workers had to cope with contradictory requirements regarding vaccines, travel, and other mandates as they crossed borders during the same flight.

The transport groups, which represent 65 million workers globally, called on the World Health Organization and International Labor Organization to act quickly.

TRENDPOST: *We note this article to illustrate the far ranging effects of the COVID War and the vast array of negative implications it has imposed across the globe.*

TURKEY: A CRIME TO TELL THE ECONOMIC TRUTH?

The government-run Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) filed a criminal complaint against the Inflation Research Group (IRG), after theYreported that Turkey's inflation rate is near 40 percent, not the 19.5 percent claimed by the country's government and central bank.

A prosecutor is investigating the complaint, which alleges the group violated rules by failing to publish its methodology along with its results.

The IRG dismissed the charge.

"Our aim wasn't a move against TurkStat or to create an alternative inflation rate," economist and IRG member Veysel Ulusoy said in comments quoted by the *Financial Times*. "but polarization is everywhere in Turkey, even in the statistics."

The IRG isn't alone in its findings.

Economist Steven Hanke at Johns Hopkins University used a method called "purchasing power parity" to compare the lira and dollar and found the June pace of Turkey's inflation also to be close to 40 percent.

TurkStat claims allegations that its data is manipulated are "baseless." However, a poll found 82 percent of participating Turks did not believe TurkStat's claim that inflation pulled back to 16.6 percent in May; a majority responding to a different survey believed Turkey's economy shrank in this year's second quarter, a time when TurkStat said the economy grew 21.7 percent.

If the economy has grown its fastest in more than 20 years, as TurkStat says, many people have failed to feel the benefit, with inflation and unemployment remaining in double digits, the *FT* noted.

Recep Erdogan, Turkey's president, has forced the central bank to keep interest rates low to goose a sluggish economy, claiming that low interest rates will slow inflation, a notion that violates both experience and fundamental economic principles. (See "Turkey's Central Bank Governor Fired After Rate Hike," 23 March, 2021.)

Erdogan fired three central bank governors in a matter of months late last year and early in 2021, shredding faith in the country's financial stability and sending the Turkish lira into a tailspin against the dollar, as we reported in "Turkey: Another Day, Another Bankster Fired" (1 Jun 2021).

On 23 September, central bank governor Sahap Kavcioglu announced a surprise additional 1-percent rate cut to 18 percent, more than 1 point below the officially recognized inflation rate.

Setting interest rates below the rate of inflation virtually guarantees that investments denominated in lira will lose value.

The cut sent investors fleeing once again, taking it as a sign that policymakers are not serious about protecting the lira's value, the *FT* said.

The lira sank to another record low against the dollar, at one point trading as low as 8.8 lira to the buck.

The new exchange rate likely will speed inflation even more by raising the cost of imports.

Turkey's economic plight has sent Erdogan's popularity to its lowest in two years, the *FT* noted.

TREND FORECAST: *As we noted in March, the sinking lira and rising inflation are symptoms of a much more troubling Turkish socioeconomic and geopolitical environment. (See "Turkey: No Political Opposition Permitted," 23 March, 2021.)*

As the global economy decelerates and inflation keeps rising across the globe, the lira and Turkey's economy will continue to slide.

With 13 percent of Turkey's economy based on travel and tourism, new travel restrictions and vaccine mandates being imposed worldwide will be especially hard on the country, its currency, and its workforce, at least through the rest of this year.

Yesterday it was reported that last month Turkey's CPI rose nearly 20 percent which is nearly four times the official inflation target. Food costs spiked by nearly 30 percent in September, and the lira is hovering near its record low against the dollar.

With President Erdogan's popularity near record lows, we forecast that when all else fails, they take you to war.

WITH VIETNAM LOCKDOWN SENDING BUSINESS TO OTHER COUNTRIES, THEY DO AN ABOUT FACE

Vietnam has imposed one of the world's most stringent lockdowns in Ho Chi Minh City and its environs in an attempt to curb the COVID virus's Delta variant, a move forcing several businesses to produce their goods in other countries.

That message was delivered to Vietnam's prime minister last week in a letter signed by American, EU, and South Korean chambers of commerce in Vietnam and the U.S.-Asean Business Council, the *Financial Times* reported.

In recent years, Vietnam has become one of southeast Asia's key manufacturing centers.

"Businesses need a clear roadmap and a date certain for reopening now," the letter said.

"Surveys that our associations have conducted show that at least 20 percent of our manufacturing members already have shifted some production to another country, with more discussions under way," the letter noted.

Members have "calls every night with regional and global headquarters deciding what customers to honor, which to turn away, and what production to shift," the associations wrote.

After successfully curbing the virus last year, Vietnam was surprised by the Delta surge and is trying belatedly to secure adequate vaccine supplies.

The lockdown, mandated in early July, left companies with few choices other than housing and feeding workers inside factories or shutting down production, the *FT* said.

About Face

Vietnam announced last week that it will relax COVID-19 restrictions in Ho Chi Minh in response to the wails of business owners and the historic 6.2 percent drop in its third-quarter GDP.

The Financial Times reported that businesses voiced their concerns to Prime Minister Pham Chinh about economy-killing mandates like strict social-distancing mandates in the city.

The services sector saw a contraction at 9.28 percent, according to Reuters. The country had been hoping for a 6.5 percent rise in GDP this year, but will likely see a 3.5 percent-4.0 percent increase, according to estimates.

The report also pointed out that about 90,000 businesses in the country suspended operations or went bankrupt in the January-September period. Ho Chi Minh had enforced a 12-hour curfew from 8 July and a lockdown that resulted in companies being forced to "choose between shouldering the cost of housing and feeding workers in their factories, or suspending production."

Under the new policy, those in the city will be allowed to leave their homes, restaurants can serve to-go meals and other essential businesses can open.

Al Jazeera reported that residents in Vung Tau city, which is 45 miles outside Ho Chi Minh, cheered when barricades that were set up on the streets to enforce the lockdown were taken down.

"We will have to celebrate this day, that the city is removing the barricades so we can go out again and get back to our normal lives," one resident who helped remove the barricades said.

The Reuters report said that Vietnam managed the first wave of the virus in 2020 relatively well, but has seen a jump in infections since April. There have been 770,000 cases and 18,936 deaths in the timeframe. Many of the cases were in or around Ho Chi Minh City. About 7 million people in the city of 10 million have received at least one jab, and 3 million are fully vaccinated.

The *FT* reported that the city will now allow social gatherings of up to 50 if those who attend are fully vaccinated, and will begin to introduce a COVID-19 “green card.” Officials there see vaccines as the key to their success.

"The global economy is on the mend with recovering demand in foreign markets. Vietnam, however, has seen its production capacity and business resilience weakening immensely following prolonged restrictions," Nguyen Duc Kien, head of the prime minister's Economic Advisory Council, told the *Sai Gon Giai Phong* newspaper. "Vietnam must accelerate approval of homegrown vaccines and soon put them into use."

TRENDS IN THE MARKETS

UNDERSTANDING RISK IN THE STOCK MARKET

By Gregory Mannarino TradersChoice.net

"The Stock Market."

What IS The Stock Market? Let us take a moment to define it. The stock market is itself a derivative of something else, in other words, the overall value of the stock market derives value from another thing, actually other thing(s). So, let us take another moment to break some of this down.

The debt market first and foremost is the largest aspect of the global financial system, and it eclipses the overall value of the stock market by exponents. There are many components to the debt market. Generally considering the debt market, which is also known as the bond market, participants can issue debt and buy debt.

Debt is also traded and swapped, as in credit default swaps. Debt can then be collateralized in a myriad of ways such as mortgage backed securities, debt obligations, and other various synthetic debt instruments.

Debt instruments, also known as securities, can then be further broken down into tranches with varying levels of risk associated with them, and then sold onto the market. Basic bonds and loans from banks are also structured into the overall debt market but are known collectively as elements of the credit market.

This mechanism of debt issuance and debt purchasing, along with "securities" created from the re-structuring and collateralizing of debt, goes then beyond face value—and into various other derivatives. Derivatives are literally "side bets" which are taken up on an underlying asset. Moreover, there are many, MANY, layers of derivative side bets.

To understand the risk(s) associated with the stock market, *which derives its value in large part from action within the convoluted web of the debt market*, one MUST have at least a basic understanding of how the debt market, and credit markets work—as I have briefly defined above.

The takeaway from having a basic understanding of the debt market is simply this—**THE STOCK MARKET ITSELF IS A DERIVATIVE OF ACTION WHICH IS OCCURRING WITHIN THE DEBT AND CREDIT MARKETS AT ANY GIVEN TIME**.

Today the overall debt market is in a HYPER-bubble which has subsequently pulled the stock market itself into a hyper-bubble, but the debt hyper-bubble is about to get much larger. If we understand that the stock market is a derivative of debt market action, and we know that the debt is going to continue to be inflated by the deliberate action of central banks, is there a way to measure risk in the stock market? **Yes, there is.**

The US 10-year yield is the benchmark, and is widely and closely watched by traders, investment banks, and hedge funds. The 10-year yield gives us a window, so to speak, into the goings on in the debt and credit markets. We can

also observe the relative value of the dollar. There is a relationship which exists between the 10-year yield and the relative dollar strength or DXY, also known as the dollar index.

I have come up with a way to gauge overall market risk and put that into a single number. **It is called the MMRI or Mannarino Market Risk Indicator.** This is FREE for everyone and runs on a graduated scale. The MMRI is an indicator of market risk at any given time. I am happy to make the MMRI available to those who subscribe to the **Trends Journal**—again FOR FREE!

The MMRI can be found right on my website TradersChoice.net.

TRENDS IN SURVIVALISM

KNOWING WHAT TO USE AND WHEN

by Bradley J. Steiner, American Combato

A martial art, if it is truly martial (that is, “of or pertaining to war”) encompasses unarmed combat and armed combat.

We see unarmed combat and physical readiness as the foundation upon which physical and technical skills are built. In fact, this is nothing new; it is exactly how the martial arts of the world originated. That is, not as sports or mere esthetically satisfying fitness builders, but as systems and methods of engaging enemies in battle—during war.

Later on, as the weaponry of nations became so advanced and sophisticated as to minimize hand-to-hand close-in combat and became much more technological, the unarmed combat of the classical arts became sports, and the personal weaponry part of the arts took a distant back seat to crew served machineguns, mortars, canons, etc.

The personal combat that once dominated warfare in ancient times has been surpassed by technological combat. Such infantry as exists today is normally utilized following bombardment by sea and air. And while hand-to-hand close combat is still taught to military personnel, unarmed, knife, stick, tomahawk, and so on, if and when taught, is allotted only a minimal amount of time.

We would, were we in charge of the American military, establish a very rigorous and complete close combat program. By becoming well versed in the art of combat much more than technical physical ability develops. That is, an all-important sense of what to use and when to use it naturally evolves as the combatant becomes truly expert.

Many who resort to violence at the first slight hint of what they think of as "disrespect", or a challenge to their manhood, or as a need to quickly beat someone—before he beats them, do so because they are not skilled enough to feel the inner confidence that comes from being genuinely prepared.

A very unfortunate misconception that prevents some parents from enrolling their children in self-defense courses, and that also blocks a lot of adults from considering the study of serious close combat is the completely erroneous idea that training in how to deal with violence by using overwhelming violence automatically makes the individual aggressive, anti-social, and belligerent.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact it is the person who lacks skill and confidence in his abilities who is the most likely to become needlessly volatile, and get into avoidable encounters with others.

A serious lack of self-confidence accounts for why some bullies (not all, by any means) do what they do. They seek to bolster their own poor sense of personal strength, efficacy, and formidability by dominating those whom they feel certain cannot fight back. The obvious and clear solution to a youngster's problem with a bully is to teach him or her how to defend himself. A powerful retaliatory action taken by surprise and leaving a bully injured, humiliated, scared, and aware that

he has indeed picked the wrong person, will make further attempts to bully the one who defeated him very unlikely.

Concern over excessive force by law enforcement officers is everywhere being expressed today. In point of fact the overwhelming majority of police officers are not inclined to be excessively violent.

However, the very nature of their workplaces puts them daily in situations where some degree of force is necessary to control, arrest—sometimes even knock out or worse—an offender. It must be done.

The best if not the only way to ensure that force will be employed appropriately is to make certain that by the time a police recruit graduates basic academy he is thoroughly prepared to handle violence—with violence. When you know and feel that you can do whatever needs doing to a suspect if he resists or attacks, you have no problem using discretion and attempting all available alternatives to seriously injuring him.

Quality teachers of combat skills and self-defense will always emphasize the need to avoid trouble if at all possible. Only when it becomes clear that you are in danger do you drop all restraints and deal with your aggressor viciously and without mercy. Why? Because that is what violent predators do when they move on their victims.

Having sufficient and serious training in what to do and how to engage the situation mentally, a person is most likely to apply the right amount of force required by the immediate circumstance. Training—the more the better—is what goes most certainly to assure that appropriate and necessary force will be rendered.

The police officer has certain advantages since his department will always provide him with definite guidelines relevant to the use of force against suspects or/and assailants. Guidelines cover the officer's use of his hands and feet, his sidearm, his baton, and any chemical agents he may be equipped with. In basic

academy he is also taught verbal and interactive skills. For the police officer the rule is: follow the mandates as set forth by your department or agency.

The private citizen faces a different problem. He is not indemnified by a law enforcement agency and the city, state, or federal government for whom he works. His job is not to be prepared to look for and deal with troublemakers, but to avoid trouble and resort to force only when no alternative exists. Whether with bare hands or with a properly licensed weapon, the only time the private citizen should allow himself to employ force is when danger to his life or to the life of another innocent person is imminent. Otherwise…walk away, run away, apologize, do anything reasonable and feasible to NOT allow a situation to escalate.

Any instruction that advocates "fighting" (other than in a sporting context) is going to get the student in deep, serious trouble one day, and it may well result in his being imprisoned or/and heavily sued in a civil court. Quality instruction in close combat and self-defense for the private citizen should emphasize avoidance as the first and most desirable option as far as dealing with any troublemaker is concerned.

We stress this again and again and doubtless there will be morons who object to the advice, viewing it as not being "macho" enough. To hell with those idiots. But our concern is providing the best possible advice that we know of for those who are concerned about self-defense. And this is exactly what we are doing.

Only if, and when actually attacked—confronted by imminent danger—should your skills and combat attitude be summoned and directed. And when that happens, if God forbid it ever does, waste no time or energy on talk, reasoning, restraint, sympathy, compassion, ethics, decency, or concern. Just go get the assailant! Bring your mind, your spirit, your strength, your speed, your resolve, your skills, and every ounce of your determination to bear, and do not hesitate or pause, but keep on attacking until the assailant has been neutralized and you are safe.

Question: “What about people who are annoying but not dangerous, or what some have referred to as ‘mild attacks’; you don’t seem to offer an option here?”

Answer: Any attack by someone who you either do not know personally to actually be a mere pest, or by a stranger, is serious. You cannot afford to assume that what is initiated as a “mere” wrist grab, arm grab, clothing seizure, shove, etc. is in fact not serious. Murders have been initiated by smiling approaches! The fact that an adversary’s first move is not destructive or damaging may be only because he is a clod. He may follow-up that “merely annoying” move with a knife stab, a powerful punch to your face, or some other seriously damaging action.

Sorry…but without being able to read minds it behooves you to assume the worst when you have no solid reason to believe no real danger is in the offing. View self-defense skills as weapons. Not merely those skills that actually involve weaponry, per se, but unarmed skills, as well.

There is a very good reason why self-defense techniques need to be damaging, dangerous, simple, and doable for life: Real world violent attacks are extremely dangerous, and they are directed against persons of both genders and all ages. And this is also why you do not use self-defense techniques—which must be harmful and vicious in the extreme—until or unless you find yourself in real danger.

To knockout, maim, cripple, or kill a human being is a terrible thing. It must only be done when there is absolutely no other alternative, in order to prevent an innocent individual from being knocked-out, maimed, crippled, or killed. The purpose of martial arts training is to ensure a safer, better human society…not to give license to wild animals.

TRENDS IN TECHNOCRACY

By Joe Doran

HOW THE CCP WENT VIRAL ON THE WINGS OF COVID

Recent events have shown that China is having serious problems marrying authoritarian control with the tech innovation it needs to develop, in order to compete with the West.

Evergrande, the crackdown on crypto technologies, computer gaming and “girlie man” culture, and the reigning in of whole sectors of its economy for doctrinal deviations, are all recent signs of its problems.

China certainly knew in late 2019 that its plan to become the world’s hi-tech and leading economic power by 2025 wasn't really on track.

Its economy relied on exports of products that either could be made pretty easily elsewhere, or were the innovations of foreign companies like Apple.

Increasingly, China was having to compete with other manufacturing hotspots. Meanwhile, its most prominent tech successes weren't the result of communist planning boards, but of entrepreneurs like Jack Ma who was becoming a thorn in the side of the CCP.

And it was as dependent as ever on stealing IP from the U.S. and other advanced—and freer—economies (see "CHINA BUSINESS ESPIONAGE NETS $500 BILLION A YEAR," 29 June 2021).

In retrospect, the COVID War might be viewed as a timely world crisis indeed, that changed a dynamic that was not in China's favor.

A new article in *Tablet* magazine takes a deep dive into the way COVID baited the West into following Chinese style repression to combat a feared and unknown new virus.

World leaders variously bamboozled or enamored by China's supposed success in combating COVID, continue to cripple their own countries.

Some institutions and actors appear to have even darker motives for covering up China's lies, and promulgating malicious policies that are keeping Western nations in paralysis.

Following China's "Success"

In recounting the course of the pandemic, which first surfaced in Wuhan China in late 2019, the *Tablet* article observed:

> "The world has been fighting a virus from China with a public health policy from China that transforms the world into China. But if the national security community has noticed this bizarre development, they haven't said so."

British scientist Neil Ferguson, whose inaccurate virus and projected lethality models influenced lockdown measures around the world in 2020, admitted he was inspired by China's example:

> "I think people's sense of what is possible in terms of control changed quite dramatically between January and March … It's a communist one-party state, we said. We couldn't get away with it in Europe, we thought … And then Italy did it. And we realised we could … If China had not done it, the year would have been very different."

As the **Trends Journal** has reported, U.S. media was actively complicit in pushing a false narrative of China's success in combating COVID (see "U.S. MEDIA PUSHED NARRATIVE OF CHINA LOCKDOWN 'SUCCESS' IN EARLY 2020," 27 July 2021).

In America, the willingness to proscribe China-style authoritarian proscriptions including suspensions of Constitutional freedoms has been a hallmark of COVID Czar Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Fauci has pushed false narratives and fake science regarding COVID death and case numbers, masks, lockdowns, social distancing, herd immunity, vaccine efficacy, and cheap drugs many doctors and studies have found beneficial in treatment of COVID.

He could hardly be more effective in damaging the country if he were a paid Chinese operative. There's no evidence of that. But there's plenty of evidence that Fauci:

- Lied about funding controversial experiments at the Wuhan lab where COVID-19 may well have originated, at a time when such experiments were banned in the U.S.
- Tried to influence an investigation in 2020 into whether that Wuhan lab might have been the source of the original COVID-19 outbreak
- Covered for the WHO and China, even after it was determined that the organization yielded to pressure from the CCP in 2020 to misrepresent the timeline of the COVID outbreak

Despite all the revelations regarding China's deceptions, Fauci in May 2021 defended Wuhan Chinese researchers and the WHO as trustworthy in Senate testimony.

How compromising are Fauci's relations with the Chinese? A story just out from The National Pulse details yet another sorry angle. Fauci supported and relied on a Columbia University researcher with deep ties and biases to the Chinese regime, in making an early determination that COVID-19 didn't originate from the Wuhan lab.

Dr. Walter Lipkin received multiple awards, including being honored by Xi Jinping, for his work in conjunction with China. Emails show Fauci congratulated his colleague on the achievement.

In 2020, when COVID broke, Lipkin became a sought after talking head in the news, defending China against Trump administration officials who were questioning the role of the Wuhan lab in the virus outbreak.

According to the Pulse:

> "Lipkin was quoted by outlets including CBS and USA Today as a means by which to 'debunk' Dr. Redfield's explosive claim linking the virus to a Chinese lab.
>
> "'We should be moving away from finger-pointing,' Lipkin told CBS after adding there is 'no evidence to suggest that it was created in a lab.'"

Lipkin and a small group of scientists produced a paper in the spring of 2020 that dismissed the idea that COVID might have originated from the Wuhan lab.

A few months later Lipkin thanked Fauci for backing that dismissal.

Media Role

The role of Western media in influencing the adoption of the Chinese way to combat the virus, can hardly be overstated.

The Tablet expose recounts instance after instance of influential outlets like the Washington Post, The New York Times, and network and cable news outlets extolling China's early response to COVID as wildly successful, while hammering the U.S..

> "'The U.S. has absolutely no control over the coronavirus. China is on top of the tiniest risks,' The Washington Post gushed. 'The verdict is in,' Politico ruled, 'China has outperformed, while the once-respected American system has disastrously faltered.'"

Why was Western media so invested in portraying China's efforts as successful, even as cracks in that narrative emerged, regarding everything China was saying concerning COVID?

The answer may have something to do with who is invested in most major U.S. media outlets: China.

As the Tablet article points out:

> "The Chinese government has financial stakes in almost every top media outlet and friends in corporations, universities, and governments. Preexisting financial relationships with China led institutions to trust information from China, endorse the CCP's narrative, and ultimately advocate for the global adoption of the CCP's policies."

The COVID War succeeded in accelerating the abandonment of Western bulwarks that have protected Americans from tyranny for two centuries. As freedoms of speech and assembly have been stripped, counter narratives to the absurdities of COVID proscriptions have been thoroughly suppressed.

As a result, China escaped having to confront the limits of its economic and social model, by duping and influencing the West into going full Orwell.

The **Trends Journal** had stood out from the very beginning, pointing out and even predicting the catastrophic transformations precipitated by China's COVID gambit.

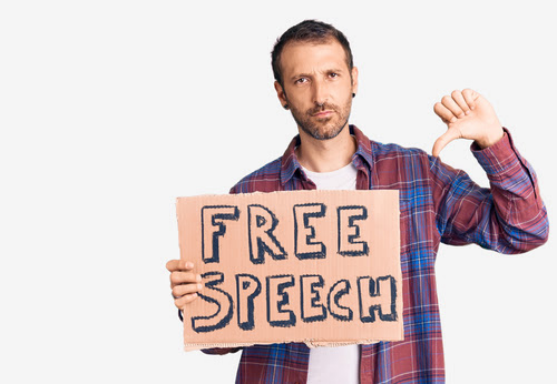
Thanks to our subscribers, for allowing our work to continue.

Just a few of many touchstone **TJ** articles include:

- "CORONAVIRUS 9/11: SPREADING TERROR" (3 Mar 2020)
- "FEAR, HYPE & SENSATIONALISM" (7 Apr 2020)
- "THE NUMBERS DON'T ADD UP" (14 Apr 2020)
- "VACCINE WILL SAVE THE DAY?" (28 Apr 2020)
- "COVID FEAR & HYPE MORE DEADLY THAN VIRUS" (2 Jun 2020)
- "THE COVID WAR IS KILLING US" (22 Sep 2020)
- "CRUCIAL COVID DATA IGNORED BY PRESSTITUTES" (3 Nov 2020)
- "LOCKDOWN MADNESS: CURE WORSE THAN THE DISEASE" (10 Nov 2020)
- "'GOLD STANDARD' COVID TEST INTRINSICALLY FLAWED" (10 Nov 2020)
- "NEW ANALYSIS: CRITICAL ERRORS IN COVID DEATH TOLL" (1 Dec 2020)
- "COVID-19 VACCINES: TRACKING ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS" (19 Jan 2021)
- "ANTIPARASITIC COULD REDUCE CHANCE OF COVID DEATHS UP TO 75%" (26 Jan 2021)
- "PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS: DON'T TAKE THE COVID VAX, PART ONE" (23 Feb 2021)
- "FAUCI THE FAKE: THE ROOT OF ALL PANDEMIC LIES" (2 Mar 2021)
- "EVENT 201: THE COVID-19 BLUEPRINT" (23 Mar 2021)
- "'BREAKTHROUGH': NEW TERM FOR VACCINE FAILURE" (13 Apr 2021)
- "WHY HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE & IVERMECTIN ARE BEING OFFICIALLY SUPPRESSED" (11 May 2021)

- "BATSH*T CRAZY: WUHAN WALLS CLOSING IN AROUND FAUCI" (18 May 2021)
- "SPECIAL REPORT: NEW TOP TREND, COVID WAR 2.0" (22 Jun 2021)

UPDATE: FREE SPEECH IS BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH



The Federal government is using a "health crisis" mantra to extend the Constitutional usurpations it achieved in the COVID War to other political targets.

Our recent article "GOVERNMENT: FREE SPEECH IS BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH" (21 Sep 2021) detailed the trend.

This past week, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky ratcheted up a "health crisis" war against Second Amendment rights.

According to a 29 September NPR article, the CDC is funding studies in order to establish a rationale for "swift interventions, as they have done to contain the coronavirus pandemic and other national health emergencies":

> "Among several other gun research projects, the CDC is now providing funding to 10 state health departments so they can start collecting data in near-real time on emergency room nonfatal firearm injuries. This will allow doctors and epidemiologists to potentially identify trends and craft swift interventions, as they have done to contain the coronavirus pandemic and other national health emergencies."

Americans have witnessed a wholesale destruction of Constitutional rights under the cry of the COVID War's "health emergencies."

Freedoms of speech, assembly, religious practice and conscience, and privacy, are among the explicit rights that have been illegally preempted.

Americans standing up for those rights have been increasingly targeted and isolated by various measures and crackdowns.

Some have observed that one of the barriers so far dissuading even more draconian government abuses are the Second Amendment rights which have allowed Americans to possess firearms.

With its new funding to cull and manipulate data, having already framed gun ownership as a health crisis, the CDC is laying the groundwork for eroding another Constitutional right, without having to pass legislation or prevail in a court of law.

THIS WEEK IN SURVEILLANCE

FBI TRYING TO PRY OPEN PROTONMAIL? Sebastian Gorka caused a stir this past Friday with a tweet claiming that the FBI had requested information about 200,000 ProtonMail accounts.

The Swiss based email provider is widely considered to be one of the most private and secure email communication companies available to consumers.

Concerning the supposed FBI request, Gorka's tweet said:

> "The FBI has just requested the account information for almost 200,000 @ProtonMail accounts in a mass "domestic terrorist" surveillance dragnet targeting Conservatives."

A response from ProtonMail's official Twitter account sought to allay concerns of its customers:

> "At the time of writing, we can confirm that no such request has been received. Such a request would not be able to compromise ProtonMail's encryption. Our policy is to fight against all politically motivated prosecutions, regardless of affiliation."

The 4th Amendment to the Constitution sets strict limits on the government with regard to the private communications of American citizens:

> "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

Fishing expeditions of the kind that Gorka's tweet suggested are expressly forbidden by the 4th amendment.

Nonetheless, in a sign of the times, many users on Twitter applauded news that the FBI might be targeting ProtonMail.

Ironically, the company came under fire earlier in September when it was revealed that it had logged the IP address of a decidedly leftist French climate activist.

The company has long claimed it does not log IP addresses of users, and has indeed used that claim as a selling point of its service. The email company also guarantees that all communications between ProtonMail accounts are encrypted in such a way that even the company cannot decrypt the messages.

But in the wake of the French authorities arresting the wanted climate activist, ProtonMail clarified its IP policy, saying that in cases where Swiss authorities

legally compelled it, the company was subject to logging IP addresses of specific user accounts.

In recent years, requests for logging specific accounts have increased dramatically.

According to Yahoo News, ProtonMail received more than 3,500 requests for assistance from Swiss authorities in 2020, compared to 13 requests in 2017.

Why would the FBI be trying to sweep up such a large amount of information concerning ProtonMail users?

Twitter users crowing about the possible abuse of power seemed to mostly chortle the same song concerning "insurrection," a phrase which has been used to tar a huge gathering at the Capitol on January 6th.

Even the FBI has admitted the January protests over widespread election irregularities did not qualify as an attempt to overthrow the government.

Nonetheless, U.S. intelligence agencies under the Biden administration have been weaponized to target political opponents in the wake of the protest, and to suppress popular dissent concerning its deeply unpopular policies, including COVID related measures and mandates.

The Federal government has run roughshod over Constitutional rights, imprisoning over 600 Americans without due process, and under conditions that many are calling political torture.

Many of those being held have been accused of nothing more than trespassing into the Capitol Building on the date in question.

The **Trends Journal** has followed the growing political abuse of intelligence agencies in many previous articles. Some recent ones include:

- "BIDEN INTEL HEADS GRILLED FOR ILLEGALLY TARGETING U.S. CITIZENS" (20 Apr 2021)
- "POST OFFICE PLAYING SPYMASTERS" (27 Apr 2021)
- "FBI ENCOURAGES SNITCHING ON 'EXTREMIST' FAMILY MEMBERS" (13 Jul 2021)
- "GAINING FREEDOM FROM THE TECHNOCRACY" (20 Jul 2021)
- "BIDEN ADMIN PUSHING FOR IRS SURVEILLANCE OF ALL BANK ACCOUNT DATA" (14 Sep 2021)

ANTIFA VIOLENCE NOT BEING TRACKED BY FBI. Banking transactions of as little as 600 dollars, text messages, views expressed on social media and much more have drawn the snooping interest of American intelligence and other Federal agencies under the Biden administration.

But the FBI did admit at a hearing last week that there was one area where the intelligence community is not tracking information: violence committed by Anfifa aligned groups.

That revelation came during a House Civil Rights and Civil Liberties subcommittee hearing on "Confronting Violent White Supremacy (Part VI): Examining the Biden Administration's Counterterrorism Strategy."

At the hearing, Timothy Langan, Assistant Director of Counterterrorism for the FBI, was asked by Rep. Nancy Mace (R-S.C.) about efforts to monitor Antifa violence.

"How many acts of violence or domestic terrorism has Antifa committed over the last two years?" Mace asked Langan.

"Since we don't categorize Antifa, nor do we calculate or collate information regarding Antifa—that movement, we don't have that," Langan responded. "But, we can provide you information on anarchist threats and cases in general."

By not keeping track of violence perpetrated by the largest leftist group in America committed to using violence, those politically aligned with its aims can avoid being confronted with official government tallies that would show inconvenient reality.

But the riots of 2020 by BLM and Antifa, which caused billions in property damage and resulted in dozens of deaths, stormings of Federal buildings and police precincts, "lawless autonomous zones," and a violent riot at the White House and burning of a church in June, are a matter of record, whether the FBI is counting or not.

The **Trends Journal** has been reporting on bias in Federal treatment of different protest groups in many articles, including:

- "POLITICAL SUPPRESSION GONE WRONG" (9 Mar 2021)
- "DOJ TO ARRESTED ANTIFA & BLM PROTESTERS: NEVERMIND" (11 May 2021)
- "DEMS STILL WANT JAN. 6 COMMISSION AFTER SENATE REJECTION" (1 Jun 2021)
- "THE LARGEST DOJ CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION IN HISTORY" (8 Jun 2021)

A GOOGLE SEARCH CAN GET YOU ARRESTED. Fire up those VPNs. The rogue Federal government stepped it up another notch in surveilling Americans.

Forbes has just broken a story on Federal agents enlisting Google to perform a "keyword dragnet" in connection with a Wisconsin criminal case.

The Feds demanded a list of anyone who had used the search engine to query for certain info about the case.

The ACLU reacted to yet another breach of Constitutional rights of Americans. According to Jennifer Granick, surveillance and cybersecurity counsel for the rights organization:

> "Trawling through Google's search history database enables police to identify people merely based on what they might have been thinking about, for whatever reason, at some point in the past. This is a virtual dragnet through the public's interests, beliefs, opinions, values and friendships, akin to mind reading powered by the Google time machine.
>
> "This never-before-possible technique threatens First Amendment interests and will inevitably sweep up innocent people, especially if the keyword terms are not unique and the time frame not precise. To make matters worse, police are currently doing this in secret, which insulates the practice from public debate and regulation."

The 4th Amendment to the Constitution prohibits the government from conducting the kind of keyword demand the Feds made:

> "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

Probable cause was clearly lacking in the abusive keyword dragnet. But the illegalities of domestic intelligence agencies are becoming daily assaults on the rights of Americans. And so far legislators and courts have done little to stop the usurpations of citizen rights.

According to *Forbes*, the Feds intended to keep their demand to the tech company secret. More can be read here.

TRENDS IN CRYPTOS

METAVERSE GAMING HITS BILLION DOLLAR PAYDIRT WITH AXIE INFINITY

Axie Infinity has grabbed the attention of traditional tech and gaming companies.

The crypto based game is built off blockchain technology and utilizes NFT (Non-Fungible Token) characters.

Currently, it's raking in revenues of 28.9 million dollars a week, which projects out to 1.5 billion a year.

That's equivalent in revenue to blockbuster traditional games. No wonder that Facebook and other tech companies are buying into the Metaverse.

On one level, Axie Infinity is a video game, with characters that do typical video game things like fight battles.

On another level, the project is a crypto rewards ecosystem that spreads profits from gaming in ways that are being hailed by many as transformative.

The AXS crypto token used to buy NFT characters has shot up astronomically in value over the last several months. In mid-June, it was trading at less than five dollars. In early October, it was over 145 dollars:

Source: Coinmarketcap.com

Another in-game token, "Small Love Potion," acts as an in-game rewards token. These can be cashed out and converted to fiat currencies, etc.

As odd as it might sound to some, *Forbes* has reported that skilled gamers in some places are making their livings off playing, via earning tokens and trading NFTs:

> "In regions like Southeast Asia, specifically in the Philippines and Vietnam, Axie Infinity is fueling a digital economy based on crypto assets.
>
> "People are playing Axie Infinity as their main source of income in areas where banking services are hard to access and often expensive."

Buying NFT characters is not cheap, and at least three are needed to enable game play. But the ecosystem of Axie Infinity allows investors to essentially buy

business stakes in the metaverse by purchasing crypto assets like characters and land, and then renting them out to others.

Gamers without substantial means can rent those assets and use them to play the game, potentially earning enough tokens to cover their costs and turn a profit.

There have been other attempts to create crypto based gaming worlds, but no previous crypto gaming project has exploded like Axie Infinity.

Others that might take off are in the works, though.

Phantom Galaxies, a project by Blowfish and Animoca, offers a graphically cinematic and realistic sci-fi gaming experience.

Forbes has reported that the Solana and Binance Smart Chain blockchain networks have witnessed a surge of metaverse projects.

The Three Kingdoms, a game on the Binance Smart Chain, is built around a theme from an ancient Chinese tale. Genopets, a project on Solana, is introducing a concept called move-to-earn. We'll try to wrap our minds around that one later.

FED MOVES A STEP CLOSER TO CBDC FUNCTIONALITY

A press release on 4 October may have just signaled that the Federal Reserve is taking a step on the way to a CBDC (Central Bank Digital Currency).

According to the release, the Fed is gearing up to adopt the ISO 20022 message format for its Fedwire Funds Service, and has invited public comment on the matter.

The Fedwire Funds Service is a real-time gross settlement system owned and operated by the Federal Reserve Banks. It enables businesses and financial institutions to transfer funds quickly and securely.

The ISO 20022 format was developed by the International Organization for Standardization, which is an independent, non-governmental organization that publishes standards for a broad range of industries.

According to the Fed announcement:

> "The change will allow for enhanced efficiency of both domestic and cross-border payments, and a richer set of payment data that may help banks and other entities comply with sanctions and anti-money laundering requirements."

A number of current crypto networks feature ISO 20022 compliance, and rumors quickly swirled about their possible use in implementing the change in the Fedwire Funds Service.

Ironically, Ripple (XRP), which is currently embroiled in a lawsuit with the SEC over the nature of its tokenized network, was one of the cryptos attracting speculation. Ripple specializes in facilitating cross border payments between institutions, and is ISO 20022 compliant.

Ripple has previously suggested itself as a platform for a projected official US CBDC, and Hedera is another project that has proponents. The **Trends Journal** previously covered that story in "U.S. CBDC TAKING ITS TIME RISING WITH PROJECT NEW DAWN?" (21 Sep 2021).

Hedera and Quant (a project focused on interoperability for Distributed Ledgers) have features and compliance that could make them prospects for integration in use cases similar to what the Federal Reserve appears to be moving toward.

POWELL ACCIDENTALLY BOOSTS CRYPTO

Cryptocurrencies' prices bumped up Friday after Jerome Powell, chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve, said in testimony before the House Financial Services Committee that the Fed has no plans to ban them.

Bitcoin jumped 10.8 percent to rise above $48,000 on Powell's comment; Ether also shot up 10.8 percent.

Crypto enthusiasts have long been nervous about government regulation, which likely would drive away some traders and make prices less volatile.

Under questioning by committee members, Powell referred to stablecoins, which are digital currencies whose value is tethered to a more stable asset, such as the dollar.

Stablecoins "are like money market funds, they're like bank deposits," Powell said, "but they're to some extent outside the regulatory perimeter and it's appropriate that they be regulated."

Powell's comment "was, of course, a very favorable note, especially when you compare it to the People's Bank of China," analyst Naeem Aslam at AvaTrade commented to *The Wall Street Journal*.

China recently outlawed cryptocurrencies in advance of releasing its digital yuan next year, a plan we reported in "China: Digital Currency World Leader" in our Global Economic Trends section of 20 October, 2020.

TRENDPOST: *That a cryptocurrency could rise 10 percent on an offhand comment by a government official reinforces our view expressed, for example, in our April 27, 2021 U.S. Markets Overview, that cryptos' prices may not move on*

fundamentals but are knocked around by loose comments, rumors, and whims, making them a playpen for speculators with money to lose.

As we continue to warn should major governments ban together to heavily regulate and/or ban crypto market, the currencies will decline. However, we maintain that even with these restrictions, there will be profitable crypto sectors.

BLOCKCHAIN BATTLES

BLOCKCHAIN BULLS: ORLANDO BRAVO. When the world's largest private equity firms are all beginning to sound the same note regarding a wave, there might be an ocean behind it.

This time it's Orlando Bravo, co-founder of Thoma Bravo, which currently has more that 80 billion in assets under management (AUM).

Bravo told CNBC he was bullish on cryptos:

> "How could you not love crypto? Crypto is just a great system. It's frictionless. It's decentralized. And young people want their own financial system. So it is here to stay."

The renowned investor's comments provided another signal of acceptance of what is increasingly seen as a once in a generation disruptive technology.

Bravo hasn't only been talking. Thoma Bravo participated in the latest funding round for crypto exchange FTX, which netted $900 million from Sequoia Capital, Coinbase Ventures, VanEck and nearly 60 other firms.

In the CNBC interview, Bravo said his firm considered the overall technology innovations of blockchains, with their distributed ledgers, efficiencies in direct transactions, and vast potential use cases, to be the most crucial and exciting aspect.

“The underlying technology of blockchain, regardless of what protocol or what system you are building upon, can be very powerful and sometimes provides better use cases than data-based software.”

Of course, blockchains are databases. But their peer-to-peer decentralization, methods of writing and encrypting info, tokenized incentives, and “smart contracts” that execute instructions based on data, have marked a revolution in database technology.

IRAN RESCINDING BITCOIN MINING BAN? When there are billions at stake, and your country is facing an international squeeze, there may be limits to your leverage.

That appears to be the case in Iran, which banned bitcoin mining several months ago, citing potential strain on their power grid.

News reports are now indicating the country is licensing mining operators. The move would be seen as significant, since Iran had been a crypto mining hotspot. By some estimates, the country has represented about seven percent of mining operations in the world.

According to blockchain analytics firm Elliptic, revenues from Iran’s Bitcoin production have been estimated at close to $1 billion a year.

Even during the ban, thousands of computers have continued underground mining operations. In one embarrassing episode, the basement of Iran’s stock exchange was found running computers with bitcoin network software.

Most mining in the country is still unlicensed, but that could be changing as the country signals more acceptance. Iran's tax agency recently called for a legal framework for crypto-trading activities in the country.

SEC AVOIDS DECISIONS ON BITCOIN ETF FUNDS. A number of investment firms looking to implement bitcoin exchange traded funds (ETFs) to clients, had decision deadlines put off by the SEC this week.

Filings by Van Eck, Global X and several other firms had decision deadlines pushed back to November and December.

Order notices by the SEC regarding its (lack of) decision read:

> "The Commission finds that it is appropriate to designate a longer period within which to issue an order approving or disapproving the proposed rule change so that it has sufficient time to consider the proposed rule change and the issues raised in the comment letters that have been submitted in connection therewith."

The **Trends Journal** has previously reported on investment firms seeking to give crypto exposure to investors via ETFs in "WEALTH MANAGERS READYING CRYPTO FUNDS FOR CLIENTS" (10 Aug 2021), "GOING LONG ON BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY" (17 Aug 2021) and "BITCOIN ETFs IN PREP AS SEC HIGHLIGHTS PATH TO APPROVAL" (24 Aug 2021).

According to crypto reporting outlet The Block, VanEck's ETF proposal is the furthest along in the review process, and will likely receive a decision in mid November.

YOUNG CHOOSING CRYPTOS OVER PENSION FUNDS. Increasingly, younger people are choosing crypto investing over putting money into traditional retirement investing accounts.

Europe has seen a major surge in crypto investing according to a recent Chainalysis report.

It showed that $1 trillion came to the region over the last 12 months, which accounts for almost a fourth of global crypto activity.

According to Ambcrypto, Spain is one country pushing up crypto adoption rates, led by young investors.

Spanish “neobank” Rebellion conducted a survey which showed that young Spaniards are choosing crypto over pension fund investments. According to the survey:

> “21 percent of young people currently invest in cryptocurrencies, which makes them [crypto] the most contracted investment product, followed by pension funds and deposits (19 percent).”

Another 38 percent of Spaniards aged 25 to 40 who weren’t currently holding cryptos, reported they were considering making such investments in the near future.

Survey responders did strike some notes of concern. For example, 23 percent expressed doubts about the reliability of cryptocurrencies.

But a larger margin, 27 percent, said they believed cryptos represented the future of payments.

TRENDS IN THE COVID WAR

RESTAURANT BIZ STRUGGLE

A National Restaurant Association survey conducted between 7 September and 15 September paints a less-than-rosy picture of the current state and the future of the restaurant industry.

As reported by CNBC, more than half of those surveyed said that business was worse now than it had been three months ago. Only 9 percent said that business had improved during that period.

More than 75 percent of the restaurant operators reported being short-staffed; among those, 83 percent were understaffed by 10 percent, while 39 percent were understaffed by 20 percent. Many reported they had reduced their hours and the number of menu items offered, to deal with the staffing issues.

With more mandates being imposed, such as showing vax passports before entering plus staff shortages, 45 percent of respondents said that their

restaurants weren't open at full capacity for indoor dining; see "NYC: OUTDOOR EATING GOOD, INDOOR BAD," (29 Sep 2020).

The restaurants have also been plagued by supply issues, with 95 percent of respondents experiencing delays or shortages during the past three months. And 91 percent reported that their profit margins have shrunk, with food costs rising and accounting for a higher percentage of sales; see "RESTAURANTS, FOOD PROCESSORS RAISE PRICES TO MEET COSTS" (20 Jul 2021).

Most of those surveyed don't expect the next three months to be any better; more than half believe business will decline even more.

As we had forecast, with the media's non-stop spreading of Delta variant fear and hysteria, COVID-19 is among the reasons cited for the decline and for the gloomy outlook. Only 64 percent of U.S. adults feel comfortable dining at a restaurant; see "WORKER SHORTAGES, VIRUS HOBBLE RESTAURANTS' RECOVERY" (14 Sep 2021), "DINERS AVOIDING RESTAURANTS FOR FEAR OF COVID" (17 Aug 2021) and "RESTAURANTS FACE BLEAK WINTER" (21 Sep 2021).

The survey results are being used by the trade association to lobby in opposition to President Biden's proposed hike in the corporate tax rate and to proposed changes in the National Labor Relations Act that would impose $50,000 to $100,000 fines for labor violations. The association is also asking for the Restaurant Revitalization Fund, created to help keep the industry afloat during the challenges of the COVID War, to be replenished.

A National Restaurant Association vice-president appealed to congressional leadership: "Restaurants still need help today and overwhelming them with costly new obligations will only prevent progress in turning the tide of recovery."

TREND FORECAST: *As winter sets in across the U.S. and more Delta variant fear and hysteria is spread by the media—plus more vax passports and other COVID War mandates imposed by politicians—restaurant sales will continue to decline.*

And, the further equity markets dive, the higher inflation rises and the deeper the economy sinks, more restaurants will go bust and overall sales across the industry will decline.

NO JAB, NO JOB. VACCINE MANDATES 'WORKING'

It turns out people have to eat and have a place to live.

Health officials in the U.S. are pleasantly surprised that President Biden's vax effort to force private-sector employers to either require workers to be fully vaccinated or force them to undergo weekly tests has been effective because vaccination rates are increasing and employees are not leaving their jobs in droves.

"Mandates are working," John Swartzberg, a physician and professor at the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley, told *The New York Times*. "If you define 'working' by the percentage of people getting vaccinated and not leaving their jobs in droves."

He told the paper that it seems that businesses have been emboldened by the drastic government actions and said these "companies think, 'If the government is doing it, why shouldn't we?'"

Trends Journal has been reporting on vaccine "caution flags" ever since the various COVID vaccines, which were approved for use faster than any other vaccines in history, were declared the primary weapon in the COVID War, such as reported in our December 2020 article, "COVID VACCINE: SCIENTISTS WARN 'CAUTION'," or our 19 January 2021 article, "COVID-19 VACCINES: TRACKING ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS."

Americans had been offered free donuts and beers in earlier rounds of incentivizing, but Biden's decision in September—which will be enforced by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration—was seen as a dramatic step. The *NYT* report pointed out that under the plan, health care workers and most federal workers could face disciplinary action if they refuse the jab.

The shift in the country has been towards vaccine mandates. The paper pointed out that New York, Rhode Island, and other states all require workers to be vaccinated to keep their jobs. Other states—like New Jersey—are less extreme and let workers submit to regular COVID-19 testing if they decide not to take the shot.

Hospitals across the country have seen increases in employee vaccinations. Kaiser Permanente told the *Sacramento Bee* that its employee vaccination rate was about 78 percent prior to its decision to mandate the vaccine on 2 August. Now 97 percent of its 216,000 employees have been vaccinated.

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our forecast that the stricter the government rules, the more aggressive confrontations will erupt between pro-choice vax vs. pro-vaccine proponents. In addition, we maintain our forecast for anti-establishment, anti-vax political movements.*

Indeed, this past Sunday, speaking at a Republican event in his home state of South Carolina Republican Senator Lindsey Graham (who got two COVID Jabs but still got the virus) was booed by the crowd when he said, "If you haven't had the vaccine you ought to think about getting it..."

And, ludicrously, Graham compared the COVID gene therapy vax to the measles vax by saying to the crowd, "How many of you have taken the measles shots?"... to which the crowd again booed, correctly and collectively yelling back, "It's not the same."

We note this to forecast that the "old guard" will be challenged by a new movement that will unite various factions from diverse socioeconomic and political sectors under the banner of "Freedom."

GENE THERAPY STUDIES RAISE CONCERNS: NOT A PEEP ABOUT COVID GENE JAB

Saturday is the least watch/read news day of the week. Thus, this last Saturday, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that the Food and Drug Administration held a 2-day public meeting in September to address concerns over gene therapy jabs.

In the new era vaxxed world, the technology holds the promise of treating inherited diseases by replacing defective genes (see "A FIRST: INJECTION CURES GENETIC DEFECT," 13 Jul 2021)—but some serious side-effects have raised alarms.

In trials of a gene therapy treatment for X-linked myotubular myopathy, a rare, often fatal muscle disease, four young boys who received the same therapy also, within weeks, all developed liver dysfunction and died.

Another gene therapy study was stopped when lab mice developed cancer.

Previous subjects in the X-linked myotubular myopathy study had shown significant improvement, and researchers are still not sure that the deaths are related to the gene therapy. BioMarin Pharmaceutical Inc., the firm with the cancerous lab rats, was surprised last year by the FDA refusing to approve BioMarin's gene therapy treatment for hemophilia, on the grounds that more detailed, long-term data was necessary.

Such incidents have been described as mere "growing pains" by gene therapy proponents, who say that it's inevitable that negative episodes come to light given the exponential increase in gene therapy studies.

The mechanics of gene therapy involve replacing missing or defective genes in persons with diseases such as hemophilia or certain forms of muscular dystrophy. It usually involves injecting the patient with a harmless virus containing the healthy DNA. Most gene therapies pass through the liver on the way to their cellular targets, and so the risk of liver damage is nothing new. More recently the risk of cancer has been seen in mice and dogs treated with gene therapies.

The article cites a case from two decades ago, in which an 18-year-old died of multiple organ failure after receiving an experimental gene therapy for a rare liver disease; that was a major setback for the entire field, but over the past decade gene therapy has made a comeback. In 2017 the FDA granted its first approval of a gene therapy product, Luxturna, which treats an inherited type of vision loss; see "AMOEBA GENE IMPROVES VISION IN BLIND MAN" (1 Jun 2021).

TRENDPOST: *Again, not a peep from the Presstitutes, not a mention in the WSJ article of the connection between COVID-19 vaccines and gene therapy. Messenger RNA (mRNA) used in the vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna makes them, technically, gene therapies, but the FDA classifies them as vaccines and not as gene therapies because they do not alter the genes; see "HUMANS SUBJECT TO mRNA 'SOFTWARE UPDATES'" (30 Mar 2021).*

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that mRNA from the vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell and does not affect or interact with a person's DNA. However, ***Trends Journal*** *readers know that any statement from the CDC is "operative" only until it is no longer so; see "COVID FRAUDSTER" (18 May 2021) and "CDC MANIPULATES DATA TO SUPPORT NARRATIVE (AGAIN)" (14 Sep 2021).*

AS FORECAST: NSW'S PREMIER A PROVEN CLOWN FRAUD

A remark oft-credited to Mark Twain, but which might have originated with Clarence Darrow, goes something like, "I've never wished anyone dead, but there have been obituaries I have read with great relish."

This story isn't about someone dying, but it's still a source of great relish and schadenfreude to learn, 1 October, of the resignation that day of the premier (since 2017) of New South Wales, Australia, Gladys “BinJerkenoff” Berejiklian.

However, in the New World Disorder, it wasn't her arrogant, dictatorial ways and utter contempt for personal freedom that caused her downfall. Rather, it was the result of an investigation by the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption, which had already uncovered that Berejiklian had been in a secret five year sexual relationship with a married state legislator who was at the center of the corruption probe.

She resigned upon the ICAC's announcement that its scrutiny had widened to include her conduct between 2012 and 2018, during which time she is alleged to have breached public trust in her handling of grant funding to community organizations, and by encouraging or failing to report the corrupt behavior by NSW Member of Parliament Daryl Maguire who she was fu*king.

Maguire had already told investigators that he had accepted envelopes of cash from Chinese nationals for fraudulently-acquired visas and other unethical schemes.

She's not the first NSW premier to resign because of an ICAC inquiry; in 2014 Barry O'Farrell stepped down after neglecting to tell investigators he had accepted a gift of a $3000 bottle of wine.

TRENDPOST: *In numerous interviews and YouTube podcasts, Gerald Celente has provided facts illustrating Ms. Berejiklian's fraudulent incompetence.*

We have also referenced Ms. Berejiklian in ***Trends Journal*** *since the advent of the COVID War, as the poster-girl for (and one of the architects of) the heavy-handed, draconian, oppressive, repressive, harsh, punitive and tyrannical policies imposed on the people of NSW (and Australia in general) in overreaction to COVID-19; see, for example:*

- *"AUSTRALIA'S PREMIER CRACKING DOWN" (5 Jan 2021)*
- *"DOWN UNDER, UNDER MORE LOCKDOWNS" (17 Aug 2021)*
- *"MORE LOCKDOWN UNREST DOWN UNDER" (27 Jul 2021)*
- *"KNOCK, KNOCK: IT'S THE COVID POLICE. DEATH CAMPS NEXT? (3 Aug 2021)*

ISRAEL: NO BOOSTER, NO 'GREEN PASS,' NO FREEDOM

Israel, the country to first introduce a COVID-19 'green pass' for those fully vaccinated to resume some semblance of "normal" life, announced that only those who have received the third vaccine booster jab will be eligible for the card.

The announcement from Tel Aviv's advisory cabinet on Sunday sparked protests across the country of 9.2 million who lashed out at what they see as a form of forced vaccination, the Associated Press reported.

"We are totally against any forced vaccinations or any forced medications, and we are totally against doing anything to our children and grandchildren that we don't agree with," Sarah Felt, a protester, told the wire service.

The **Trends Journal**, on 23 February, published an article titled, "ISRAEL: NO VACCINE, NO GREEN PASSPORT," that called Israel a trailblazer in early COVID-19 "passport" adoption. We predicted that Israel "set the trend" for the rest of the world: No COVID Jab, no Freedom.

(For more on this, see our 2 March article "NO JAB, NO FREEDOM" and our 19 January article, "AIRLINES & BUSINESSES: NO JAB, NO ENTRY.")

Since then, the country's rollout of the card system has been plagued by technical issues.

The country spent this summer focused on promoting a third COVID-19 vaccine jab to ward off serious infection. About 3.5 million in the country have received a booster shot, the AP reported. The report pointed out that 70 percent of those currently hospitalized with serious cases have not been vaccinated—which means 30 percent are vaccinated.

TREND FORECAST: *Once again, Israel has set the trend that will be embraced by the rest of the world: no booster shot, no life. Every year, or possibly every six months, people will be required to roll up their sleeves to take a jab to protect them from some new variant that makes the previous jab less effective.*

And as we have forecast, there will be growing anti-vax, anti-establishment movements to counter the forced vax mandates in many nations across the globe.

UNVAXXED AUSSIE'S EXCLUDED

In last week's **Trends Journal**, we reported on the plan to gradually "normalize" life in Australia's New South Wales (largest city, Sydney) as projected full-vaccination goals are met, except that the unvaccinated

would be exempt from having their freedoms restored; see "NSW: NO VAX, NO FREEDOM!" (28 Sep 2021).

Now NSW's Premier Gladys "Beenjerkingoff" Berejiklian (who suddenly resigned last week; see "AS FORECAST: NSW'S PREMIER A PROVEN CLOWN FRAUD" in this issue) told people who have not taken the COVID Jab that they will continue to be treated as second-class citizens, even after the 80 percent fully-vaccinated mark (forecast for the end of October) is attained. And when almost all remaining restrictions and stay-at-home orders are lifted on 1 December, a series of restrictions will remain for the un-vaxxed.

"A lot of businesses have said they will not accept anyone who is unvaccinated," Berejiklian announced, adding, "Life for the unvaccinated will be very difficult indefinitely," and that unvaccinated persons should expect to be barred from entering shops, hairdressers and entertainment venues even when such businesses are reopened to those who dutifully accepted the jabs.

TREND FORECAST: *As detailed by the former Premier, "Life for the unvaccinated will be very difficult indefinitely."*

*That a statement such as this is accepted as rational, especially coming from a fraud that was fu*king another politician who she was doing dirty money deals with is accepted as rational and repeated by Presstitutes... exemplifies how low society has fallen.*

Moreover, the general population accepts and obeys what their politicians and "authorities" tell them.

However, an "irate tireless minority, keen on setting brushfires in the minds of men," will be opposing these dictates. New anti-establishment political movements which we have forecast, will greatly accelerate when equity markets crash and the Greatest Depression wreaks havoc across the globe.

TRENDPOST: *Australia thus continues to be a country in which COVID-19 policies have had far greater negative impact (harsh lockdowns and harsher*

enforcement) on the general population than the virus itself; see "AUSTRALIA: DRONES & IGNORANCE" (25 Aug 2020). The latest figures (as of 1 October 2021) show that, in a country of just under 26 million, there have been just 1,309 deaths since the COVID War was launched in February 2020... which, of the total population, equals 0.00509 percent dead from the virus . Over the course of 18 months virus deaths equal the grand total of 0.0003 percent per month.

NBA'S VAX MANDATE FACES PLAYER PUSHBACK

The National Basketball Association, with around 90 percent of its players already fully vaccinated against COVID-19, has been on board with Pres. Biden's vaccination plan.

But when the NBA sought to mandate that, for the upcoming season, all players be vaccinated, it got some public pushback from the National Basketball Players Association, the union for current professional players in the NBA.

The Hill reports, on 29 September, that a number of NBA stars have publicly criticized the vaccine and are refusing to take it, and the NBPA has rejected the NBA's vax requirement. Some of the union's representatives are unvaccinated, which opens the door to problems for themselves and their teams.

For example, the union's vice president is Kyrie Irving, who plays for the Brooklyn Nets and has not been vaccinated. New York City's indoor vaccination mandate means that Irving could be forced to miss all of his team's home games, which would cost the team games and money.

Andrew Wiggins of the Golden State Warriors, who applied to the NBA for a religious exemption but was denied, faces a similar situation because San

Francisco requires proof of vaccination at large indoors events; see "SAN FRANCISCO: NO VAX PASSPORT, NO FREEDOM OF CHOICE" (17 Aug 2021).

Bradley Beal of the Washington Wizards is not vaccinated, and reportedly asked, "Why are [vaccinated people] still getting COVID...? It's funny that it only reduces your chances of going to the hospital. It doesn't eliminate anybody from getting COVID. Right?"

Jonathan Isaac of the Orlando Magic, who last year didn't participate in his team's protests of the national anthem, has criticized Dr. Anthony Fauci and said that vaccines can't be trusted because they are man-made.

But superstar LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers, usually outspoken on a variety of highly-charged topics, declared that, although vaccinated, "I don't think I should get involved in what other people should do for their bodies and livelihoods."

However, basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar favors the NBA's vax mandate, telling CNN "We have to educate ourselves so that we understand what's being offered. These vaccines are safe and they are effective. And we have to fight this virus as a group. We can't have certain people feeling, 'Well, I don't have to do that.' That's insanity."

A Kaiser Family Foundation poll released 28 September found that most unvaccinated Americans are unlikely to change their thinking, and will "definitely not" get the shot unless required to.

The NBA backed off on the players, while still mandating shots for referees and team personnel working near the court. Unvaxxed players must undergo testing and wear a mask in team facilities, and are barred from sitting next to vaccinated players. And many teams report that 100 percent of their players are already vaxxed.

Ja Morant of the Memphis Grizzlies said, "I got vaccinated early...I have a baby girl. I travel a lot. I can't bring COVID back to her." He might be unaware that

children have a 99.997 percent recovery rate; see "VAX KIDS? THE COVID RISK IS 'TINY'" (13 Jul 2021).

None of the other four major U.S. sports leagues require their players to be vaxxed, but the National Football League, with 93 percent of players vaxxed, has stringent protocols for unvaxxed players and their teams. The National Hockey League and Major League Baseball each have about 85 percent of players vaxxed, and the NHL hopes to attain 98 percent for its upcoming season. MLB's restrictions are eased for teams that attain 85 percent player vaccination.

TRENDPOST: *The arrogance of comedians and sports figures is exemplified in Kareem Abdul-Jabbar telling CNN, The Cartoon News Network, "We have to educate ourselves so that we understand what's being offered. These vaccines are safe and they are effective. And we have to fight this virus as a group. We can't have certain people feeling, 'Well, I don't have to do that.' That's insanity."*

It is "insanity" that a man who played basketball and knows shit about science, is quoted with the arrogance that he is "educated" and how dare the rest of us "stupid" people question that the Operation Warp Speed gene therapy shot—the fasted one ever rushed to market—is not "safe and effective."

The importance of this is that the vast majority of the population look up to "celebrities," sports figures, comedians and their political cohorts... and will believe what they tell them and do as they say.

MASKS ON A PLANE = MASS STUPIDITY

Remember boys and girls and children of all ages, when on an airplane, it is OK to take your mask off when eating and drinking. But put it on between bites and sips because that's when the COVID will slide down your throat and kill you!

As Gerald Celente noted when the COVID War began and mandates were being imposed on populations: “They’re making this shit up.”

Need more proof?

Depending on what country you are from, there are different mask wearing rules on airplanes.

On 28 September, *The Washington Post* reported on the myriad rules pertaining to mask requirements for airplane travelers, especially children.

Under the U.S. Transportation Security Administration's mandate, effective through January, everyone 2 yrs. old and older must wear a face covering in airports, planes, trains and other forms of public transport.

But, shoving out their own made-up bullshit rules, Air France requires masks of everyone 6 and older.

To further illustrate the arrogance and stupidity of their making this crap up, Lufthansa requires masks of those 11 or older. But the U.S. rule takes precedence over others, so foreign travelers to the U.S. need to be prepared to comply.

The federal mask mandate does provide for exemptions for "certain disabilities," but the CDC says that conditions that make mask-wearing only "difficult," such as, for example, asthma, do not necessarily qualify.

More Mandate Madness

And each airline has its own set of grounds and procedures for requesting an exemption. Delta, for example, puts passengers through a "Clearance-to-Fly" process that can take more than an hour; American Airlines requires medical documentation submitted 72 hours before takeoff; Southwest requires a doctor's note a week in advance; and JetBlue, while requiring exemption

requests "well in advance," says that it's a "very rare case" in which a traveler manages to qualify.

Anyone who refuses to wear a mask on a plane—children included—may be prohibited from flying, now and in the future; such persons may be removed from the aircraft and may incur federal penalties.

The airlines claim their crew members strive to be flexible when dealing with families with small children, but entire families have been forced to deplane over a small child refusing to wear a mask or just being unable to keep it on.

TREND FORECAST: *Why are children being forced to wear masks and get vaccinated? As noted in this week's article, "VAX KIDS? MORE DROWNED IN THE U.S. THEN DIED OF COVID."*

Between May 2020 and 23 September 2021, the grand total of 498 children died of the virus in America. And as we have reported, the majority had preexisting comorbidities and/or were overweight or obese.

TREND FORECAST: *Mandates beyond mask wearing will be enforced across the globe on air travel and beyond... affecting all aspects of life.*

On Sunday, Air New Zealand announced it will require international passengers to be fully vaccinated. The airline's CEO Greg Foran said, "Being vaccinated against COVID-19 is the new reality of international travel."

Anyone flying into Canada must be fully vaxxed and the French government allows "Vaxxed Only" on domestic air, long-distance train, and on busses.

TRENDPOST*: To further illustrate the New World Order fascist dictates, The Washington Post article includes propaganda tips on how to train and motivate children to comply with the mask rules, and even advocates practice sessions a month or two before a trip; even at 18 mos., we are told, children can "start to practice."*

Even though the current TSA mandate is effective only through January, don't expect mask requirements to go away; see "THE NEW ABNORMAL: MASKED FOR LIFE" (25 May 2021).

TRENDPOST: *And as we have noted, TSA lunacy rules say the masks may be removed for eating, drinking and taking medication, but only briefly, and replaced after each bite or sip. Why? Obviously, in the New Abnormal world of lost freedom and intelligence... the virus will not enter one's mouth between sips and bites!*

Airline employees, from ticket agents to flight crews, must remind travelers of the rules. And not just any face covering will do. Bandannas, scarves, balaclavas and even masks with valves are prohibited; see "SADOMASKISM: THE INHUMAN WAY" (7 Jul 2020).

VAX WEAKENS; COVID PILL APPEARS

On 1 October, Reuters reported some COVID War news, good and bad.

First, the bad news. Actually, it's not really "news" to report that the highly-touted COVID vaccines, once hyped to the public as the miracle cure that would vanquish the deadly virus once and for all—see "VACCINE WILL SAVE THE DAY" (28 Apr 2020)—have exhibited significant loss of effectiveness over time.

Numerous **Trends Journal** articles have addressed this; see, for example:

- "U.K. TO REVIEW VACCINE EFFICACY AFTER ISRAEL REPORTS" (26 Jan 2021)
- "ISRAEL: COVID DRUG MUCH LESS EFFECTIVE THAN WHAT WE'VE BEEN SOLD" (27 Jul 2021)

- "CDC'S 3 NEW VAX EFFECTIVENESS STUDIES = BIG LIE" (24 Aug 2021)
- "VACCINES LOSE EFFECTIVENESS, MORE SHOTS NEEDED. HO-HUM." (3 Aug 2021)

But now Reuters tells of a new study which finds that, at least in the case of the Pfizer-BioNTech shots, levels of vaccine-induced antibodies which have the power to neutralize the original strain of COVID-19 drop, by a factor of 10, within 7 mos. of the original dose.

Furthermore, in half the patients studied, neutralizing antibodies which are effective against variants—such as Delta, Beta and Mu—were undetectable 6 mos. after the second dose.

The researchers point out that such neutralizing antibodies are not the immune system's only means of defense against the virus, but they are "critically important" in protecting against infection.

TREND FORECAST: *Totally absent Presstitutes reporting and government mandates is the hard fact that the COVID Jab was sold to the public as having a 96 percent efficacy rate: Two shots and it's over. Never COVID again... safe for the rest of your life.*

That lie has now changed. So, what's the conclusion? Booster shots will be needed 6 to 7 mos. after the initial dose to enhance protection against COVID-19 and its variants. Quelle surprise! Of course, this is good news if you're making, selling or otherwise promoting booster shots.

Remember, the Drug Lords' plan is for new variants to continue to appear, necessitating more shots, at least annually, in perpetuity, on the model of flu shots; see "MORE COVID JABS, MORE BIG BUCKS FOR DRUG LORDS" (28 Sep 2021).

And Now, Some Good News?

The same Reuters story reports that pharmaceutical giant Merck & Co. has entered the fray with a pill to fight COVID.

The company announced on 1 October that its experimental, orally-administered antiviral drug for COVID-19, Molnupiravir, tested on mild to moderately infected patients who had severe risk factors, cut patients' hospitalization and death rates in half.

The article quotes Amesh Adalja, of the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security: "An oral antiviral that can impact hospitalization risk to such a degree would be game changing."

The drug operates by introducing errors into the virus's genetic code. It would be the first anti-COVID-19 drug in pill form.

TRENDPOST: *Merck intends to seek Emergency Use Authorization from U.S. Food & Drug Administration; this was the route taken to rapidly bring the COVID vaccines into distribution. The procedure allows the FDA to recommend that a drug or vaccine, which has gone through only a few months of trials, be released to the general public; it usually takes several years to determine potential long-term health consequences. See "FDA APPROVES U.S. VACCINE" (15 Dec 2020).*

VAX KIDS? MORE DROWNED IN THE U.S. THEN DIED OF COVID

According to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 498 children from the ages of 1 to 19 years of age across the U.S. have died from COVID-19, which is easily outpaced by deaths caused by gun violence, drownings, and traffic accidents.

The Daily Mail reported that data collected from May 2020 to the week ending 23 September showed that a total of 3,343 children died in car accidents and 4,000 from drowning.

The **Trends Journal** has extensively reported on the relatively low risk the disease poses for children without underlying conditions. According to the CDC, the virus recovery rate for 1-to 20-year-olds is 99.997 percent.

See our November 17 articles:

- "KIDS DON'T SPREAD COVID"
- "MORE EVIDENCE KIDS DON'T SPREAD COVID TO ADULTS"
- "DATA CONFIRMS SCHOOLS AREN'T SUPER-SPREADERS"

The CDC report pointed out that suicides among children in 2020 rose by 50 percent, according to the website. There were 534 suicides among children in 2019.

TREND FORECAST: *The data of who is dying of COVID and why is completely ignored by the media, politicians, "health experts" and "authorities."*

Instead, COVID fear and hysteria are continually sold. We have also reported extensively on the psychological harm that closing schools had on developing children. (See "U.N. DIRECTORS: CLOSING SCHOOLS IS CREATING A 'LOST GENERATION.")

UNICEF issued a report warning of dire consequences to young children if schools are not reopened. The report, titled "Averting a Lost COVID Generation," strongly advocates that children be allowed to go back to school:

> *"While children can transmit the virus to each other and to older age groups, there is strong evidence that, with basic safety measures in place, the net benefits of keeping schools open outweigh the costs of closing*

them… Schools are not a main driver of community transmission, and children are more likely to get the virus outside of school settings."

Totally ignoring the facts, and consumed with his power trip, last Friday, California Governor Gavin Newsom declared that all children from classes K-12 in both public and private schools... must get the COVID Jab.

As we have forecast, there is going to be a sector of society that will increase homeschooling while also joining anti-vax, anti-establishment movements.

ITALY, NO COVID-19 JAB, NO JOB

Governments that cannot convince citizens to take the COVID-19 vaccine have resorted to the tried-and-true method of essentially threatening their populace with starvation for compliance.

What better way to "convince" someone a vaccine is safe than by threatening their livelihood?

Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi's government passed an order last week that compels companies—both private and public—to stop paying employees who refuse to submit to the COVID-19 vaccine.

The plan was embraced by Rome because it dances around potential legal headaches if workers were given an ultimatum. These workers must present a "green pass" to see their green. (See "UPDATE: EURO DIGITAL GREEN PASS" GAINING SPEED," and "ITALY: NO GREEN PASS, NO FREEDOM.")

Renato Brunetta, Italy's public administration minister, said all employees must show "green passes" at their jobs, which impacts 23 million workers.

“It’s an extraordinary endeavor,” he said. “It’s all the human capital in the country.”

Francesco Borgonovo, the deputy editor of the daily *La Verita*, told NPR that the "green pass" is “political, not a health measure.”

“No one up to now has proven to me that this political measure protects us against the virus,” she said.

Draghi has been one of the most outspoken proponents of the vaccines and has said they are the only way the country will ever return to normal.

We pointed out in August that Draghi condemned those who refused to take the shot, and said, “If you don’t vaccinate, you get sick, you die or you let other people die.”

The Italian order even forces those who have had and recovered from COVID-19 to get vaccinated. NPR called Rome’s mandate “one of the strictest in the world.” To date, some 70 percent of the Italian citizens have been fully vaccinated.

***TRENDPOST**: As we have reported in previous issues, Mario Draghi was born into the upper class with long Bankster credentials—Bank of Italy, World Bank, Goldman Sachs, European Central Bank…so, like most bankers, he works best when the system is rigged in his favor.*

***TREND FORECAST:** Politicians have failed at selling COVID-19 vaccines to a strong minority of the public despite corporate media's attempt to do their best selling the vax, social media companies silencing debate against the jab, and the joined effort to portray anyone who even questions the vaccine as a stupid, ignorant, insane heretic that should be condemned.*

Yet, there will be strong resistance among many to get the jab.

For example, the vaccine was first promoted as being 96 percent effective, which led much of the public to believe they were bulletproof. But following the Israeli Health Ministry analysis that the jab had a 39 percent efficacy rate, politicians and "health officials" walked back, admitting you can still get the virus after being fully vaxxed.

However, the line being sold was that those who got the shot and still got the virus would fare better than the unvaccinated that got the virus. And when Delta emerged and news that vaccines appear to wear off in under a year, now it's a third jab—for old time's sake.

Thus, while there will be growing mandates and animosity from public officials against those who will not get vaccinated, and losses of "freedom," we maintain our forecast that not only will vax resistance intensify, it will lead to great divisions across all sectors of society.

HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL GOES VIRTUAL

Highly vaccinated Harvard Business School announced last week that it will move most of its classes to an online format due to a surge of COVID-19 infections among the student body, further cementing our years-long prediction that virtual classes will replace brick-and-mortar classrooms.

The Wall Street Journal reported that the school is one of the first major universities to change direction after the school year officially started. Administrators said in an email, obtained by the *Journal*, that the business school accounted for two-thirds of the COVID-19 cases in the entire university and just recently saw a 20 percent spike in cases.

Srikant Datar, the school's dean, said the school is a "complete outlier" and its positivity rate is 12 times the rest of the university.

"These distressing figures are so high that they have attracted the scrutiny of local public-health officials," he said.

Harvard reported last week that 60 of the 74 COVID-19 cases have been among graduate students, faculty, and staff. The school also pointed out that 95 percent of those attending in-person classes have been vaccinated, and 96 percent of the staff have received both jabs.

Students at the business school were asked to stop "unmasked indoor activities, limit in-person interactions with others outside their household, move group gatherings online and cancel all travel."

The **Trends Journal** has said in previous issues that COVID-19 infections need to be clearly distinguished from severe illness and death, but this is ignored by the media and politicians.

Indeed, there is no mention of any student COVID deaths.

TREND FORECAST: *When the COVID War was launched in February 2020 and universities and schools began shutting down, we noted it was the beginning of the upending of the industrial age education system that was long ready for a facelift and heralded in a new, more effective approach to education: online learning. (See "INDIA'S ONLINE-LEARNING AN INVESTMENT WINDFALL, SOLIDIFYING 'INTERACTIVE U' FORECAST IN TRENDS JOURNAL;" the 2017 article "INTERACTIVE-U: THE INDIA MODEL," and the August 2020 article "INTERACTIVE U IN THE U.S.A.")*

Gerald Celente had forecast 25 years ago that online learning would replace the factory model education methods that got their footing in Prussia after the Napoleonic Wars. The coronavirus outbreak has shown that in-person learning can be replaced, which will only further accelerate the move to all-interactive learning.

TRENDPOST: *Megan McArdle, a columnist for The Washington Post, wrote in response to Harvard's decision that MBA students at the prestigious school are "there to network with other MBAs and score interviews with elite firms, not to master course content. They may rebel at paying $100,000 a year to sit home and stare at a screen."*

COVID-19 has upended every aspect of our lives and those who are fastest to adapt will succeed, while those stuck in the pre-COVID business and school structure will become dinosaurs.

Of course, it is hard to duplicate in-person networking (but not impossible); it is quite easy to replace the learning element. Gerald Celente wrote in 2017 that interactive learning "will revolutionize education and "the growth of the home education and Interactive-U trend will accelerate rapidly once tele-videophony or other comparable multimedia-interface technologies become available and affordable."

PROTEST BREAKS OUT IN SLOVENIA OVER COVID-19 PASSES

About 10,000 protesters took to the streets in Slovenia's capital Ljubljana on Wednesday to lash out against the country's COVID-19 mandates, prompting a swift police response that resulted in water cannons and tear gas being used on demonstrators, a report said.

"I am here for the future, the future of my kids, the future generations because this craziness needs to be stopped," Katja Zupan, one of the protesters, told the Associated Press. "If we don't stand up for ourselves and for mankind, then we are done, we are lost."

Protesters voiced their opposition to COVID-19 vaccine passes and were galvanized after the announcement that the country suspended the Johnson & Johnson jab after the death of a 20-year-old woman who died of a stroke two weeks after inoculation.

One of the mandates that have faced public backlash is Ljubljana's move to require all those who work at state-run firms to take the shot or submit to a pricey PCR test.

This is not the first protest to erupt in the country over these mandates.

Two weeks ago, about 8,000 protesters gathered in the capital and were also doused with water cannons after railing against "fascism."

Police said they responded after protesters threw glass bottles and stones in their direction.

The **Trends Journal** has been documenting the movement against COVID-19 mandates that claim to be rooted in science. (See "FRENCH VAX PASS PROTESTS ESCALATE. MOST MEDIA IGNORES THEM, LIES ABOUT SIZE," "PROTESTS BREAK OUT IN FRANCE OVER HEALTH PASS MANDATE" and "MASSIVE PROTEST IN LONDON; U.S. MEDIA LIES ABOUT THE NUMBERS.")

TRENDPOST: *Beyond the new anti-vax, anti-establishment political movements we have been forecasting, the* ***Trends Journal*** *has pointed out in previous issues that drug makers are enjoying the rich rewards vaccine production can have when there is a global outbreak. See:*

- *"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)*
- *"More Booster Jabs, More Windfall Profits for Drug Lords" (24 Aug 2021)*

YOUTUBE : NO FREEDOM OF SPEECH. BELIEVE WHAT WE TELL YOU!

YouTube is keeping up with the new American free-speech tradition: You can say whatever you want, as long as it's approved.

The Google-owned platform announced that it will take down video channels tied to Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Joseph Mercola, an alternative medicine entrepreneur, as part of its sweeping crackdown on videos that claim COVID-19 vaccines approved by health authorities are dangerous and ineffective.

"We've steadily seen false claims about the coronavirus vaccines spill over into misinformation about vaccines in general, and we're now at a point where it's more important than ever to expand the work we started with COVID-19 to other vaccines," YouTube said in a statement.

The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on the tech crackdown against COVID-19 "misinformation." (See "YOUTUBE BANS SEN. RAND PAUL FOR QUESTIONING FAUCI," "YOUTUBE BANS THE SCIENCE AGAIN" and "FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS UNDER ATTACK AS ONLINE CENSORSHIP INCREASES.")

Vaccination rates in the U.S. have slowed. Only 56 percent of the population has received both shots compared to 71 percent in Canada. The White House has been vocal that influential voices online have contributed to vaccine hesitancy.

The White House has pointed its finger at social networking companies like Facebook for allowing the spread of inaccurate information. President Biden said in August that the "only pandemic we have is among the unvaccinated, and that—and they're killing people."

The company said it will take some time to pull down all the videos that it deems as misinformation. YouTube has not called for the ban of videos that raise questions about other widely used vaccines like chickenpox and measles.

TRENDPOST: *It is a fascist/communist world when tech companies become the self-appointed arbiters of truth. One needs to look no further than last November when Twitter decided to restrict the distribution of a New York Post article with "unverified claims" about Hunter Biden.*

Just recently, Ben Schreckinger, a reporter from Politico, published a book, "The Bidens: Inside the First Family's Fifty-Year Rise to Power," which stands up most of the Post's reporting on Hunter Biden's emails with a Ukrainian businessman. Twitter decided to block the Post's story—at the height of the election season—due to its "Hacked Material Policy." Would Biden have won if not protected by Big Tech?

YouTube was also criticized in Russia last week for removing posts from Alexei Navalny, the Putin critic, that showed "Smart Voting," which recommends to the public candidates most likely to defeat pro-Kremlin hopefuls, according to The Moscow Times. Navalny blasted President Vladimir Putin for turning the "almighty Big Tech" into "his accomplices."

TREND FORECAST: *Among the greatest OnTrendpreneur® opportunities of the first half of the 21st century is the creation of competitive social media sites. The world awaits it. That so few exist makes no social, political or business sense.*

TREND FORECAST: *We have written extensively about the censorship trend and how it would increase. In the 11 December 2018* ***Trends Journal*** *article, "CENSORSHIP 2019," we forecast the proliferation of internet censorship across the globe: "Freedom of speech? Freedom of Expression? Forget about it! From the United States to China, from New Zealand to Nepal, Censorship is a megatrend. For well over a year, social media giants and governments have been silencing voices that challenge establishment agendas."*

In our 21 January 2020 issue, we doubled down on the forecast, stating: "Our 'Censorship' Top Trend of 2019 has now become a way of life: unchallenged and barely reported by the mainstream media, who are included among social media giants as the chief censors banning those who don't tow their party lines and special interests."

*As the **Trends Journal** has been warning for years, Silicon Valley is silencing users on the internet who dare challenge the official narrative. Unfortunately, ever since the politicians and Presstitutes started the COVID War, censorship has increased dramatically.*

The degree of censorship muzzling the globe is now potentially so comprehensive that it poses an imminent threat to the fundamental concept of freedom.

ANTI-LOCKDOWN FIGHTERS GRAB SEATS IN AUSTRIA'S REGIONAL PARLIAMENT, AS PREDICTED BY TRENDS JOURNAL

A new political party elbowed its way onto the scene in Austria last week that seems to encapsulate frustration with COVID-19 lockdowns after it blew past expectations and secured seats in one of the country's nine provincial parliaments last Sunday after securing 6.4 percent of the vote.

The party, called People Freedom Fundamental Rights (MFG), ran in opposition to lockdowns, mask mandates, and other COVID-19 orders, according to Reuters. The report said the party far exceeded expectations and "stunned many observers."

"The underlying trend is an anti-establishment message about personal rights, freedom and anger at an elite from a group who feel excluded," Thomas Hofer, a

political consultant, told the *Financial Times*. He called the party's performance a "regional phenomenon."

Joachim Aigner, MFG's leading candidate, told the *FT* that his party's success was due to it being comprised of "ordinary citizens, from [real] society…we know exactly what the concerns and problems of people are."

MFG was formed in February 2021 in response to what supporters saw as an unjust COVID-19 crackdown by the government. News.com.au, citing a poll, said half of the non-vaccinated voters supported the far-right FPO party, and 25 percent of that number supported MFG.

MFG has been opposed to the country's new push to require proof of vaccination in order to enter certain venues. The party has insisted that it is not anti-vaccine.

We reported in an 17 November 2020 article titled "MORE LOCKDOWNS, MORE PROTESTS" that Austria's Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, a conservative, called for a 24/7 curfew at the time, which was one of the strictest in Europe.

"Every social contact is one too many," Kurz said at the time.

TREND FORECAST: *The* ***Trends Journal*** *has been reporting on anti-lockdown protests in major cities around the world.*

We have noted that the "Greatest Depression" has been accelerated by knee-jerk reactions from politicians to grab for more to fight the COVID War. As we have forecast, new anti-tax, anti-vax, anti-lockdown, anti-establishment political parties and social movements will accelerate. (See "EUROPE: MORE LOCKDOWNS, PROTESTS, ECONOMIC HARDSHIP," "LOCKDOWN PROTESTS RAGING. NEW LOCKDOWN ORDERS" and "EUROPEAN BUSINESSES BRISTLE AT NEW LOCKDOWNS.")

CALIFORNIA'S NEWSOM: NO VAX, NO SCHOOL

California Governor Gavin Newsom on Friday issued a statewide COVID-19 vaccine mandate that will compel school students—from kindergarten to 12th grade—to roll up their sleeves to take a COVID-19 vaccine once approved for their age group by the Food and Drug Administration.

"We have to do more," Newsom said last week at a San Francisco middle school, according to The Associated Press. "We want to end this pandemic. We are all exhausted by it."

The COVID-19 vaccine will find its place among other mandatory vaccines in the school system, like mumps and rubella and will impact the 7 million children in the state. The report pointed out that about 40 to 50 percent of parents polled have expressed a level of vaccine hesitancy when it comes to their children, and for good reason.

Several **Trends Journal** articles cite Centers for Disease Control and Prevention figures that show 99.997 percent of 1-to-20-year-olds recover from the virus. (See "U.S. SCHOOL UPDATE: CONFUSION REIGNS," "KIDS DON'T SPREAD COVID," "DRUG DEALERS: GET KIDS VACCINATED," and "VAX KIDS? THE COVID RISK IS 'TINY.")

Under Newsom's plan, the first students to receive the vaccines will be those in the seventh through 12th grades, and then kindergarten through sixth.

A poll conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 48 percent of parents of children between 12 and 17 years old say their child has received at least one dose of a vaccine. (The U.S. has approved the vaccine for anyone over

the age of 16 and has approved the emergency use authorization for those between 12 and 15.)

"The share of parents who say they want to 'wait and see' before getting their 12-17 year old vaccinated has decreased to 15%, down from 23% in July. Just 4% of parents say they will only get their teenager vaccinated "if their school requires it," and one in five (21%) say they will 'definitely not' vaccinate their child, similar to the share measured in previous months," the KFF report said.

Newsom's mandate is the first imposed by a state on school children, and will likely start a trend. The state will allow medical and religious exemptions for students.

The report pointed out that the state has one of the highest vaccination rates in the country, with 84 percent of those 12 and older who have received at least one jab, and 70 percent fully vaccinated, the AP reported.

Fabio Zamora, the father of a student in California, told the wire that he believes that it is the parent's decision.

"The government in no shape or form should be having mandates like that," he said. "I don't care for that. I'm a veteran. I served this country, and fought for those rights."

TREND FORECAST: *The more schools, from kindergarten to college—that mandate COVID vaccinations, the faster the online learning trend will accelerate.*

As we have noted, trends are born, they grow, mature, reach old age and die.

Online learning is still in its infancy and will provide rich OnTrendpreneur® opportunities for those who design new strategies to capitalize on this multi-trillion dollar mega-trend.

POLL: UNVAXXED OLDSTERS HAPPIER THAN VAXXED

According to a new poll of 1,015 Americans aged 50 and older, conducted in late August by the Associated Press and the National Opinion Research Center, there are stark contrasts in the way older Americans view COVID-19 risks and vaccination status.

The essential finding of the AP-NORC poll is that vaccinated older Americans are more fearful than their unvaccinated counterparts. Even with the dreaded Delta variant accounting for a doubling, since June, of the percentage of those who worry about themselves or a loved one being infected, vaccinated persons are far more likely to be in the "worried" category. In fact, 61 percent of unvaccinated persons are "not worried," whereas only 25 percent of vaccinated persons make that claim.

In fact, while increasing numbers of unvaccinated older Americans are returning to normal—traveling, returning to gyms, churches, restaurants and crowded venues—it's the vaccinated who remain hunkered down or never going anywhere without a mask. And it's also the vaccinated who are less likely to rate their quality of life and general happiness as satisfactory; see "TV STATION SOLICITS UNVAXXED HORROR STORIES, GETS DELUGE OF VAXXED HORROR STORIES INSTEAD: MEDIA IGNORES THE FINDINGS" (21 Sep 2021).

The AP report states as a given that the unvaxxed are at greater risk from COVID-19, and claims they choose to ignore such risks on the grounds that the government is exaggerating them; see "JOIN THE VAXXED HERD? MANY AMERICANS SAY 'NO'" (11 May 2021).

Dr. Irwin Redlener, of Columbia U.'s National Center for Disaster Preparedness, ascribes this dichotomy to vaxxed persons having a realistic respect for science while unvaxxed persons have little such respect. Furthermore, vaxxed persons

who remain worried tend to blame their worries on the unvaxxed, whom they see as being "selfish." "Their stubborn point of view," said one vaccinated 61 yr. old (who is still afraid to travel, go shopping, eat in a restaurant or swim in a public pool) of the unvaccinated, "keeps them from resolving a health crisis."

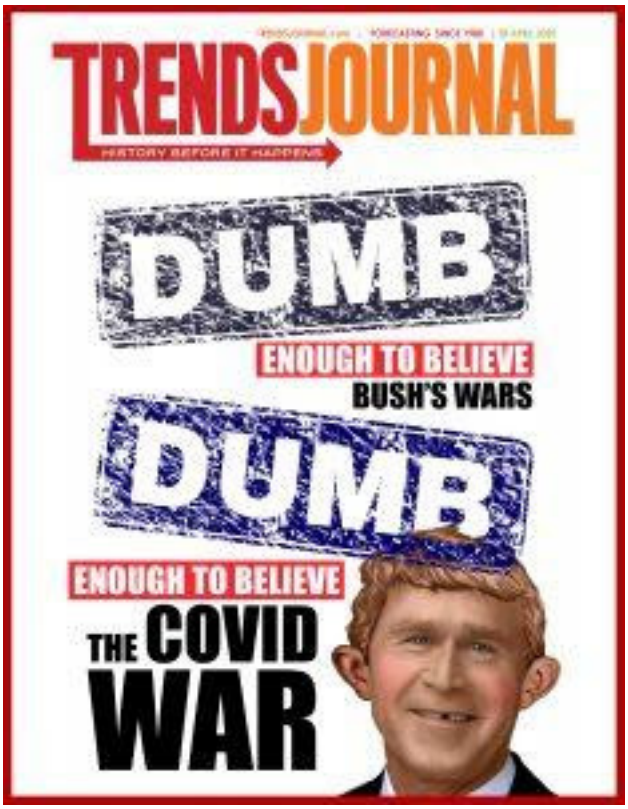
TRENDPOST: *Totally absent in this article is why are vaxxed afraid? If they are vaxxed with a gene therapy shot that was sold with a 96 percent efficacy rate then they are allegedly safe. And who are the un-vaxxed threatening? Allegedly, only those who are not vaxxed. Indeed, the fear and hysteria is illogical, yet, the constant bombardment from Presstitutes and politicians keeps the general public worried that they will be victims of the COVID War.*

IN PORTUGAL, MILITARY APPROACH ACHIEVES VAX GOALS

As we had reported back in 2020, politicians and the media compared fighting the coronavirus to fighting a War. And just as the masses marched off to Mussolini, Heiled Hitler and saluted Stalin, when the COVID War was declared, they obediently followed their leaders.

So, as *The New York Times* reported on 2 October, to get their people to line up for the COVID Jab the government of Portugal decided to treat the COVID War like an actual war, and put a military man—former submarine squadron commander Vice Admiral Henrique Gouveia e Melo—in charge.

Indeed, they might have taken a cue from **Trends Journal**; see "CORONA VIRUS: POLITICAL LEADERS ON THE WARPATH" (24 Mar 2020) and "MEDIA: GET JABBED, END THE COVID WAR" (13 Apr 2021).



Trends Journal cover (28 Apr 2020)

As a result, the nation boasts an 86 percent vaccination rate, with 98 percent of those eligible (essentially everyone over 12) fully vaccinated, and believes it's close to attaining herd immunity. Portugal is not among those who reject that concept; see "NO HERD IMMUNITY FOR THE HERD" (17 Aug 2021). On 1 October the country dropped almost all its COVID restrictions; new cases are down to 650 a day (in a total population of 10.3 million) and very few cases are proving fatal.

Of course, setbacks are possible, and have been seen elsewhere. Israel, the first country to vaccinate the majority of its population, has seen breakthrough cases and led to the discovery of the vaccines' diminishing effectiveness and the need for booster shots; see "ISRAEL: BOOSTS COVID SHOTS FROM 2 TO 3" (14 Dec 2021). Portugal may soon offer booster shots to older and more vulnerable people, and expects its goals to be reached by late December.

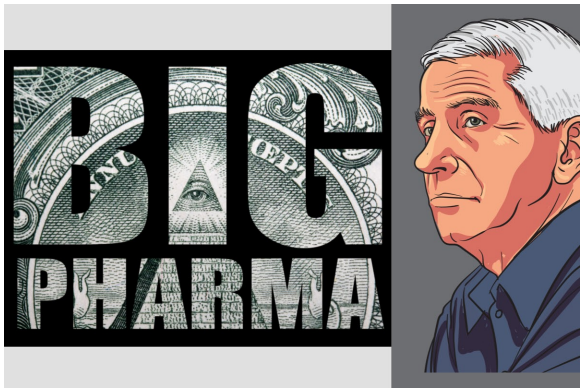
Admiral Gouveia e Melo credits his success to having taken a military approach: "The first thing is to make this thing a war." He drew his team from the

Portuguese military, employed military rhetoric and made it clear he was perceived as detached from politics. It also helped that anti-vaxxers are in the minority in Portugal and not as vocal as elsewhere.

TRENDPOST: *The military understands the use of propaganda, so to spread the message of vaccine safety the technique of showing soldiers and medical personnel lining up for their shots was employed. And the admiral donned his camouflage combat uniform and strode into the midst of the "crazy" protesters, confronting them and accusing them of living in the 13th century.*

There was resistance to the shots and to the militaristic attitude, but resistance ultimately fell from 40 percent to 2.2 percent, in part because the country's culture and the war rhetoric made people more disposed to obey authorities without question; as ***Trends Journal*** *observed, in "COVID WAR: FEAR SELLS" (21 Jul 2020), "The louder the war drums beat, the more obediently the masses followed their leaders… as they continue to do."*

THE TIES THAT BIND FAUCI TO BIG PHARMA



The relationships between big pharmaceuticals, government regulating bodies and health agencies, and politicians, are receiving new scrutiny this week.

It follows a revelation that lobbyists paid by AstraZeneca and Pfizer have been directing Australian politicians to push their COVID vaccine.

Emerald Robinson of One America News Now (OANN) has helped expose the problem.

On 2 October she tweeted about the news:

> "So AstraZeneca and Pfizer were paying lobbyists to direct Australia's leaders to push the vaccines?
>
> "This should be the biggest story around the world today."

As troubling as pharmaceuticals using lobbyists to profiteer off a pandemic is, it only represents one aspect of corrosive practices distorting health systems.

The close relationship of government research and regulating authorities to pharmaceuticals is another problem.

Pfizer's "CTI for NIH Researchers" initiative illustrates one example.

Pfizer, one of two major American pharmaceuticals providing the bulk of COVID vaccines, at considerable cost to taxpayers, has funneled money to the National Institutes of Health for years via the collaboration.

According to the NIH website:

> "NCATS led an innovative collaboration for the NIH with Pfizer's Centers for Therapeutic Innovation (CTI)(link is external) from 2014 to 2019. The CTI collaboration, which was governed by a steering committee, enabled NIH and Pfizer scientists to identify biologic compounds with activity in a pathway or target of interest and move these compounds through laboratory testing and into clinical evaluation.
>
> "A cooperative research and development agreement (CRADA) collaboration with CTI included, among other things, access to Pfizer's drug development enterprise and publishing rights. It was the first NIH-wide biologics initiative with a pharmaceutical partner that NCATS coordinated on behalf of all NIH intramural researchers."

How objective could the NIH be in evaluating Pfizer's products, given such relationships?

Public Servants, Private Patents

The ties that researchers and administrators at public agencies have had to drugs and other treatments developed in concert with big pharmaceuticals, has been a long-standing problem.

Multiple scandals have surfaced over the years, only to be swept under the rug.

Not surprisingly, Dr. Anthony Fauci, a leader of U.S. COVID policy, has been at the center of some of those episodes.

In 2005, for example, controversy erupted at the National Institute of Health, over an Associated Press expose about royalty payments being received by researchers conducting experimental trials of drugs to patients.

According to the NIH's own account of the controversy:

> "Patients who took part in clinical trials at the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) had no idea that scientists at the institutes received $8.9m (£4.8m; €6.8m) in royalty payments and might benefit financially for the use of their discoveries by pharmaceutical companies and device makers, reports from Associated Press allege. This information was not made public until the press agency obtained the information after filing a request under the Freedom of Information Act...
>
> "...A patient advocacy group, the Alliance for Human Research Protection, says that patients might have thought differently about the risks of trial treatment if they knew of scientists' financial interests."

Fauci was one of the researchers receiving money for patents related to an AIDS treatment.

In the wake of the controversy, Fauci claimed he felt the monies he received were an unseemly conflict of interest, and donated the funds to charity:

> “The [AP] reported that two leading researchers, Anthony Fauci, head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and his deputy, Clifford Lane, received payments relating to their development of interleukin 2 as a treatment for HIV/AIDS…
>
> “Dr Anthony Fauci told the BMJ that as a government employee he was required by law to put his name on the patent for the development of interleukin 2 and was also required by law to receive part of the payment the government received for use of the patent. He said that he felt it was inappropriate to receive payment and donated the entire amount to charity.”

More recently, Fauci has come under question for suppressing Ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine in 2020, two cheap drugs that were showing promise in treating COVID-19. Meanwhile, Fauci aggressively pushed Remdesivir, an expensive drug the NIH was heavily invested in, as a COVID treatment. It received authorization in October of that year.

In the spring of 2021, Fauci was forced to address email exchanges that were made public, which showed respected scientists complained to him about the issue.

Dr. Josh Backon of Hebrew University confronted Fauci for discounting the use of Chloroquine and Ivermectin.

Backon sent Fauci an email making the case for treatments using the drugs. After Fauci failed to respond, Backon resent the email with a link to a study showing the efficacy of the drugs, together with the admonition, “Continue ignoring me.”

Fauci finally responded in an email, saying the “National Heart Lung and Blood Institute will take a look at this.”

Despite mounting evidence from March of 2020 to the present moment regarding the effectiveness of those cheap drugs, Fauci has never acknowledged or recommended their use.

Instead, under Fauci's leadership, government agencies have repeatedly smeared and falsely suggested Ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine were unsafe, or not commonly used in humans.

In contrast, Remdesivir has repeatedly been identified for causing far greater incidences of serious side effects, including renal failure.

The **Trends Journal** recently profiled Fauci's role in promoting Remdesivir, despite its problems, in "FAUCI FAVORITE REMDESIVIR LESS SAFE THAN DRUGS HE SMEARS" (28 Sep 2021).

Why do the ties and conflicts of interest between government officials, researchers and big pharma continue to be ignored or downplayed by mainstream media?

In 2021, the problems go well beyond the drug commercials comprising huge chunks of media advertising revenue.

Media corporations are increasingly big tech corporations that are allied or partnering with bio-pharma and health corporations that have personnel revolving doors with political institutions and NGOs.

Regulating authorities are hopelessly compromised. And the health of average citizens is paying the price.

VACCINATED MORE LIKELY TO BECOME INFECTED WITH COVID VARIANTS, SAYS NEW STUDY

A study of more than 1,300 San Francisco area residents shows those who received COVID vaccinations were more likely to be infected with COVID variants than unvaccinated individuals.

The study, while not yet peer reviewed, would provide more evidence that the vaccines are creating serious problems.

The blog Conservative Treehouse picked up on the study, noting:

> "The California study finds that vaccinated individuals are more susceptible to COVID variant infections than unvaccinated. Geer Vanden Bossche has been warning that vaccine antibodies would suppress natural antibody responses. The vaccine antibodies take control of the immune system and defend only against a targeted virus."

According to the study's abstract summary:

> "Here we analyzed SARS-CoV-2 whole-genome sequences and viral loads from 1,373 persons with COVID-19 from the San Francisco Bay Area from February 1 to June 30, 2021, of which 125 (9.1%) were vaccine breakthrough infections. Fully vaccinated were more likely than unvaccinated persons to be infected by variants carrying mutations associated with decreased antibody neutralization (L452R, L452Q, E484K, and/or F490S) (78% versus 48%, p = 1.96e-08), but not by those associated with increased infectivity (L452R and/or N501Y) (85% versus 77%, p = 0.092). Differences in viral loads were non-significant between unvaccinated and fully vaccinated persons overall (p = 0.99) and according to lineage (p = 0.09 – 0.78). Viral loads were significantly higher in symptomatic as compared to asymptomatic vaccine breakthrough cases

($p < 0.0001$), and symptomatic vaccine breakthrough infections had similar viral loads to unvaccinated infections ($p = 0.64$)."

The study was posted recently on the medRxiv.org website.

Among the study's dozens of researchers are:

- Katherine T. Hernandez, San Francisco Department of Public Health
- Venice Servellita, of the Department of Laboratory Medicine, University of California San Francisco
- Erika Torres, Color Genomics, Inc., San Francisco
- Mary-Kate Morris of Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory, California Department of Public Health

MedRxiv serves as an online archive and distribution server for complete but unpublished manuscripts (preprints) in the medical, clinical, and related health sciences.

MedRxiv cautions that posted studies are not yet peer reviewed, and should not be reported in news media as established information.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN TIGRAY DETERIORATES. ADDIS ABABA: "FU" UN

A United Nations committee released a damning report on Thursday that painted a dire picture of the conditions in Tigray that includes widespread malnutrition, blaming the Ethiopian government that launched the civil war in November 2020 for staging a blockade against essential aid.

The report prompted Ethiopia officials to demand that the UN leave the country within 72 hours.

Antonio Guterres, the UN secretary-general, said he was "shocked" by the decision of Ethiopia's foreign ministry to expel the seven officials. The move was seen as the "most significant" expulsion of the organization's officials from any country, CNN reported. The decision came right after the UN raised alarm over the worsening humanitarian conditions in the country.

A report from the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA, said about 90 percent of the Tigrayan population is in need of food or some type of assistance. About 79 percent of pregnant women who were screened in the past week suffered from acute malnutrition, the report said. There is concern that there is famine in the war-torn country.

Alex de Waal, the executive director of the World Peace Foundation, a think tank at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, told *The Wall Street Journal* that Tigray is "definitely in famine."

"It's a designation that will hang around the neck of the Ethiopian government as a badge of eternal shame," he said.

The UN group accused Addis Ababa of blocking aid to the population, an allegation that the government denied. The government gave the UN officials 72 hours to leave the country for "meddling" in their affairs.

TRENDPOST: *The* ***Trends Journal*** *has been reporting on the conflict since it began (see "ANOTHER NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER GOES TO WAR," 10 Nov 2020). These are just a few of the many articles and trend forecasts we have made since then:*

- *"ETHIOPIA'S TIGRAY WAR HORRORS" (15 Dec 2020)*
- *"ETHIOPIA AND SUDAN: TENSIONS RISING" (26 Jan 2021)*
- *"ANOTHER ETHNIC MASSACRE IN ETHIOPIA" (4 May 2021)*
- *"ETHIOPIAN MILITARY CRISIS CONTINUES TO WORSEN" (29 Jun 2021)*

Abiy Ahmed launched the war against Tigray in November, saying it was because they had a vote in September, despite a countrywide voting ban due to the COVID outbreak.

Tigray was considered a potential threat to his power because it makes up about 6 percent of the country's population of 110 million, and it has ruled Ethiopia for two decades.

He assured the country that his troops would make quick work of the Tigrayan forces, but that has not materialized and there is now a humanitarian crisis.

President Joe Biden, on 17 September, threatened Ethiopia with new sanctions unless they agreed to stop fighting and open the lanes for humanitarian aid.

Jen Psaki, the White House press secretary, told reporters on Thursday that the conflict "must stop."

"The action follows the release of reports warning that hundreds of thousands of people are starving to death in northern Ethiopia. We're deeply concerned that this action continues a pattern by the Ethiopian government of obstructing the delivery of food, medicine and other lifesaving supplies to those most in need," she said.

The Brookings Institute reported that 5.2 million of Tigray's population of 6 million have faced hunger and have been in need of food assistance for months. Only 10 percent of the supplies earmarked for Tigray have reached their intended target.

***TREND FORECAST:** This Ethiopian civil war will continue to rage. The longer it lasts, more people will be escaping in efforts to find safe-haven nations. As economic conditions deteriorate across the continent, there will be strong anti-immigration populist movements in Europe to stop the flow of African nationals who will risk their lives to leave nations wracked by civil unrest, poverty, crime, government corruption and violence.*

CHINA FLEXES MUSCLE ON TAIWAN. WHO WILL STOP THEM?

Beijing sent 77 military airplanes near Taiwan's airspace within 48 hours last week, which was the highest number reported since Taipei has been counting.

Chinese President Xi Jinping told its military to "heighten its readiness and prepare for warfighting," Derek Grossman, a senior defense analyst at the RAND Corporation policy think tank, told CNN. Despite the incursion, he called the chances of an invasion remote.

> "The PLA [People's Liberation Army] still has many vulnerabilities, especially when faced with the near-certain intervention of the United States with possibly—probably?—Japanese and Australian support. China understands the severe downsides of a failed attack or invasion of Taiwan and will probably continue to bide its time."

The CNN report said Friday's incursion came on the 72nd anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The report said the aggression Saturday came in two waves, with 20 planes during the day and 19 at night, according to Taipei. The buffet of planes included 26 J-16 fighters, 10 Su-30 fighters, and two anti-submarine warning aircraft, the report said.

The **Trends Journal** has reported on China's aggression in the region and the fact that Taiwan is no match militarily with China. (See "TAIWAN MILITARY RAMP-UP WILL NOT STOP CHINA," "CHINA TO TAKE TAIWAN: A MATTER OF TIME," and "CHINA MILITARY. READY FOR WAR?")

We reported in January that Col. Wu Qian, China's Defense Ministry spokesman, said, "The PLA will take all necessary measures to resolutely defeat any attempt by the 'Taiwan independence' separatists, and firmly defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity" and that Taiwan is an "inalienable part of China."

AntiWar.com reported in August that Adm. John Aquilino, the head of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, told the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado that the U.S. military is the "greatest military on the planet" and is prepared for any Chinese aggression.

“We are here to continue to operate to ensure peace and prosperity throughout the region, and we have to be in a position to ensure that the status quo remains as it applies to Taiwan,” he said.

The report said the conversation drifted to the possibility that China might invade Taiwan. He said the U.S. is prepared for “any contingency” that could occur.

Beijing sees Taiwan as part of its territory and will “unify” the renegade island—separated by the Taiwan Strait—with force if needed. Taiwan, which is home to about 24 million, has been governed independently since 1949.

The Council on Foreign Relations wrote,

> “Beijing claims that Taiwan is bound by an understanding known as the 1992 Consensus, which was reached between representatives of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang (KMT) party that then ruled Taiwan. However, the two sides don’t agree on the content of this so-called consensus, and it was never intended to address the question of Taiwan’s legal status.”

The U.S. State Department called China’s recent actions “destabilizing” and reiterated its “rock solid” commitment to Taipei.

"We urge Beijing to cease its military, diplomatic and economic pressure and coercion against Taiwan,” the department said.

TREND FORECAST: *Despite condemnations when they do so, there will be no military forces from other nations that will challenge Communist China’s military might. Indeed, America, with the largest military in the world, has not won a war since World War II and cannot even win against third-world nations such as Afghanistan after invading that nation some 20 years ago.*

Should war break out between China and Taiwan, we forecast the Taiwanese military will not aggressively fight back, since doing so would result in millions of deaths and mass destruction.

TREND FORECAST: [“TOP TRENDS OF 2021: THE RISE OF CHINA:”](#) *As we have forecast, the 20th century was the American century—the 21st century will be the Chinese century. The business of China is business; the business of America is war.*

While America spent countless trillions waging and losing endless wars and enriching its military-industrial complex, China has spent its trillions advancing the nation’s businesses and building its 21st-century infrastructure.

Moreover, it should be made clear that despite the scores of trillions U.S. taxpayers have poured into the pockets of the military/industrial/intelligence complex, the “We’re #1” nation has not won a war since World War II... a war that the U.S.S.R. was also instrumental in fighting the Axis powers.

Therefore, absent pure insanity (which reigns deep in the heartless souls and egotistical minds of politicians), considering the weaponry of New Millennium Warfare, which Gerald Celente had detailed in his keynote speaker address at the Virginia Military Institute in 2000, a war between the U.S. and China would be the end of life on earth as we know it.

As Albert Einstein noted when asked what weapons would be used to fight World War III, he said, “I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.”

BRAVE NEW (CHINESE) WORLD?

The People's Daily Online reported, on 29 September, that China now leads the world in applications for patents involving biological breeding, according to a report from the Development and Research Center of the China National Intellectual Property Administration.

Such patent applications are on the rise worldwide, but the majority come from the U.S. and, now, from China. All the top 10 applications were from Chinese universities and research institutions; the top three spots were taken by Zhejiang University, China Agricultural University and Nanjing Agricultural University. But Chinese provinces and municipalities were also listed among the applicants.

The report offered guidance to Chinese applicants in negotiating the patent process, and was not limited to biological breeding, but also included molecular marker-assisted breeding and genome-editing. That guidance was based on studies of the patents already held by transnational corporations, and how those corporations' intellectual property rights would affect China's molecular breeding industry.

TREND FORECAST: *China is very much on the move, and as* ***Trends Journal****'s Gerald Celente has been saying for years, "The 21st century will be the Chinese century." It's interesting to see China concerning itself over intellectual property rights, however, given its historical penchant for ignoring just such rights; see "CHINA CHALLENGING U.S. HI-TECH DOMINANCE" (13 Jul 2021) and "CHINA BUSINESS ESPIONAGE NETS $500 BILLION A YEAR" (29 Jun 2021).*

So it's easy to surmise that, among the many areas in which China seeks dominance, is the area of genetic engineering. The world may have already seen an example of that in COVID-19, should one choose to believe the "conspiracy theory" that the virus did not occur naturally, but was created in the Wuhan Institute of Virology, and that Dr. Anthony Fauci was complicit; see "FAUCI

FUNDING OF WUHAN LAB BEING EXPOSED BY JUDICIAL WATCH" (10 Aug 2021) and "RAND PAUL LAYS DOWN LAW TO FAUCI" (20 Jul 2021).

One might also surmise that China won't limit its genetic engineering to improving agriculture or even (allegedly) weaponizing viruses, but may delve into re-structuring human DNA, as has actually already been done, by a Chinese researcher who in 2018 used the technology called CRISPR —see "CRISPR CREATOR SAYS GENE EDITING JUST GETTING STARTED" (22 Jun 2021)—to create the world's first gene-edited babies, albeit in violation of China's laws; the researcher, who is not a doctor, was sentenced to three years in prison for deliberately going against China's regulations on scientific experimentation and medical ethics; see "ARE HUMANS ALREADY BEING GENETICALLY LEGISLATED?" (8 Jun 2021).

TOP U.S. GENERAL ADMITS U.S. LOST IN AFGHANISTAN

Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, who appeared in front of Congress last week to discuss the Afghanistan withdrawal admitted to the House Armed Services Committee that the war had been a “strategic failure.”

“It wasn’t lost in the last 20 days or even 20 months,” he said. “There’s a cumulative effect to a series of strategic decisions that go way back. Whenever you get some phenomenon like a war that is lost—and it has been, in the sense of we accomplished our strategic task of protecting America against Al-Qaeda, but certainly the end state is a whole lot different than what we wanted.”

The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on the U.S.'s misadventure in the country. Gerald Celente, the publisher, had forecast when the Afghan War began that America would lose: “If Alexander ‘The Great’ couldn’t pull it off, if the

British couldn't beat them and neither could the Russians, there is no way America will win."

(See "AS CELENTE FORECAST: U.S. WOULD LOSE AFGHAN WAR LAUNCHED BY BUSH. THE WORST IS YET TO COME.")

Celente also noted that the U.S. had not won a war since World War II. As a result of his forecast, Celente, once a popular guest on mainstream media who has appeared twice on Oprah, was blackballed from the press and TV and accused of being anti-American. (See the movie, "ZIZI and HONEYBOY," starring Doris Roberts.)

The political fallout of the misadventure remains to be seen, and whether President Biden can somehow right his ship by signing the $1 trillion infrastructure bill and $3.5 trillion spending package is still to be determined.

But the fact remains that after 20 years, the blood of 2,448 U.S. troops who met their demise there, and the 20,000-plus Americans injured, and $2.2 trillion spent, Afghanistan's government and its cowardly, corrupt presidency retreated with nary a whimper.

"If the goal was to rebuild and leave behind a country that can sustain itself and pose little threat to U.S. national security interests, the overall picture is bleak," the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) said.

The SIGAR's final report on the country was damning and served as a cautionary tale for future U.S. missions, as we reported in our 24 August issue, in an article titled, "BIDEN ON AFGHANISTAN: "FUCK THAT."

Milley said whenever a military suffers defeat there are usually an "awful lot of causal factors."

"And we're going to have to figure that out. A lot of lessons learned here," he said.

Milley's appearance in front of the House committee became something of a show trial, with representatives doing their best to get a soundbite that appears on cable news. But one of the other topics discussed was what generals told Biden prior to the withdrawal.

Biden gave an interview with ABC News' George Stephanopoulos in August and made it clear that none of his generals told him to keep a small troop presence in the country.

"But your top military advisors warned against withdrawing on this timeline," Stephanopoulos said. "They wanted you to keep about 2,500 troops."

Biden became cagey and Stephanopoulos asked again to confirm that no military advisor told him to keep the troops in place.

"No," Biden said. "No one said that to me that I can recall."

Milley and Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., the head of U.S. Central Command, both testified the day before—in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee—that they told the president to keep 2,500 or more troops in the country.

"I recommended that we maintain 2,500 troops in Afghanistan…The withdrawal of those forces would lead inevitably to the collapse of the military forces and eventually the Afghan government," McKenzie said in front of the Senate. He told the House the following day, "My concern was that if we withdrew below 2,500 and went to zero, that the Afghan military and government would collapse. And of course, that's not a potential counterfactual; that is in fact what happened."

Jen Psaki, the White House press secretary, insisted that the president received "split" advice about Afghanistan. (See "BIDEN PRESIDENCY=OBAMA 2021.")

"Ultimately, it's up to the commander-in-chief to make a decision. He made a decision that it was time to end a 20-year war," she said.

TRENDPOST: *To* clearly illustrate the decline of America, imagine, *"Ultimately, it's up to the commander-in-chief to make a decision," to both start and stop wars launched by political hacks in violation of the nation's Constitution which states that only Congress can vote to go to war... which they have not done since WWII.*

And, to add economic insult to America's military defeat, In celebration of its multi-trillion dollar Afghan military defeat, the longest war in American history, last Thursday, the U.S. House on approved its $778 billion fiscal 2022 National Defense Authorization Act. (See "WAR MACHINE GETS RICHER AS AMERICANS GET POORER: HOUSE EASILY PASSES $768 BILLION DEFENSE BILL")

TREND FORECAST: *As we have long noted, the business of America has been war, and the business of China is business. The 20th century was the American century, and as we have forecast the 21st century will be China's... and one of our 10 Top Trends for 2021, is "China 2021."*

Moreover, 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.

Indeed, we published an article titled, "WILL TALIBAN CASH IN ON $1 TRILLION WORTH OF AFGHAN MINERAL WEALTH?", in our 24 August issue, the country—although poor—is sitting on iron, gold, copper and lithium, which has attracted China's attention.

We forecast that the hard facts and analyses project China to surpass the U.S. as the world's largest economy within a decade, and the U.S.—incapable of winning a war since WWII—would be defeated by China in a military confrontation.

TRENDS-EYE VIEW

THINK COVID WILL KILL YOU? HOW ABOUT THIS?

Should you manage to avoid succumbing to COVID, there are still plenty of unseen killers out there, and one of them is microplastics. Those are tiny pieces of plastic, smaller than 5 mm and often quite a bit smaller (hence the name "micro").

Microplastics are ubiquitous, being used in a variety of industries. They are also created when plastic objects are broken down. And they are often ingested. The simple act of a baby chewing on a plastic pacifier is now fraught with peril, according to reporting by Euronews.com on 1 October.

Scientists used to believe that ingested microplastics passed harmlessly through the human digestive system. Indeed, researchers examining fecal samples from 10 adults and 6 babies in New York State found two common types of microplastics, polycarbonate (PC) and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) in all of them.

But the babies' samples contained at least 10 times as much as the adults'. It's believed that the babies ingested higher levels from objects like pacifiers and from crawling around on carpets containing plastic particles.

And while the microplastics found in such sampling did appear to have passed through, concern is increasing that the smallest particles can cross cell membranes and enter the bloodstream. Studies of lab animals suggest that microplastics have caused cell death, inflammation, and metabolic disorders.

These newfound risks to humans follow on the already known environmental hazards of microplastics. As was believed about humans, it had been believed that fish could harmlessly ingest and eliminate microplastics, but recent findings by Duke University indicate that chemicals coating the microplastics affected the fishes' reproductive hormones.

TREND FORECAST: *Before the COVID War began, there were strong anti-plastic movements sweeping much of the globe. Those have ended. Indeed, plastic bags were being banned in New York State on 1 March 2020, but when COVID came, people were restricted to bring their own "COVID carrying shopping bags" into stores and had to use the plastic ones provided.*

When the COVID War ends, the major issue making the news will be Climate change, and the anti-plastic movement will gain further momentum.

TRENDPOST: *It's just one more thing polluting our water; see "YOU THINK COVID WILL KILL YOU? HAVE A DRINK OF WATER!" (15 Jun 2021). One source of microplastics in water is the particles shed by synthetic fiber fabrics during laundering. So the new findings are an argument for avoiding synthetic fabrics. Failing that, however, scientists suggest washing synthetics only in full washloads, as that will result in less friction and fewer microplastics going down the drain.*

And as reported, the mussel may prove even more useful in its role of "filterer of the sea" by helping to remove microplastics; scientists found that 300 mussels

could filter out a quarter-million pieces of microplastic in an hour... but a mussel full of plastic might not be the seafood of choice to ingest.

TOXIC BABY FOOD

Scandals involving baby food are, sadly, nothing new. In the '70s, Nestlé was vilified for promotions targeted at the Third World which touted its baby formula as superior to breast milk. Because of the formula's cost, many mothers over-diluted it with water, and Nestlé was blamed for the resulting widespread malnutrition, stunted growth and death. A global boycott ensued, which some people maintain to this day.

In the '80s, broken glass was found in Gerber baby food. In 1988 the two top executives of Beech-Nut were sentenced to a year in prison and $2 million in fines for selling "apple juice" that contained little or no actual juice; they had made the situation worse by attempting to dump the bogus product in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

In 2011, glass was found in baby food from Nestlé of France; some 30,000 jars were recalled. And in the last decade Heinz baby food in China was found to contain lead, Heinz in Canada had to recall baby food that had spoiled due to faultily sealed jars, and Beech-Nut recalled almost 2,000 lbs. of baby food because of broken glass.

So it's with a sense of déjà vu that one reads, in *The Wall St. Journal* on 2 October, of the latest cases of Stuff that Doesn't Belong in Baby Food, especially since some of the same names are involved.

Released this week by the House Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy are the revelations that rice cereals for infants from both Beech-Nut and

Nestlé's Gerber were found to contain more inorganic arsenic than the Food and Drug Administration allows. But according to bureaucrats, some levels of arsenic in baby food are considered OK; see "TOXIC METALS FOUND IN BABY FOODS" (9 Feb 2021).

Beech-Nut recalled the batches in question; Gerber did not. Beech-Nut said its manufacturing process "does not contribute heavy metals to the final product." Nestlé (which acquired Gerber in 2007) said it has "a rigorous process for testing finished foods."

TRENDPOST: *We note this article to once again illustrate that while the mainstream news and all of society is consumed with how COVID will kill you... consistently ignored are the pesticides, particles, chemicals, artificial ingredients, preservatives, GMOs etc., that are killing hundreds of millions that are barely reported and generally ignored.*

WELLS FARGO: THE BANKSTER GANG

The financial services behemoth Wells Fargo, which in 2020 was the fourth-largest U.S. bank in terms of total assets, has had its share of scandal, probably the best-known of which was in 2016, when it came to light that the bank's employees had created up to 1.5 million bogus bank accounts.

The firm currently holds some $1.9 trillion in assets, just below the $1.95 trillion asset limit that was placed on Wells Fargo by the Federal Reserve in 2018.

Now, as reported by *The New York Times* article on 29 September, Wells Fargo has had federal penalties levied against it to the tune of $72.6 million for its latest scandal. This time, the irregularities centered around foreign currency transactions.

Federal prosecutors said that, over seven years, 771 clients (many of which were small to medium-sized businesses) had been defrauded by Wells Fargo; the bank's sales staff, working on a system that paid bonuses in the millions on foreign exchange revenue, gave false information, added markups and charged higher prices to less-experienced customers.

As part of its settlement, Wells Fargo paid back $35.3 million to the clients the bank had overcharged and otherwise victimized.

Wells Fargo issued a statement which said that the events in question had occurred before 2017, and that since then the bank's foreign exchange procedures and oversight had been "significantly improved."

TRENDPOST: *Did any of those who perpetrated this fraud go to jail? Of course not! See "DON'T CALL THEM 'CRIMINALS' - THEY'RE 'WHITE SHOE BOYS'!" (29 Sep 2020); unlike most "common" criminals, corrupt banksters (just as greedy, just as criminal) can rob people with relative impunity; if caught, they face fines, penalties and forced restitution (which doesn't necessarily undo the damage), but seem to never risk incarceration.*

For more of Wells Fargo criminal violations for which they get a slap on the wrist, while we the little people of Slavelandia are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law for minor crimes, also see "EX-WELLS FARGO CEO SETTLES CASE FOR $2.5 MILLION" (17 Nov 2020) and "WELLS FARGO: SLAP ON THE WRIST FOR COMING MORE CRIMES" (14 Sep 2021).

AMERICAN LEGAL SYSTEM: A CRIME SYNDICATE?

More and more, we seem to now be living in times and circumstances that our Founders warned us about. In 1792 Congress first established one of the principles of our judiciary system: in order to guarantee the public's trust in the courts and the impartiality of judges, no one should be a judge of his or her own cause.

As Shakespeare said of Caesar's wife, judges should be above suspicion; if involved in a case where there is even a whiff of impropriety, an ethical judge should recuse him- or herself.

Alas, that was then and this is now. *The Wall St. Journal,* on 30 September, reported on its own investigation which revealed that, between 2010 and 2018, 131 federal judges (129 federal district judges and 2 federal appellate judges) had broken the law by failing to recuse themselves from 685 lawsuits involving companies in which they or their families had financial interests.

The judges had been appointed by every president from Lyndon Johnson to Donald Trump.

The investigation uncovered 61 judges or their families who not only held stocks in companies appearing before the judge but who also traded those stocks while the cases were active. This comes on the heels of revelations of similar conflicts of interest at the Federal Reserve; see "FED ETHICS? FU!" (21 Sep 2021).

The judges offered an assortment of excuses. Some blamed court clerks or search engine software that failed to adequately screen for conflicts. One judge who ruled on a trademark case involving Ford Motor Co. claimed she hadn't realized that her husband possessing Ford stock in his retirement account

should have disqualified her. Her comment? "I regret my misunderstanding, but I assure you it was an honest one."

In another case, a Colorado couple asked a judge to block a Comcast subsidiary from accessing their property to lay fiber-optic cable, claiming that company workers had bullied and threatened them, terrorized their children and even injured their dog. The judge acceded to Comcast's wishes and sent the case back to state court. When it was revealed that he or his family owned Comcast stock and that he should have recused himself, the judge said, "I dropped the ball. Thank you for helping me stay on my toes the way I'm supposed to."

The Judicial Conference of the U.S. is the federal courts' policy-making body; its Committee on Codes of Conduct wrote a letter reminding one judge that the ethics code for federal judges "requires recusal when a judge has a financial conflict, regardless of the substance of the judge's actual involvement in the case."

TREND FORECAST: *The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, however, actually seemed to bristle at the WSJ's revelations, saying the WSJ's report "on incidents where conflicts inadvertently were not identified before a case was resolved or transferred is troubling, and the Administrative Office is carefully reviewing the matter."*

The entire government system is rife with unethical criminality. We have been reporting on Federal Reserve presidents making mulita-million dollar bets, knowing before anyone else the next Fed moves that will direct the markets.

On Sunday, from millions of leaked documents, the Pandora's Papers reported how politicians, public officials, Banksters, celebrities, power brokers, big business tycoons, etc., have been raking in hundreds of millions, buying mansions across the globe and paying no taxes. This, at a time when We the Little People have been declared "unessential" and hundreds of millions— if not billions—of lives and livelihoods destroyed to fight the COVID War.

And to further illustrate the levels of corruption, last week we ran these two articles, "AMERICA'S RICHEST 400 FAMILIES PAY A TINY PERCENT OF FEDERAL INCOME TAX COMPARED TO THE WORKING CLASS" and "WORLD'S LARGEST ADVERTISING GROUP A CRIME GROUP."

Thus, our "OFF WITH THEIR HEADS 2.0" trend from December 2019, forecasting the global rise in anger directed at the 1 percent, was already spreading globally prior to the 2020 COVID War.

The great wealth gap followed by the destruction of small businesses by politicians who launched the COVID War while allowing the Bigs to get bigger will be a key platform in the formation of new political parties across the globe. As the gap between the rich and poor widens, so, too, will the animosity between the "haves" and "have nots."

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

DOLLAR GENERAL EMPLOYEES: PLANTATION WORKERS OF SLAVELANDIA

The "business" news is that billionaire Jamie Dimon, the Bankster boss of JP Morgan Chase—the gang that commits crimes and pays "Get out of Jail Free" fines—defended his $31.5 million salary: "We have a free market in this country, which … everyone should applaud," he said.

"Free market"? What a joke. The game is rigged. From stocks to businesses, the one percent control and own what used to be called, "The Land of Opportunity." The rich in the U.S. keep getting wealthier, and the expendable, working-class

has never been more desperate to work at menial jobs with little pay and recourse.

The New York Times on Friday reported on claims by former Dollar General store employees who describe poor working conditions and meager paychecks. The report pointed out that there is little wiggle room on these balance sheets to turn a profit, so it seems that the employees take the hit. They face long hours for about $12 an hour—which is less, in some cases, than even Walmart pays. The report said these stores pay some of the lowest salaries in the industry.

The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on the country's shift toward so-called gig economies and cheap labor. (See "SLAVELANDIA: RICH GET RICHER, POOR GET POORER," and "AMERICA: TAX/AUDIT 'WE THE PEOPLE,' NOT BILLIONAIRES")

We've also pointed out that one of the results of the COVID-19 outbreak was that the rich got richer and the poor got poorer; 37.2 million Americans are living in poverty in the U.S., which marks a 3.3 million jump since 2019. The report pointed out that married families had the lowest level of poverty at 4.7 percent.

The Times pointed out that there was a surge in demand for dollar stores and they accounted for one in three stores that opened in the U.S. in the past year. Dollar General said that it hired 50,000 new workers from mid-July and Labor Day, the report said.

TREND FORECAST: *Among the reasons there is a shortage of workers is that they no longer want to work for poverty level wages.*

As Gerald Celente has long said, "When people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it." Therefore, as socioeconomic conditions continue to deteriorate, "NEW WORLD DISORDER," one of our 2020 Top Trends, will escalate as billions take to the streets, demonstrating against the lack of basic living standards, crime, violence, and government corruption.

MORE PANDEMIC SHADY TRADES AT THE FEDERAL RESERVE?

The Federal Reserve trading scandal may not have been tamped down with the resignations of two regional presidents.

Bloomberg reported on Friday that Fed Vice Chair Richard Clarida moved more than a million dollars between a bond and stock fund, immediately preceding a Fed announcement of possible pandemic policy action.

The suggestion was that Clarida's financial move may have been predicated on inside information about contemplated Fed actions.

Clarida's transactions were detailed in his 2020 financial reports. Reporting requirements for such disclosures require reporting within certain dollar ranges, so Clarida wasn't compelled to disclose exact amounts of his trades.

But the reports showed that he moved money out of a Pimco bond fund and bought the Pimco StocksPlus Fund and the iShares MSCI USA Min Vol Factor exchange-traded fund in comparable amounts, on 27 February, 2020.

Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell issued a statement the next day that coronavirus "poses evolving risks to economic activity" and added that the Fed was "closely monitoring developments and their implications for the economic outlook."

The new questions about trading on insider information follow recent problems regarding two regional Fed presidents that decided to retire early, following similar issues.

The Trends Journal reported on that in "BANKSTER BANDITS GET RICHER PLAYING THE INSIDE TRACK" (14 Sep 2021) and "SCAMMING FEDERAL RESERVE PROMISES TO 'DO BETTER'" (28 Sep 2021).

70'S REDUX: IT'S A REAL "DRAGFLATION"

The more things change, the more they remain the same.

Americans are currently getting hit with inflation and energy price increases, together with disappointing employment numbers that feel retro in a decidedly uncool way.

Gerald Celente has memorably referred to it as "Dragflation."

The Bureau of Economic Analysis announced Friday that a key gauge of inflation reached a record 30-year high in August.

To give some annualized and semi-annualized numbers as reported by Zerohedge:

- oil up 55%,
- natural gas up 122%,
- food up 33%,
- shipping costs up 225% in '21;
- past 6-months US CPI up 7.6% (annualized),
- core CPI up 6.8%,
- wages 4.9%

The PCE price index, which tracks consumer expenditure, increased by 4.3 percent in the 12 months ended in August, outpacing July's 4.2 figure.

Meanwhile, an energy squeeze is driving up fuel prices not only stateside, but in Europe and Asia as well. There are shortages and gas lines in the UK, and China's electric grid has experienced outages as well, due in part to reductions in coal usage.

A good part of the problem today, as in the 70's, or early 90's, for that matter, revolves around energy.

But the root of the energy squeeze is different now, than in former times. Geopolitics in the Middle East isn't the real factor in the current crunch.

Pandemic policies have created supply chain nightmares, and depressed economic growth generally, especially outside of Asia.

But the green energy agenda may be an even bigger factor.

A recent *Asia Times* article noted that U.S. investment in hydrocarbons has experienced a major pullback from the period between 2015 and 2019.

According to the *Times*:

> "Energy investment in the United States has dwindled as large institutional investors boycott fossil fuel investments. China's critical electricity shortage is the result of draconian regulation of coal mining, exacerbated by Beijing's punitive ban on Australian coal imports."

Exploration and development spending in the United States in 2021 (and predicted for 2022) will be a fifth of what it was in 2015, when it peaked at $150 billion. In 2015, the sector actually had a negative free cash flow, because they were investing and borrowing heavily to increase output.

Now, they're sitting on cash, paying down debt, otherwise constricted and dis-incentivised by green policies.

And what, meanwhile, are green initiatives producing? Obviously, not nearly enough.

A Global Reset can demand all it wants, regarding redirecting a hundred trillion in capital investments to reduce Carbon Emissions “to zero” by 2050, as the International Energy Agency has proposed.

But not only are those numbers pie in the sky in themselves, there is no green energy technology existent that can power economies to produce those trillions along the way.

To put it another way, if green energy were cheaper and more abundant than hydrocarbons, the whole scheme would work perfectly.

The extremeness of the green agenda, ironically, may end up sabotaging more modest, achievable goals.

As a result, average citizens around the world may be enduring a lot more 70’s redux in the near future, as countries clamp down to meet carbon targets, and fiddle with Fed interest rates to try to keep the whole mess from totally imploding.

TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE

By Ben Daviss

NO WORKERS? NO PROBLEM. WE GOT 'BOTS.

The reluctance of workers to return to low-skill, low-wage jobs post-COVID is speeding the adoption of robots throughout the economy.

One warehousing company reported hiring 26,000 people to finally staff 13,000 jobs; half the people quit or were fired after the first few days, the *Financial Times* reported.

"In the 1980s, the main reason for investing in automation was to reduce labor costs," Dwight Klappich at consulting firm Gartner told the *FT*.

"Now, for almost half the clients, their primary concern is labor availability," he said.

Amazon is the poster ad for automation, which it has emphasized for nearly a decade.

Its investment in robots and the technological structure to support them saves the company between $3 billion and $4 billion yearly, according to Marc Wulfraat, founder of logistics company MWPVL International – "and that could be underestimated," he told the *FT*.

What's not for a CEO to like? Robots work around the clock, never take lunch or potty breaks, vacations, or sick days, and never complain or go on strike.

Wincanton, a British warehousing company, has made an investment in robots that has cut its human payroll by as much as 40 percent without reducing the amount of goods the warehouses handle.

Now DHL, the international cargo company, is investing in 7,500 robot projects across 12 separate categories of operations, including teaching robots how to wrap pallets stacked with goods.

It's all good for robots' builders and suppliers.

Honeywell, which supplies robotic technology to warehousers and other users, grew revenues in its robotics business by 14 percent to $2 billion in 2020, the *FT* reported.

TRENDPOST: *Automation is claiming jobs from burger flipper to pharmacist assistant. Robot maintenance and repair shops are becoming the new HR departments.*

Some businesses are adopting a "cobotic" workforce, in which humans and robots complement each other ("Robots Turn 100 Soon," 15 August, 2018). However, robots are taking jobs faster than the workers they replace are disappearing.

This strengthens two trends.

One is the embryonic movement to create apprenticeship programs to prep workers with no or outdated skills to qualify for jobs in tech, such as robot repair.

The other is the growing pressure to provide a guaranteed income, especially for people unable to adapt to skilled work. However, this would likely require a massive redistribution of wealth, taking profits from companies making money by replacing workers with bots and giving the money to their displaced ex-employees.

Although growing in popularity, especially among young people, the idea of a guaranteed income still faces years of political opposition.

HOW THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

After decades of research and failed attempts, the tire industry has demonstrated something almost as good as a gas tank that's always full—an airless tire.

The challenge has been to design a tire that needs no air but is still squishy enough to maintain a solid grip on the road.

Michelin calls its creation the "Tweel," a combined tire and wheel.

It consists of a limber, treaded outer rim that is connected to a center metal wheel by flexible spokes.

The hard, rubberized spokes replace the air in a conventional tire.

The spokes flex up and down, allowing the outer rim to flatten slightly against the road in the same way that a normal tire does.

The spokes' stiffness is tunable vertically, which determines ride comfort, and horizontally, which controls handling, Michelin says.

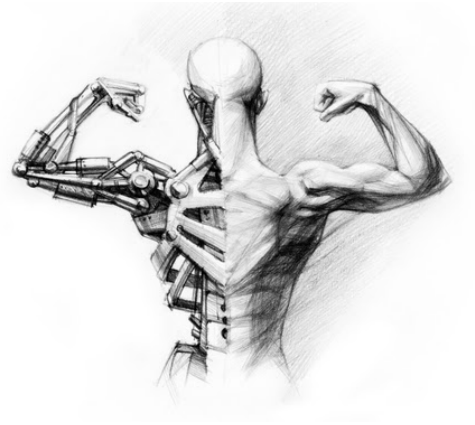
General Motors has partnered with Michelin in creating the new "Uptis" tire, as the Tweel has been christened, and will introduce it in some production models as early as 2024.

TRENDPOST: *About 200 million tires hit the scrap pile each year because of punctures; millions more are junked early because underinflation causes needless wear, Michelin says.*

The Tweel not only eliminates that waste, but also requires less material to make than a conventional tire and may last as much as three times longer, according to Michelin, making the Tweel a win for the environment as well as for drivers.

Michelin's Tweel. (Credit: Michelin)

REAL MUSCLES FOR ROBOTS



Scientists at Washington University have been trying to make muscle-like structures for soft robots with surfaces that resemble skin.

After some frustrating experiments, they decided to use real muscles—or, more accurately, real muscle proteins.

Harvesting muscle from mammals wouldn't work, so the team decided to recruit microbes to make it.

First, the researchers genetically engineered bacteria that make titin, one of three essential muscle proteins, inside their bodies.

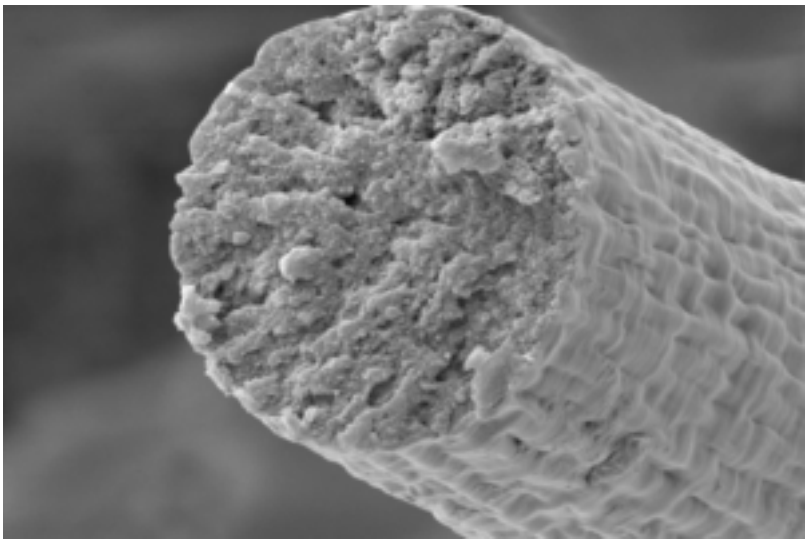
Titin is the biggest protein molecule found in nature, so the group further refined their bacteria to stitch together bits of the molecule in polymers about 50 times bigger than the usual bacteria molecules, about as big as the bugs could handle.

After harvesting their titin crop, the developers used a conventional spinning process to spin the polymers into fibers about a tenth the thickness of a human hair.

They then analyzed the fibers to determine the structure that gave them their strength, tested the material, and found it could absorb more energy without breaking than Kevlar, the synthetic fabric used to make bullet-proof vests.

Their process can be scaled commercially at low cost, the engineers said, and they have filed a patent on their creation.

TRENDPOST: *The university group will apply their new fiber to making soft muscles for robots. Others will see commercial opportunities in licensing the invention to make, for example, shoelaces that never snap, running shoe soles that last far longer, or new kinds of protective shields for soldiers or police.*



Washington University's new titin fiber made from artificially created muscle protein.

Credit: Washington University