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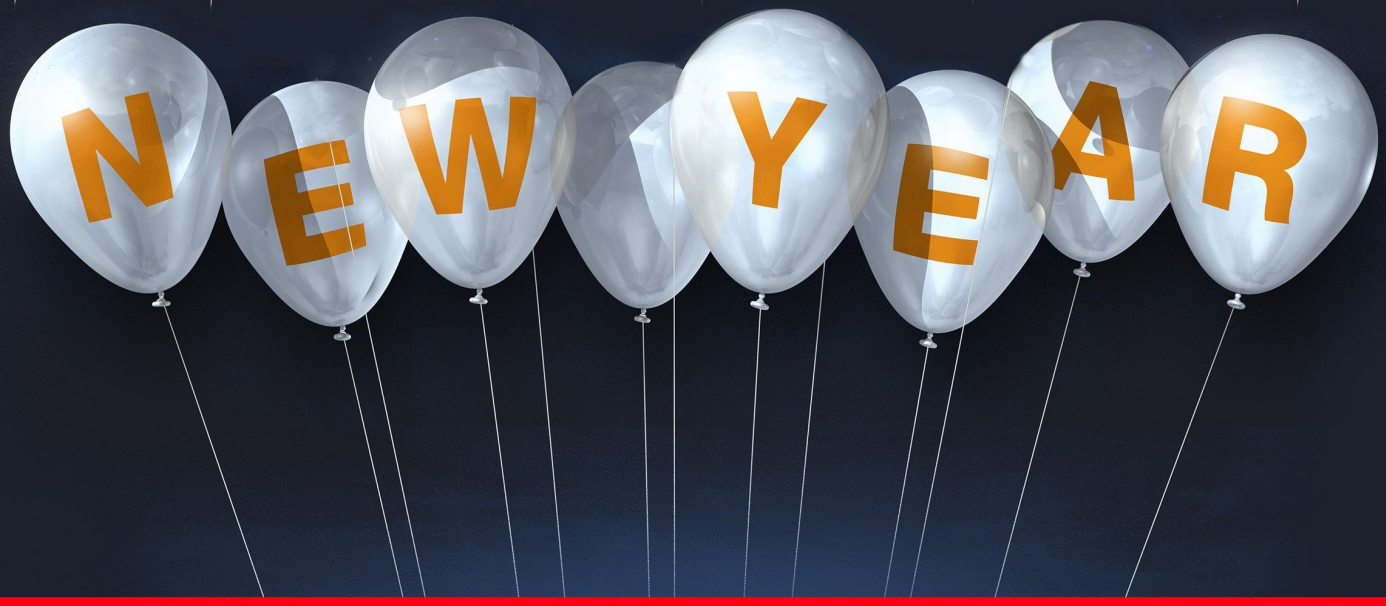

TRENDS JOURNAL
HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS®

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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

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Inside

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Welcome to this week's **Trends Journal**: HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Yes, a Happy New Year for only those who get the COVID Jabs #1, #2, #3. And Israel announced today that it's Jab #4 for people over 60 and medical workers.

Of course, this must be a "conspiracy theory" since this time last year the Drug Lords, politicians and Presstitutes sold the line that two shots would provide a 96 percent efficacy rate... and herd immunity would be reached at 70 percent, according to America's self-anointed top infectious disease expert, Anthony Fauci.

For those choosing not to get the Operation Warp Speed shots—depending on the nation, state and city—Freedom, as we continue to detail in the **Trends Journal**, is not permitted by a government in a country near you. Today, Germany imposed a list of strict rules and mandates that hits the unvaxxed the hardest.

On the economic front, the stricter the mandates the harder it will hit businesses, lives and livelihoods. And of course, beyond the COVID War and economic trends, the **Trends Journal** covers the world, and there are essential geopolitical, environmental, hi-tech, low-tech and scores of other trends that we identify and forecast to help you prepare for the new year and beyond.

To celebrate the Christmas and New Year holidays we are taking a two-week break. However, should important events occur you will receive Trend Alerts to keep you on top of the news and ahead of the trends.

Buon Natale,

Gerald Celente and the Trends Journal Team

COMMENTS

WAGES RISING FOR SOME, NOT OTHERS

High quality, experienced and skilled employees in-demand are probably the one's resigning their jobs and finding better ways to fit the job into their life rather than vice-versa. Those employees with little competitive advantage outside of their current job placements are stuck and at the mercy of stingy employers or Corporations. They have to take what they can get.

So, salaries are going-up in-tandem with inflation if you are in the top tier of high demand occupations, such as in High-Tech (programmers or coders, for example). In addition, many of them are starting their own businesses instead of staying with a large corporation. However, if you are a service worker or are paid wages, then you are falling farther behind.

Craig Bradley

A VOTE THAT MATTERS

Voting has become a joke. The politicians were so freaked out by how many people polled didn't believe in the system because of our last election. The politicians started doing recounts trying to convince the

public voting does matter. People are voting another way, they're moving to States that reflect their values, and not empty votes.

Hieronymus Meilink

VACCINES NOT AS ADVERTISED
I think that these "vaccines" were never intended to do anything but to cause autoimmune deficiency disorder. No they don't cause the Sars Cov2 virus to mutate into an HIV virus. What they do is cause the body to make spike proteins that have an adverse effect on the body's T cells thus causing lowered immune function in that body (AIDs) and / or autoimmune enhanced disorders. such as the French Polio. Each time you get the jab you get a lowered function or adverse reaction of your immune system that appears to be long lasting.

a1achiropractic

UNVACCINATED DEHUMANIZED
Yes, they are…and a friend of mine mentioned a book titled "Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland." A book on how Ordinary Police officers become murderers and killers…but not just them…also, Doctors and Nurses catch onto the "Trends," and begin murdering and killing people, too. We ARE in Dangerous Times! When we look to our Justice Departments for justice, and they begin doing the 'opposite' in the Name of Justice, then we are certainly going to have to defend our lives, freedoms, and the people we love.

Just look at what is happening in Doctor's office, Dental offices, etc…they have a disdain for treating you if you don't comply on their property…Don't want to wear a "breathing obstructive device…that's fine…we don't have to serve you or help you." Not serving or helping people is just the beginning of the systematic change in an individual's behavior on how they are handling this fear created environment.
This is GOING to go way too far…it already has…

DAvid SEila

SLAVELANDIA
Slaves in slave landia. Remember big business in the early US states tried to use Natives as slaves and they had no part of that. So they had to resort to offshore slave laborers.
Take a page out of the Native Americans. Use gold, silver and Bitcoin. Any money taken out of the system is a useful tool in your future.

Dillon Sawyer

CRACKDOWN ON SANTA
In Germany they even arrested our Santa Clause for not wearing a mask. He should have taken Knecht Ruprecht with him.

Zarathustra

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TRENDS ON THE U.S. ECONOMIC FRONT

U.S. MARKET OVERVIEW

U.S. STOCKS CLOSE LOWER LAST WEEK

All three major U.S. stock indices trended down last week, digesting news that the U.S. Federal Reserve will end its multi-trillion dollar bond-market scheme in about three months, start raising interest rates next year and the fear of possible economic damage from the Omicron virus.

Last Friday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average gave up 1.5 percent, the NASDAQ less than 0.1 percent, and the Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 1 percent.

On the Fed front, considering the latest 6.8 percent inflation rate, the Fed's near-zero interest rates are actually deep in negative territory, yet the money junkies on The Street want to keep the flood of cheaper-than-cheap money

flowing. And, if the Fed sticks to what it suggests, rates will only rise to 0.75 percent next year.

The Bank of England raised its key rate from 0.1 percent to 0.25 on 16 December (see related story in this issue), Russia raised its rate a day later, and several other countries either have raised rates or are poised to.

“The underlying primary fear in the market is inflation,” David Donabedian, chief investment officer at CIBC Private Wealth.

As a result, investors are rebalancing portfolios toward stocks, dumping the speculative ones and moving into those that will become more valuable if inflation rises and Omicron increases the work-at-home and other trends that will benefit various market sectors.

Share prices of Zoom Communications, Peloton Interactive, and vaccine maker Moderna all bucked market headwinds and rose on Friday.

Brent crude slipped 2 percent to close at $73.52 Friday on fears of an Omicron-related economic slowdown. Gold, a traditional hedge against inflation, edged up 0.4 percent.

The Stoxx Europe 600 index shed 3.5 percent Friday as natural gas prices soared (see related story in this issue).

Japan’s Nikkei 225 dumped 1.8 percent, Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index dropped 1.2 percent, and the Shanghai Composite Index also ended down 1.2 percent.

“Treacherous” Undercurrents

Beneath stock indices’ record prices, “treacherous undercurrents” are dragging down share prices for hundreds of companies to their lowest levels in a year, according to the *Financial Times*.

Earlier this month, 1,380 U.S. stocks sank to their lowest price this year, the *FT* found.

A few days later, the S&P 500 set a new record while 210 of its stocks—close to half—were at least 10 percent off their highs for the year.

Just five S&P stocks—Google's parent company Alphabet, Apple, Microsoft, Nvidia, and Tesla—have given the index half of its gains since April, Goldman Sachs has estimated.

On the NASDAQ, which is tech-heavy, 1,300 of the index's 3,300 stocks are down by at least 50 percent over the past 12 months and 80 percent are down at least 10 percent, according to *FT* calculations.

Options trading reached a record pitch in November, the Options Clearing Corporation reported.

As of 18 December, the month had seen two days on which options trades topped 50 million, a level seen only ten times before in the corporation's history and an indication of markets' volatility and investor jitters.

"Right now, the index moves are completely misleading to what's going on below the surface," Brian Bost, Barclays co-head of equity derivatives for the Americas, said in an *FT* interview.

The disparity between workaday stocks and the market's marquee names portends a market reversal likely to be worsened by the U.S. Federal Reserve's newly announced policy tightening, the *FT* noted.

"We are possibly on the verge of the Fed taking away the punch bowl for the first time in three years," portfolio manager Jason Goldberg at Capstone Investment Advisors, a hedge fund that trades on volatility, told the *FT*.

"Think about how many strategies are predicated on the Fed having one's back," he said. "You have to rethink those."

“No one knows what will happen with inflation,” Bost noted. “We are on the verge of a regime where people do say ‘we need to get out of equities’,” he said.

TRENDPOST: *We have been warning for months that equity markets are overpriced, with record highs divorced from economic reality and, as Goldberg said, predicated on the faith that the Fed has investors’ backs, with its ocean of cheap money.*

TREND FORECAST: *We also have forecast that when the Fed begins to turn off the cheap-money tap, markets will decline as evidenced by last week’s sell-off and the major U.S. stock indexes declining yesterday for the third consecutive session.*

As the Fed winds down its bond-buying program, bond markets will tighten from the bottom up: first, investors will dump junk bonds and money will flee up the ratings scale to safety.

Equity markets are peaking. As interest-rate hikes approach, investors will batten down their portfolios, locking down value stocks and becoming much more cautious and selective in their bets.

With each quarter-point rate hike, the equity and housing markets will shed value. We maintain our forecast that when rates pass 1.5 percent, housing and equity markets will suffer a sharp reversal.

This Week

Equites across the globe dove yesterday as the Omicron fear kept overwhelming the mainstream news of rising “cases”... and as we detail in this **Trends Journal** in our COVID War section, not rising deaths.

In fact, today was the first reported Omicron death from a person who had, according to a press release from Harris County Public Health, "The individual ... had underlying health conditions."

Indeed, as we reported, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, some 94 percent of those who have died of the virus have 2.6 pre-existing comorbidities and the COVID recovery rate overall is an estimated 99.7 percent.

Yet, the headlines scream that one person (who was in poor health) out of a population of 333 million Americans died of the Omicron virus.

Yesterday the Dow closed down 433 points, the S&P fell 1.1 percent and the Nasdaq was down 1.2 percent.

Overseas, the pan-continental Stoxx Europe 600 slumped 1.4 percent, and the Asian Indexes also closed down over 1 percent.

Today equities sprang back, with shares in the Asia Pacific recouping yesterday's losses with the Nikkei up 2 percent and Shanghai up 1 percent. In Europe, Stoxx 600 was up 1.4 percent with travel and leisure stocks jumping 3.5 percent... despite strict travel restrictions, lockdowns, COVID mandates and vax passport requirements.

In the States, again, despite the spreading fear of travel, tourism and hospitality would be hit by the Omicron fear... equities snapped back with airlines, cruise lines and entertainment stocks leading the charge.

Carnival, the cruise line company saw its stock spike 8.7 percent. Delta Air Lines and United Airlines were up 5.9 percent and 6.9 percent respectively. Over in Nevada, America's gambling hub, Caesars Entertainment jumped 8.75 percent and Las Vegas Sands spiked 8.4 percent. Again, the equities that should be hit the hardest by the fear of a spreading Omicron virus, shot up the highest.

Today, the Dow closed up 560 points, the S&P 500 rose 1.8 percent and the Nasdaq jumped 3 percent.

GOLD/SILVER: With fears of Omicron lessening on The Street, and the dollar and bond yields moving higher, gold was down some $6 today, closing at $1,788 per ounce while silver jumped up over 1 percent closing at $22.50 per ounce. Both precious metals are still stuck in their months-long trading range.

TREND FORECAST: *As we note in this and previous* ***Trends Journal****s, the economy cannot run without cheap money. Thus, as a result of the cheap money drying up when interest rates go up, the economy and equity markets will sharply decline... which will in turn strongly drive up precious metals and cryptocurrency prices as investors seek safe haven assets.*

Also, minus a wild card event, such as the Fed rushing to push interest rates much higher, we forecast that gold will stay above $1,700 per ounce and silver's bottom will be in the $18 per ounce range.

And, what is absent in the media coverage, as interest rates climb, so too will the cost of servicing the massive government and corporate debt that was accumulated when interest rates hit rock bottom. Thus, the greater the debt load and the slower the economy grows, the higher the levels of default.

BITCOIN: Same story, different week. Once again there was spreading Bitcoin fear last week that the best of the cryptocurrency's days were over when the coin slid down to the $45K range.

As we go to press, it's trading in the $48.5K range, about $1K higher than last week. Thus, as with precious metals, bitcoin is also stuck in its trading range.

We maintain our forecast that bitcoin is not in a dive position and that when it solidly breaks above the $55K range per coin, it will hit new highs.

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our GSB—Gold, Silver, Bitcoin—forecast that all three will maintain and then pass their current and previous highs when, after the U.S. Fed rate hits 1.5 percent, equity markets sharply fall and the economies sink into Dragflation: Declining Gross Domestic Product and rising inflation.*

We also maintain that a major factor in forecasting the future price of bitcoin and other crypto currencies is dependent upon government regulations. However, that threat in the U.S. and Europe will lessen as more banks, businesses and investment funds are going crypto, thus, the upward crypto trends, especially bitcoin, will continue to gain momentum.

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

OIL: Despite Brent crude recently sinking below $70 per barrel over fears of nations imposing COVID War 2.0 travel curbs, lockdowns and other restrictions that are throwing work, leisure and travel plans into chaos... oil prices snapped back with Brent closing today $74.24 per barrel and West Texas Intermediate at $71.47 per barrel.

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our forecast that oil production will continue to moderate and while OPEC+ plans to gradually increase supply every month by 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) after sharply cutting back output last year, should the COVID War 2.0 continue to ramp-up and economies decline, they will limit output to keep prices in their current range.*

FED INTEREST RATE HIKES = MARKET MELTDOWNS?

At last week's meeting of the U.S. Federal Reserve's Open Market Committee, a majority of committee members signaled their expectation that the Fed would raise its key interest rates by one-quarter percentage point at least three times in 2022, beginning this spring.

All 18 committee members agreed that rates will need to rise next year.

A majority penciled in another three quarter-point hikes in 2023 and two in 2024.

Stupid or Liars?

We have extensively detailed, for nearly a year, that the Fed Banksters kept saying inflation was "temporary," then it became "transitory," while we kept forecasting it was real and would rise.

As recently as September, half the committee's members thought any rate hikes could be put off until 2023, emphasizing the need for the job market to recover to pre-COVID strength before rates should rise ("When Will the Fed End Cheap Money Policy?" 27 Jul 2021).

Although 3.9 million more people remain jobless than in February 2020, studies now show many will not return to the labor market due to COVID fears, child and family care responsibilities, or having cashed out of the soaring stock and housing markets and taken early retirement ("The Great Resignation: Will Jobs Come Back?" 16 Nov 2021).

To lay the groundwork for a spring rate boost, the group voted to end the central bank's $120-billion monthly bond purchases before April instead of by the end of June, as had been previously planned (see related story in this issue).

The Fed needs to stop buying bonds to stimulate the economy before it raises interest rates to restrain the economy.

"There's a real risk now that inflation may be more persistent…and the risk of inflation becoming entrenched has increased," Powell told a news conference after the meeting.

"Part of the reason behind our move today is to put ourselves in a position to be able to deal with that risk," he said.

In early November, the Fed set a plan to reduce bond purchases by $15 billion a month, ending the program in June; now the bank will cut its purchases by $30

billion each month, ending the buying spree by April ("Fed Winding Down Bond Purchase Program: Jokers Wild," 9 Nov 2021).

Inflation in the U.S. will end this year at 4.4 percent, most committee members at the meeting agreed, easing back to 2.7 percent in 2022 and settling around 2.1 percent by 2025.

Earlier, the group had projected that inflation would peak at 2.3 percent in 2022.

"We're not going back to the same economy we had in February 2020," Powell said in the press briefing.

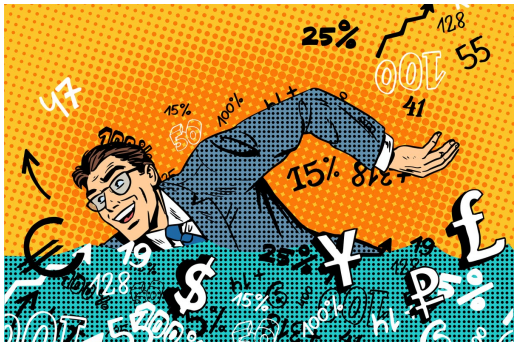
"Early on [in the COVID War], the sense was that's where we were headed," he said.

TREND FORECAST: *The investment and housing markets are in for a difficult year ahead as they wean themselves from the Fed's artificially low interest rates and endless flow of cheap money.*

Economic fundamentals will reassert themselves in the equity markets, most likely leading to a major correction when the Fed rate hits 1.5 percent.

The housing market will cool, although prices will remain high: strong demand will continue as younger families reach the home-buying age, mortgage lending criteria will be strict as long as COVID persists, and construction labor and materials will still be scarce through much of 2022.

EUROPEAN MARKETS: HIGHER RATES IMPACT



On 15 December, the U.S. Federal Reserve indicated it probably will raise interest rates at least three times next year (see related story in this issue).

The next day, the Bank of England raised its key interest from 0.1 percent to 0.25 and it was believed that Eurozone stock markets notched new record highs because the gamblers "priced in" future interest rate increases.

There's the general belief that equities will be rising because economies will steadily grow and strong economic growth will deter negative implications of higher interest rates.

However, the fear also persists that inflation is drawing central bankers' focus away from supporting the recovery and jobs market and toward cooling inflation, which risks an economic slowdown.

TREND FORECAST: *Surveys of purchasing managers indicate that the Omicron virus already is dragging down Britain's economy, one reason why the Bank of England's interest rate hike (which, as we had forecast, should have come sooner) caught The Street by surprise*.

And, despite inflation rising at 5.1 percent in the U.K., the highest rate in a decade, the B.O.E. 0.25 interest rate hike is minimal. Thus, when accounting for inflation, interest rates are actually negative. Therefore, should interest rates rise above 1.5 percent, the U.K. economy (which is facing new COVID War restrictions) and the equity markets, will rapidly decline.

CORPORATE STOCK BUYBACKS SET RECORD

After shepherding cash through much of the COVID War, corporations bought a record $234.5 billion worth of their own stock in this year's third quarter, surpassing the previous quarterly high mark of $233 billion notched in 2018's final three months.

The wave of stock buybacks through this year has helped propel the Standard & Poor's 500 stock index to 67 record closes in 2021 as of 13 December, handing it a 25-percent gain for the year, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

That's not the end of it, analyst Howard Silverblatt at S&P Dow Jones Indices, said to the *WSJ*, forecasting an additional $236 billion in buybacks this quarter.

In September, Microsoft's board of directors authorized the company to repurchase up to $60 billion worth of its shares; Hertz Global Holdings, which filed for bankruptcy in May 2020, has said it will buy back $2 billion of its stock, and Dell Technologies plans a $5-billion buyback, the *WSJ* said.

The buybacks, which reduce the number of shares available to the public, have helped push equity markets to record after record this year, as has the flood of cheap money Congress and the U.S. Federal Reserve have ladled into markets to keep them functioning during the COVID crisis.

As a result, in 2021, overall earnings among S&P companies will be 45 percent higher than in 2020, according to analysts cited by the *WSJ*.

Buybacks do more than simply boost stock prices.

They also raise per-share profits and signal investors that a company is optimistic about its financial future.

"It's always comforting to have a management team tell you how undervalued they think their shares are," portfolio manager Anne Wickland at Easterly Investment Partners told the *WSJ*.

Higher stock prices also figure into executives' annual bonuses.

Activists, politicians, and some analysts have criticized the buybacks, arguing that the cash would be better used if it were to be invested in the companies' operations than in stock shares.

TRENDPOST: *As we noted last spring in [“Corporations To Return to Buying Their Own Stock”](#) (18 May 2021), the trend of the Bigs getting bigger persists here as it does elsewhere.*

When corporations buy back their own stock, the benefits flow to shareholders, market gamblers, and the executive suite.

The trend of the Bigs getting bigger and investing in expanding their revenue stream persists... rather than re-investing to build their business and for capital improvements. It’s about supply and demand—the more stocks they buy, the less supply. The less supply, the higher the price goes.

LEVERAGED LOANS CRISIS BREWING

Of the 954 leveraged loans sold to investors in 2021 through November, 33 percent of the loans were made to companies whose debts exceeded earnings by at least six times, the *Financial Times* reported.

The loans exceed a 2013 guideline adopted by the U.S. Comptroller of the Currency, the Federal Reserve, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation that leveraged loans to a company not exceeding the six-times limit.

“Generally,” the guideline states, a company’s debt that surpasses six times its earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITA) “raises concerns for most industries.”

“There is an insane amount of leverage in the system,” Dennis Kelleher, president of the nonprofit Better Markets financial advocacy group, told the *Financial Times*.

"It has created a ticking time bomb," he warned, and which we noted in "Will Junk Bonds Turn to Junk?" (14 Dec 2021).

As interest rates rise, companies top-heavy with debt could fail, sending shock waves through the financial system.

Also, accounting customs allow borrowers to include "add-backs" in earnings calculations, showing higher earnings on paper and thus justifying even more debt.

The debt problem has been worsened by the Fed's cheap money and $120-billion monthly bond purchases that began in March 2020, Kelleher said.

The Fed's actions, designed to see the economy through the COVID crisis, lowered lending standards, he pointed out.

The computer and electronics industry holds 20 percent of the loans exceeding the six-times guideline, up from 13 percent from 2013 when the guidance was written.

The leasing and service sectors also have a high proportion of over-leveraged debt, the *FT* noted.

TREND FORECAST: *Loose lending policies began before the COVID virus arrived but are unlikely to survive the Fed's end to bond-buying and higher interest rates. As markets collide with the reality of a faltering economy, unbuffered by permissive Fed policies, lenders will protect themselves with stricter lending standards.*

As a result, more businesses will be forced to restructure debt on less favorable terms than they have become used to; other companies will be unable to survive tighter standards and the number of corporate defaults will rise.

LABOR MARKET'S STRENGTH PROVES FED POLICY WRONG, WSJ SAYS

As inflation reared early this year, the U.S. Federal Reserve bet that the labor market could run strong without pushing costs and prices higher for a prolonged period—a bet that has proven to be wrong, *Wall Street Journal* columnist Greg Yp wrote in a 17 December analysis.

The Fed continued to insist that inflation would be "temporary," then "transitory," while the central bank kept pouring money into the economy to support business and, particularly, hiring.

Through much of this year, the Fed said its primary goal was to see "full employment," which later was adjusted to "maximum employment," before it would rein back stimulus spending or raise interest rates, as we noted in "Will Fed Reduce Bond Purchases Later this Year?" (3 Aug 2021).

Late last month, Fed chair Jerome Powell admitted in Congressional testimony that inflation has turned out to be neither temporary nor transitory and has now forced the Fed to shift its focus from force-feeding the job market to lassoing relentless price increases ("The Powell Push: For Better or Worse," 7 Dec 2021).

Unemployment dipped to 4.2 percent in November and wages are rising briskly, Yp noted, but 4.9 million fewer Americans are working now than in February 2020, leaving the Fed far from its goal of full employment.

Also, wages are not inflation's primary driver; consumers' unstinting demand for houses, cars, and other big-ticket items are leading prices higher, Yp said.

However, growing pressure for pay hikes during an inflationary period likely will determine inflation's future, he said.

Wages rose at a 6-percent annual rate during the third quarter, according to Fed figures, which would be sustainable if worker productivity was growing at 4 percent annually, twice its historical rate, Yp noted.

Instead, productivity actually declined this year through September, government figures show.

The loss of productivity is due, in part, to the way the U.S. handled workers cut off by the COVID shutdown compared to Europe's approach, Yp argued.

"When COVID-19 hit, the U.S. chose to support workers largely by letting companies fire them and then pay generous unemployment insurance to keep incomes stable," MIT economist Kristin Forbes said.

As a result, "people lost connection with their jobs and dropped out."

"In Europe, they chose furloughing people and they were still connected and had a job to come back to," she pointed out.

Through its choice, the U.S. may have raised the "natural" unemployment rate that is consistent with low, stable inflation, Forbes argued.

All of which leaves the Fed to guess again: it can keep interest rates low because supply-line issues will work themselves out, Yp agrees, but that could take a year or more. Meanwhile, prices and wages could chase each other higher in a wage-price spiral that could take on a life of its own.

The Fed has no choice but to tighten policy now to slow inflation, but at the risk of also slowing the economic recovery now while raising the risk of a recession later, Yp concluded.

TREND FORECAST: *We note this article to illustrate the Fed's failures and how, for nearly a year, they were either too stupid to forecast inflation's rise, or were lying so they could keep pumping in cheap money to artificially boost equities and the economy.*

And while not rising as fast as inflation, salaries will continue to rise as the demand for workers is greater than the supply. Also, one of our Top Trends for 2022, "Unionization," will also push wages higher.

BANKSTER BANDITS: "SERIAL CRIME WAVE AT THE LARGEST U.S. BANK"

The Wall Street Journal, in its edition of 18-19 December, reports that the Securities and Exchange Commission has fined the brokerage arm of JPMorgan Chase $125 million, the largest fine ever for violating SEC rules requiring brokerages to document communications and make such records available to regulators.

Having access to such records is essential to the SEC's function of protecting investors and the market's integrity.

Such communications, involving salespeople, traders and bankers, were once conducted on recorded phone lines or messaging software that was digitally archived, but now take place via cell phones and encrypted apps; where the brokerage went wrong was in not adequately supervising employees and making sure rules were followed.

Monitoring and archiving employees' communications is the responsibility of management, and became more difficult when, in response to COVID-19, more employees began working from home. But the SEC charged that JPMorgan's transgressions had predated the COVID War, and amounted to evading the regulators' ability to conduct investigations.

JPMorgan (in terms of assets, the largest U.S. bank) will also pay $75 million to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to settle a similar case.

Trends Journal reported, in "THIS BANKSTER AIN'T SINGIN' THE BLUES" (27 Jul 2021), on how JPMorgan Chase, having admitted to five felony counts brought by the U.S. Justice Dept. since 2014 (related to market manipulations), had paid over $920 million to settle. Nobody went to jail, no other actions were taken, and JPMorgan's chairman and CEO, Jamie Dimon, and his Board of Directors not only kept their jobs, but Dimon was praised by the bank for his leadership and awarded a $50 million bonus.

But the bank's recent settlement with the SEC is its first with that agency to involve an admission of wrongdoing; it's only since October that the SEC has deviated from its "no admit, no deny" policy. The bank also admitted misconduct in its case before the CFTC.

However, an article in Wall Street on Parade, on 20 December, points out that the same type of communications violations by JPMorgan had figured in the earlier Justice Dept. case, and the firm had been on probation and under a Deferred Prosecution Agreement. And then, in September, more charges of market manipulation were brought against the bank by the Justice Dept., and again the result was another Deferred Prosecution Agreement and probation.

The WSoP article alludes to a lawsuit against JPMorgan charging that the bank even falsely reported being in compliance with its agreements with the Justice Dept. This had to do with the bank putting the children of Chinese officials on its payroll in order to further its business interests in China.

The WSoP article goes into some detail (as is characteristic of that publication) in describing how JPMorgan allegedly used complex, convoluted, confusing and outright false record-keeping to obfuscate and conceal its alleged improprieties; the lawsuit essentially alleges that JPMorgan kept, for fraudulent purposes, two sets of books.

And the SEC is depending on JPMorgan's Board of Directors to oversee a "Compliance Consultant." Wall Street on Parade describes this mess as "this

serial crime wave at the largest federally-insured bank in the United States," and calls for a Senate investigation.

TRENDPOST: *Wall Street on Parade also mentions yet another scandal involving JPMorgan Chase: the "London Whale" affair; see "CRIMINALITY IN HIGH FINANCE: THE BEAT GOES ON" (9 Nov 2021).*

What more can we possibly say? Any allusions to "the foxes guarding (or even running) the chicken coop" seem woefully inadequate to describe the doings of the members of this big ol' self-protecting, self-perpetuating, congenitally corrupt club; see "DON'T CALL THEM 'CRIMINALS' -- THEY'RE 'WHITE SHOE BOYS'!" (29 Sep 2021).

WILL OMICRON KILL MORE BUSINESSES THAN PEOPLE?

The dramatic jump in COVID-19 cases and the emergence of the Omicron variant has forced companies to rethink their approach to bringing employees back into the office, with several large companies announcing a shift in strategies.

The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on how the COVID-19 has forever changed what it means to work from home and landlords should be afraid. (See: "REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY UPDATE," "CORPORATIONS CONTINUE TO SHED OFFICE SPACE," and "OFFICE WORKERS' SLOW RETURN ENDANGERS LANDLORDS, CITY FINANCES.")

The trend has even sped up the innovation that will soon render offices nearly obsolete. (See: "SPOTLIGHT: METAVERSE," and "METAVERSE: THE NEW COLLECTIVE."

Lyft, Ford Motor, Uber Technologies, and Alphabet's Google have all delayed plans of a return to the office due to variant fears, *The Wall Street Journal* reported. The paper reported that the reduction of employees returning to work would be "painful for office-building landlords who have struggled with high vacancy and uncertainty over the long-term impact of the pandemic."

Kastle Systems, the security company that tracks access-card swipes at office buildings in the 10 largest cities in the U.S., reported that about 41 percent of the workforce have returned to their desks, the *WSJ* reported.

James Gorman, the CEO of Morgan Stanley, said in an interview that he was wrong to tell employees that they should get back into the office.

"I thought we would have been out of it past Labor Day, and we're not," he told CNBC.

He said he believes the world will be dealing with the pandemic "through most of next year."

"Everybody's still finding their way and then you get the Omicron variant; who knows, we'll have pi, we'll have theta, and epsilon, and we'll eventually run out of letters of the alphabet. It's continuing to be an issue," he said.

Jefferies, the investment bank, told its nearly 5,000 employees to work from home and Goldman Sachs told its bankers to hold off on any more holiday parties. *The New York Times* reported that Citigroup had its employees returning to the office twice a week since September, but has since told them that they could work remotely.

Apple Inc. also took steps to limit the spread of the virus by delaying the return to the office and closing three stores due to outbreaks.

The Journal, citing a person familiar with the announcement, reported that there is now no clear date for a return. Tim Cook, the CEO, had said that employees would be able to return in some kind of a hybrid approach in February.

Analysts predict that another hiatus from the office would cause “more employers to consider remote work longer term,” the paper said. There is hope among landlords and restaurants in major cities that any drawback will not be as severe as it was in the early days of the outbreak due to the prevalence of vaccines.

The U.S. is averaging more than 120,000 new coronavirus cases each day, which represents a 40 percent jump from earlier this month, *The New York Times* reported.

News also broke out last week that Google plans to fire any employee who does not adhere to the company’s vaccination policy. CNBC received an internal memo among executives that said if these unvaccinated workers don’t take the jab by 18 January, they will be placed on paid administrative leave for two months followed by unpaid personal leave for up to six months, and then be terminated.

The Washington Post also told its employees that it plans to bring workers back to the office by mid-February and they are expected to have taken a booster and should prepare for weekly testing.

“What we've been seeing from our customers is uncertainty: Do we mandate boosters, do we not mandate boosters?” Benjamin Granger, an organizational psychologist at the software company Qualtrics, told T*he Times.* “When we see the first domino fall, I think we’ll see a cascade of them coming.”

TREND FORECAST: *We had forecast this trend last year when the media and politicians launched the COVID War. The two factors: remote working and that people leaving expensive, large urban centers for suburban and ex-urban locations are unprecedented and would not have been possible prior to the advances of 21st-century technology.*

Thus, there will be a steady decline in overbuilt urban areas. Despite moves to change zoning laws to turn empty commercial buildings into residential ones, it

will not replenish the loss of rental income from commercial tenants and economic loss for retail, restaurant, tourism, and hospitality businesses that thriving commercial cities generated.

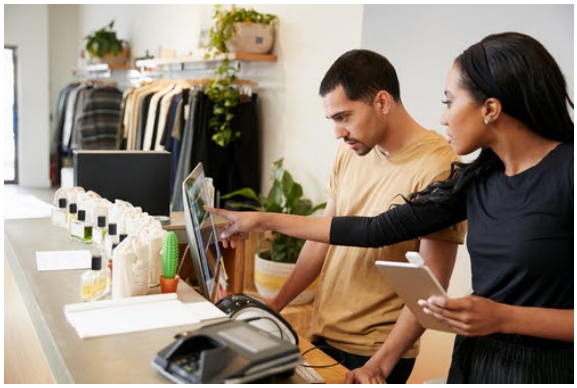
*As we have detailed in this and previous **Trends Journal**s, the Wall Street Mob and the Bankster Gang have been more eager to get their employees back at their desks since they hold massive amounts of commercial real estate debt and huge real estate holdings.*

From Skype to Zoom, the work-from-home trend persists even as lockdowns and other COVID War protocols begin to fade into the past.

Even a complete "return to normalcy" may not manifest in office workers flocking back to their cubicles, and the high rate of unused, unoccupied and unneeded office space is taking a toll, and creating shake-ups, in the commercial real estate market.

*We went into detail on this in our article of 5 January 2021, "TRENDS IN REAL ESTATE," as well as in numerous other real estate articles in the **Trends Journal**.*

RETAIL SALES CREEP UP IN NOVEMBER



Sales at stores, restaurants, and online retailers rose a modest 0.3 percent in November from October, plunging from October's 1.8-percent jump.

Sales at electronic stores slipped 4.6 percent and were down 1.2 percent at general merchandise stores. Online sales were flat, according to the U.S. labor department.

Still, November's number was 18.2 percent above that from a year earlier and almost tripled inflation's pace of 6.8 percent over the same 12-month period.

TREND FORECAST: *Inflation, now running at a 39-year high rate, contributed to the higher dollar volume of sales, as did the hoard of cash that many consumers stockpiled during 2020's shutdown.*

We forecast companies across the business spectrum – from raw materials to finished products – will continue to raise prices as inflation continues to rise. We also forecast a retail/restaurant/hospitality consumer spending slowdown as Omicron fears continue to be hyped by politicians and Presstitutes.

DRIVERLESS CARS = DRIVERLESS FRAUD

Dan Ammann, who left the presidency of General Motors (GM) at the beginning of 2019 to steer Cruise, the corporation's initiative in self-driving cars, has resigned from the company.

GM had promised it would field a road-ready driverless car in 2019 but that did not happen.

Since Ammann took charge at Cruise, enthusiasm for autonomous vehicles has waned as the scope of the technological challenges have been made more obvious and several high-profile crashes have underscored the challenges.

GM bought Cruise for $1 billion in 2016 and the San Francisco-based company is testing 300 autonomous vehicles there and in Phoenix.

GM's terse statement announcing Ammann's departure failed to give the usual thanks and praise for his service, indicating tensions between him and the company.

TREND FORECAST: *In May 2018, we correctly equated the over-heated driverless vehicle investment trend to the dot.com bubble of the late 1990s (*"Driverless cars? As forecast: Driverless fraud, Driving us over the cliff", 18 May 2018).

Back then, the hype and overblown expectations of how internet-driven businesses would drive investor megabucks led to an explosion of start-ups over those next few years. But a large percentage quickly failed and the bubble burst.

The driverless car hype has followed the same track as the dot.com implosion, as the entire auto industry and segments of the high-tech world invested billions in what we accurately forecast as an over-eager bet.

TREND FORECAST: *The intervening years have proven that safe self-driving vehicles require much more sophisticated technology and infrastructure than the technology's early promoters acknowledged.*

Development of those technologies and infrastructure will continue, but at a much reduced rate of investment and speed than three years ago.

Vehicle makers have now realized that, although safe self-driving cars may be a reality some day, their evolution will take many years more than first expected.

In addition, it will be years beyond that that a majority of drivers feel comfortable risking their physical safety in the hands of an algorithm.

In addition, people will be reluctant to give up driving because it remains one area of our lives where we still can exercise choice and control.

TREND FORECAST: *The opposite of Hi-Tech auto's is one of our Top Trends for 2022, "Low–Tech Simplicity." And as we note, "The "simplicity" trend has great import for manufacturing in general, but especially for the automobile industry. Hi-tech, as we have detailed, has dramatically driven up the cost of*

automobiles... and have made them unaffordable for the shrinking middle classes.

Going Low-Tech, provides a very broad and profitable OnTrendpreneur® automobile opportunity.

TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT

DUTCH SPENDING SPREE TO BOOST ECONOMY

Coinciding with the new strict lockdown measures that have had thousands out on the street protesting against, the new coalition government in Amsterdam announced plans to increase public spending that will focus on housing, education, defense and climate change.

The *Financial Times* pointed out that the Netherlands was historically considered to be the E.U.'s frugal state, but the new spending will increase the country's ratio of debt to gross domestic product about the 60 percent limit imposed by the E.U. in the next few years.

Prime Minister Mark Rutte's People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, or VVD, is part of the new coalition government. As recently as the summer of 2020, Rutte's government urged constraints with the E.U.'s COVID-19 recovery fund. One of the main reasons for the new spending is the jump in parliamentary seats

for the pro-European D66 party, which is considered the second-strongest party in the newly formed coalition.

"In general, D66, which is clearly pro European and also more in favor of public spending than Rutte's VVD, seems to have been successful in leaving its mark in the coalition agreement," Theresa Kuhn, an associate professor in political science at the University of Amsterdam, told Euractiv.com.

About €60 billion will be earmarked for the green transition. The government vowed to open two new nuclear power stations in an effort to rein in its greenhouse gas emissions by 55 percent by 2030, *The FT* reported. (See "RADIOACTIVE NUCLEAR WASTE, FUKUSHIMA, CHERNOBYL GOOD. COAL BAD.")

The **Trends Journal** reported last week that countries across Europe are looking for nuclear power to end their reliance on coal and gas from Russia. Not all countries in Europe agree that nuclear power is the answer. Germany—citing the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in 2011—is concerned about more reactors on the continent and the radioactivity that could be produced.

We have reported on the rise of nuclear power as countries try to turn away from fossil fuels. (See "FRANCE EARMARKS BILLIONS FOR NUCLEAR AND 'GREEN' ENERGY; INVESTORS BULLISH ON URANIUM," "AHOY! NUCLEAR POWER MINI-PLANTS ARE FLOATING YOUR WAY" and "UPDATE: CHINA READY TO LAUNCH NEW NUCLEAR POWER INDUSTRY.")

The *FT* pointed out that Amsterdam's move to spend more follows a similar move by Berlin's new coalition.

EUROPE'S CENTRAL BANKS DIVERGE ON STIMULUS POLICY

Europe's central banks have taken different stances on interest rate increases since the U.S. Federal Reserve indicated on 15 December that it probably will begin raising rates next spring and probably will boost them three times in 2022.

The next day, the Bank of England moved its base rate from 0.1 percent to 0.25 (see related story in this issue).

Also on 16 December, Norway's central bank doubled its key rate from 0.25 percent to 0.50 percent.

At its 16 December meeting, the European Central Bank (ECB) decided to end its €1.85-trillion bond-buying program in March as planned, but expand a separate bond-buying campaign next year to keep the continent's wobbly recovery moving ahead in the face of new lockdowns and uncertainties prompted by the Omicron virus.

That adjustment will leave the bank buying €40 billion in bonds each month as of April instead of €80 billion, trimming the purchases to €30 billion in July and €20 billion in October.

The ECB stands ready to restart or amplify bond purchases "to counter negative shocks" induced by the Omicron variant, ECB president Christine Lagarde said in a press briefing following the meeting of the bank's governing council.

The bank will not boost its base interest rate until it stops buying bonds, it said in a statement.

In the past, the ECB has repeatedly vowed not to raise interest rates from their current -0.50 percent for at least the next two years.

The ECB's decision to continue bond purchases for at least another nine months surprised analysts, following the Fed's decision to shut down its own program sooner than planned.

"I don't think that something happening at the Fed is bound to happen" in Europe, Lagarde said.

Nations are at different stages of economic recovery, have employed different levels of stimulus, and face different issues, she noted.

Europe's economy has yet to return to its pre-pandemic level and is faltering; new shutdowns intended to control Omicron's spread pose additional uncertainties.

In contrast, the U.S. economy continues to accelerate past its 2019 performance and president Joe Biden has indicated a distaste for further lockdowns.

The Eurozone's inflation rate climbed to 4.9 percent in November, the highest since the common euro currency was initiated in 1999. Germany's inflation reached 5.2 percent last month.

TREND FORECAST: *With new COVID lockdowns under way, Europe's economy stumbling, and Germany on the edge of recession (see related story in this issue), the ECB says it will not raise interest rates in the next few months.*

The bank's inaction will allow inflation to run free.

However, price rises may be restrained to a degree by the region's economic slowdown.

Still, as the virus threat eases and the Eurozone's economy stabilizes, we forecast the bank will be forced to raise interest rates sooner than 2024.

CHINA'S ECONOMY SLOWS IN NOVEMBER

China's economy slackened in November, thanks to a lagging consumer economy and the persistence of the COVID virus.

The property market, which makes up almost a third of China's GDP, stumbled with the failure of major developers Evergrande Group and Kaisa Group to be able to pay their debts, resulting in both corporations being declared in default earlier this month, as we reported in "Evergrande in Default, Fitch Says" (14 Dec 2021).

Several indicators highlighted the economy's lethargy:

- new home prices declined 0.33 percent from October through November across 70 cities, the worst month-to-month slip in six years;
- new construction starts were off 9.1 percent year on year in November, worsening from a 7.7-percent slip in October;
- retail sales edged up 3.9 percent in November from a year previous, sliding from October's 4.9 percent and missing analysts' expectation of 4.5 percent;
- a variety of service industries were hampered by China's zero-tolerance policy for COVID infections, with catering shrinking by 2.7 percent after losing 2 percent in October.

Beijing is expected to set a growth target of at least 5 percent for the new year, in part to prod local governments to spend more, *The Wall Street Journal* reported; meager local spending has weighed on the economy in recent months.

Earlier this month, the People's Bank of China reduced banks' cash reserve requirements, freeing more cash to be available for loans.

TREND FORECAST: *Should the Chinese economy continue to weaken, we forecast its central bank will lower reserve requirements even more in the next few months.*

As we have reported, the government already has loosened rules governing mortgage lending and may ease regulations further on the property market.

Moreover, despite the economy weakening, China's GDP growth is stronger than other major nations. And minus a global economic meltdown, we forecast it will continue to grow at higher rates than the U.S., Japan, Germany, U.K., etc.

TURKEY'S MARKETS CRASH, CURRENCY CRISIS

On Monday, 20 December, the value of Turkey's lira slid to 18 against the dollar, down 13 percent after plunging 5 percent Friday.

The currency cratered after the country's central bank cut interest rates on 16 December, the fourth cut in as many months as inflation continued to rage at more than 21 percent, although an independent group has placed inflation's actual pace at 40 percent, as we reported in "Turkey: A Crime to Tell the Economic Truth?" (5 Oct 2021), and another unofficial analysis has pegged the rate at 58 percent.

The lira has given up about 58 percent of its value this year.

The day after the rate cut, the benchmark Borsa 100 index sank 8.5 percent, its worst performance since, which automatically shut down trading twice during the day.

On 20 December, the rout continued. Trading was halted once as prices fell through an automatic trigger that shut down the market in hopes of quelling panic.

When the market opened again, another automatic shutdown followed almost immediately.

The market crash worsened as a wave of margin calls triggered panic selling, according to Yahoo!Finance.

To stanch the lira's plunge, the central bank released foreign currency into the markets.

It was the fifth time this month the bank has intervened to try to bolster the lira.

In cutting interest rates while inflation soars, the bank is ignoring economic wisdom and experience and is instead following the dictates of strongman president Recep Erdogan, who has staked his personal credibility to his notion that low interest rates reduce inflation.

The cuts are part of an "economic independence war" that is successful, Erdogan declared, citing passages in the Quran condemning usury as further justification for his rate cuts.

Erdogan also is hoping low rates will shore up Turkey's crumbling economy ahead of the nation's presidential election next fall.

As part of his personal economic campaign, Erdogan also has announced that he is raising Turkey's minimum wage by 50 percent, a move that likely will drive inflation harder.

"With this raise, we have proved our determination to prevent our employees being crushed by price increases," he said in a televised address, adding that "we will not allow [the lira] to crash," although it already has.

The negative reactions to Erdogan's economic tinkering were swift and harsh.

The rate cut "is now a deliberate evil," former central banker Ugur Gurses tweeted, calling it "a shame for our country."

The lira's fall had already negated the value of the boost to the minimum wage and reduced the new number by the equivalent of $110 U.S. dollars, said Ahmet Davutoglu, a former prime minister.

"The word for taking $110 out of people's pockets by pretending to give them 1,425 Turkish lira is 'stealing'," he said.

Turks have plundered their savings to pay higher prices for basic necessities. Some Turks had put their money into stocks, believing that equities would fare better in an inflation-driven economy; that expectation was dashed as markets plummeted last week.

The new chapter in Turkey's financial collapse adds even more pressure to the banking system, which owes loans denominated in foreign currencies equivalent to about 11 percent of the country's GDP, according to Capital Economics.

The central bank is now thought to have more foreign-currency liabilities than assets, *The Wall Street Journal* said. "We were astonished to watch the central bank releasing precious foreign currency to the market after it cut rates," Erdal Bahcivan, chair of Istanbul's Chamber of Industry tweeted.

UPDATE: Today, in an effort to stop the lira's slide Turkey's central bank said it will support the conversion of foreign currency deposit accounts into lira deposit accounts to further encourage reverse dollarization. In intraday trading today, the lira fell 8.6 percent, they spiked over 18 percent ending up 7.0 percent at 12.230 per dollar.

"In the event that resident real persons, who already had an FX deposit account ... convert their accounts into Turkish lira time deposit accounts will be eligible to benefit from the incentive," the central bank said.

As reported by Reuters, more than half of locals' savings is in foreign currencies and gold, according to central bank data, due to a loss of confidence in the lira after years of depreciation. At its low, the lira was down some 60 percent on the year.

TREND FORECAST: *It is not surprising that Erdogan framed his failed policies in warlike terms. As Gerald Celente notes, "when all else fails, they take you to war"—in this case, casting his economic failures as a response to what he will term "hostile outside forces" in hopes of unifying the nation behind him.*

It's not working: Erdogan's popularity keeps sliding along with stock values and the lira.

Erdogan will not acknowledge the abysmal failure of his policies. He also is unlikely to surrender power, whatever the result of the next election: his 2018 re-election was marked by widespread claims by opponents and independent observers of ballot-stuffing and other forms of corruption.

Turkey will continue to spiral down into economic and political chaos, prompting street demonstrations and, in all probability, violent response from government troops as Erdogan clings ever more desperately to power.

As the global economic recovery decelerates—and as inflation keeps rising across the globe—the lira and Turkey's economy will continue to decline. Ongoing fears of the Omicron virus will worsen Turkey's plight; nearly 13 percent of its GDP rests on travel and tourism.

GERMANY SLIDING TOWARD RECESSION

Germany's economy will contract by 0.5 percent this quarter, compared to the third, and either stall or shrink further in 2022's first three months, according to Germany's Ifo Institute for Economic Research.

An economy is officially in recession when it shrinks for two successive quarters.

"Ongoing supply bottlenecks and the fourth wave of the coronavirus are noticeably slowing down the German economy," Timo Wollmershäuser, Ifo's chief forecaster, said in a statement announcing the institute's study.

"The strong post-pandemic recovery that was originally expected for 2022 still hasn't materialized," he noted.

Although Ifo expects Germany's economy to grow again in next year's second quarter, the institute cuts its overall outlook for Germany's GDP growth in 2022 from 5.1 percent to 3.7.

TREND FORECAST: *Remember, Germany is the world's fourth largest economy and it is on the brink of recession. The dour outlook comes as countries around the world brace to fight COVID War 2.0 Omicron variant. This in turn may add pressure to stretched global supply chains and force central banks to rethink plans to withdraw support for the economy. Thus, more cheap money equals more inflation.*

Also pushing down its economy, access to restaurants in Germany are limited to people who must provide proof of vaccination or recovery. And as of next Tuesday, whether indoors or outdoors, a maximum of 10 people who have been vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19 can attend a private gathering. And if an

unvaccinated person is present, only one other person outside the household would be able to attend.

Adding to the economic downward pressure, spectators will be banned from sporting events, cultural shows, concerts and other large public events.

We also forecast that protests against these mandates will increase and there will be the emergence of anti-establishment, populist movements.

CHINA CUTS KEY INTEREST RATE

On 20 December, the People's Bank of China reduced its one-year prime lending rate by 0.5 percent to 3.8 percent.

The rate is the one at which commercial banks lend to their most credit-worthy customers and benchmarks rates for other loans, CNN Business noted.

The cut is an attempt to reinvigorate a slowing economy slammed by the Omicron virus, lagging consumer spending, an energy shortage, a harsh crackdown on businesses deemed "too capitalist" ("Xi Ramps Up Economic "Cultural Revolution" in China," 27 Jul 2021), and a property industry staggering under mountains of debt ("Evergrande in Default, Fitch Says," 14 Dec 2021).

Also, China has adopted a "zero tolerance" policy for Omicron infections, keeping consumers out of stores and restaurants. The policy has dealt another blow to the country's consumer economy, which China is trying without great success to cultivate in its "dual circulation" strategy of balancing consumer spending and export revenue.

In November, China's home prices fell for a third consecutive month, according to government data, signaling a continuing crisis in the property market, which accounts for as much as a third of China's GDP.

The rate cut is the first since April 2020, when the bank chopped its rate in response to the country's COVID-related temporary shutdown and its first economic contraction in four decades.

"The cut reinforces our view that authorities are increasingly open to cutting interest rates amid looming economic headwinds," China strategist Zhaopeng Xing at ANZ wrote in a 20 December research note.

The rate reduction will save China's borrowers about 80 billion yuan, equivalent to about $12.6 billion, per year, beginning in 2022, he estimated.

Last week, the central bank reduced the cash reserve requirement for most banks by half a percentage point. The reduction is expected to release an additional 1.2 trillion yuan, or about $188 billion, for business and personal loans, the bank said.

The central bank "wants to provide more easing as it gets more concerned of the economic momentum," Societe Generale wrote in a 20 December research note.

"There should be no doubt by now that a serious (though still restrained) easing cycle is unfolding," the note said.

Analysts have said that, in 2022, China's economy could grow more slowly than at any time since 1990, at its slowest pace since 1990 next year, CNBC reported.

TRENDPOST: *China has held to a strict "hands-off" policy regarding broad economic stimulus during the COVID War.*

The fact that it is now cutting interest rates and banks' reserve requirements is a clear sign that Beijing is increasingly anxious about next year's economic performance.

The government has set a 5-percent growth target for next year, modest by Chinese standards. The government is likely to unleash more stimulus to ensure that the GDP expands by at least that much in 2022.

SPOTLIGHT: BIGS 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 and how the Bigs keep getting bigger and the rich keep getting richer...

PFIZER BUYS ARENA PHARMACEUTICAL FOR $6.7 BILLION

Flush with billions in cash from the success of its COVID vaccine, Pfizer Inc. has agreed to pay $6.7 billion to buy drug maker Arena Pharmaceuticals, which specializes in medications for inflammatory bowel conditions.

Pfizer will pay $100 a share for Arena, more than twice the company's 10 December closing price of $49.94.

Arena's market value had slumped 30 percent this year before Pfizer's takeover was announced.

Etrasimod, Arena's drugs for ulcerative colitis, will report clinical trial results next quarter and, if successful, is projected to bank $900 million in annual sales by 2026, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Arena also is testing a drug targeting Crohn's disease. Clinical trial results are due in 2022's second quarter.

Xeljanz, Pfizer's drug for the two conditions, notched $2.44 billion in worldwide sales in 2020.

Pfizer had $27.7 billion in liquidity as of October, analysts reported, with revenue more than doubling in this year's third quarter as the company's COVID vaccine brought in $13 billion.

With so much buying power, Pfizer is likely to make other acquisitions.

Pfizer has the assets to do as much as $132 billion in takeovers through 2022, analyst Evan Seigerman at BMO Capital Markets wrote in a 12 December research note.

"Pfizer is making good use of the deluge of cash," he noted.

Arena developed Belviq, an anti-obesity drug, that failed in the marketplace. It then sold rights to the drug to a rival and redirected its research efforts to address inflammatory conditions.

BLACKSTONE BUYS BLUEROCK RESIDENTIAL FOR $3.6 BILLION

Asset management powerhouse Blackstone Inc. has agreed to pay $3.6 billion to acquire Bluerock Residential Growth, a real estate trust that owns 30 apartment buildings with 11,000 units and

a loan portfolio secured by 24 “rental assets.”

Most of the properties are in Atlanta, Austin, Denver, Orlando, and Phoenix, cities that have boomed as remote workers have migrated to Sunbelt cities cheaper than New York, San Francisco, and other conventional business centers.

The tight U.S. housing market has blocked many potential home buyers from owning a house, pushing up demand for apartments and spiking rental rates, a shift that has drawn billions of dollars in new investment into rental housing.

Affiliates of Blackstone Real Estate will pay $24.25 a share, about 124 percent above the trust’s 15 September closing price, the day before Bloomberg reported the trust was looking for a buyer.

As part of the deal, Bluerock will spin off its single-family rental business to Bluerock Homes Trust Inc., a newly formed real estate investment trust that will hold interests in about 3,400 houses across the U.S.

After closing at $15.44 on 17 December, Bluerock’s share price zoomed as high as $27.20 when news of the sale broke.

Blackstone also is in discussions with Brookfield Asset Management and Nuveen to buy 8 Spruce Street in Manhattan, an 899-unit luxury apartment tower valued at about $930 million.

TRENDPOST: *Among the horde of investors snapping up rental properties this year, Blackstone has been among the most aggressive.*

Last spring, a Blackstone subsidiary committed $1 billion to buy U.S. rental houses this year (“Invitation Homes to Buy $1 Billion Worth of Houses This Year,” 1 Jun 2021). In June, the company bought Home Partners of America, which owned about 17,000 rental houses around the U.S. (“Blackstone Extends Reach Into Housing Market,” 29 Jun 2021). In July, it paid $5.1 billion for 678 rent-controlled apartments across the U.S. (Blackstone Pays $5.1 Billion to Buy

Rent-Controlled Apartments, 20 July, 2021). In August, it put $784 million into eight student housing complexes ("Investors Now Targeting Off-Campus Student Housing," 14 Sep 2021).

As we wrote in "Rents Soar as Investors Buy Properties and Raise Rates" (14 Sep 2021), with investment companies grabbing the most desirable houses in the most competitive markets, tens of thousands of houses will be off the market for years to come that otherwise would be available to individuals and families as wealth-building investments in the American Dream.

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

These limitations will foment political movements that call for debt relief, guaranteed incomes, and other social proposals.

UPSTART START-UP BUYS SWEDISH AUTOMOTIVE FIRM FOR $4.5 BILLION

Veoneer, a Swedish maker of car parts, will be taken over by SSW Partners, a U.S.-based investment firm that has never done a deal and has no dedicated fund for buying companies.

Chip maker Qualcomm, with $200 billion in market capitalization, has guaranteed that Veoneer's shareholders will be paid when the deal closes, giving them an 85-percent premium to the stock's pre-deal price.

SSW are the initials of the firm's founders, which give it a stellar pedigree: Eric Schwartz is a former Goldman Sachs executive, Joshua Steiner co-founded the

private equity firm Quadrangle Group, and Antonio Weiss was Lazard's head of investment banking.

Qualcomm had wanted to buy Veoneer's autonomous vehicle software division, but the Swedish firm wanted to be sold in whole and had entered discussions with car parts distributor Magna International.

Qualcomm then entered an agreement with newly-formed SSW, which outbid Magna for all of Veoneer's stock.

After selling Veoneer's autonomous driving division to Qualcomm, SSW will sell the remainder of Veoneer to the highest bidder, the new firm has said.

However, "Qualcomm and SSW investors agreed that Qualcomm would lead and control negotiations with Veoneer," Veoneer stated in a proxy statement.

Also, "Qualcomm has agreed to take all actions necessary to cause SSW…to have available sufficient funds to satisfy the required merger payments when due and payable," a regulatory filing says.

Through their past dealings, SSW's founders have extensive ties to the global wealth community, including executives involved with Anheuser-Busch, 3G Capital, German conglomerate JAB, and U.S. billionaire Michael Bloomberg.

Instead of raising a fund and then looking for deals, SSW prefers to find a deal and then call on possible funders to structure a purchase, the *Financial Times* said.

ORACLE TO BUY CERNER CORP. FOR $28 BILLION

As reported in today's *Wall Street Journal*, "Oracle Corp. on Monday announced its largest deal ever, a roughly $28.3 billion

purchase of electronic-medical- records company Cerner Corp. that vaults the business-software giant deeper into healthcare technology.

The deal extends Oracle cofounder Larry Ellison's longstanding willingness to buy his way into new markets. Mr. Ellison built Oracle into a major power in business software in part through a long list of acquisitions over the decades."

TREND FORECAST: *We note the WSJ language to further illustrate how the Bigs buy their way into new markets, and get bigger and how companies like Oracle have a "long list of acquisitions over the decades." Thus, the pure example of how the few now own the most.*

As the gap between the rich and poor widen, there will be political movements to reinstate and/or impose new anti-trust legislation to break up the Bigs.

SPOTLIGHT: INFLATION

*As **Trends Journal** subscribers well know, when the Banksters and mainstream business media were claiming inflation was "temporary" and then "transitory" we said they were either lying or too stupid to see the facts. Here is some of the latest inflation data and what it will mean.*

UKRAINE FEAR: EUROPEANS, U.K. HIT WITH NEW RECORD HIGH GAS PRICES

Europeans may be looking at the extended weather forecast more closely than usual in hopes of a mild winter because gas prices have hit a new record high last week as uncertainty over Russia's intention with Ukraine looms large.

The Wall Street Journal reported that the benchmark prices for natural gas for January increased to €120.25 per megawatt-hour, which marks a nearly 30 percent jump this month and 600 percent since January. The **Trends Journal** asked in September: "Will Surging Gas Prices Sink U.K., E.U. Economies?"

"We are literally at the mercy of the weather for the next month or two," Henning Gloystein, an analyst at Eurasia Group, told *The New York Times*. Laura page, a gas analyst at Kpler, a research firm, told the paper that the British are paying $41 per million British thermal units, which is the equivalent of the U.S. paying $230 per barrel for oil.

Reuters reported that most of the gas that flows through pipelines goes through Belarus and Poland. The Nord Stream connects directly to Germany. The trend continued on Monday when gas prices increased more than eight percent.

Reuters reported that Russian deliveries through the Tamal-Europe pipeline were at their lowest levels in a month. The *Financial Times* reported that the request from European countries to Moscow to increase output went unanswered.

Laurent Ruseckas at HIS Markit, a consultancy firm, identified several problems with the paper that included low storage levels, new competition from Asia, and questions about Moscow's intentions with Ukraine. Another analyst said it has been unseasonably cold in western Russia, which could be hampering output.

"The market is in a febrile state, so these things come out and the prices are affected significantly and immediately," he told the paper. Gazprom, the major Russian supplier, has said it met all contractual obligations with Europe.

Critics have accused Russia of playing politics with the gas output to advance its Nord Stream 2 pipeline to Germany. The Biden administration announced in May that it will not hit companies working on the project with sanctions.
The BBC called the pipeline a "major geopolitical prize for the Kremlin."

Sen. Bob Menendez, a Democrat, criticized the White House's move at the time and urged Biden to "move forward with the congressionally mandated sanctions."

Ukrainian officials said the construction of the controversial pipeline could cost the country about $2 billion in "annual transit revenue" and "makes it more susceptible to energy extortion by Russia."

TREND FORECAST: *We hold to our forecast made in "High Natural Gas Prices Slow Europe's Recovery" (14 Sep 2021): high gas prices will reverberate through the continent's economy, pausing growth through the winter, fueling inflation, and retarding any full economic recovery by at least six months.*

U.K. INFLATION HITS 10-YEAR HIGH, CENTRAL BANK HIKES RATES

Led by relentless price increases in clothing and gasoline, Britain's inflation rate reached 5.1 percent in November, its highest in a decade.

The rate is almost a 20-percent increase from October's 4.2 percent and well beyond the 5 percent the Bank of England had forecast.

In response, the bank's Monetary Policy Committee raised its base interest rate from 0.1 percent to 0.25 by a vote of eight to one at its 15 December meeting (see related story in this issue).

The hike surprised a majority of analysts polled by Reuters. They had expected the bank not to act because of the nation's rapid spread of the Omicron virus and its possible harm to the nation's economic recovery.

In its November meeting, the committee indicated that if the labor market continued to show strength, the group would be ready to turn its focus to controlling inflation.

The U.K.'s economy added a healthy 275,000 jobs in November, new data showed.

"Recent economic developments suggest that these conditions [of labor market recovery] have been met," the Bank said in a 16 December statement. "The labor market is tight and has continued to tighten, and there are some signs of greater persistence in domestic cost and price pressures."

The hike was "fairly surprising," given the Omicron wave and its uncertain impact, Hussain Mehdi, a strategist at HSBC Asset Management, told CNBC, but "there were solid reasons for action."

"The labor market is tight and Omicron has the potential to exacerbate supply-side constraints in goods and labor," he added.

"Ongoing upside inflation risks are likely to push the [bank] into further action in 2022."

Inflation in the U.K. will remain around 5 percent through the winter and peak at 6 percent in April, the bank said in a statement announcing the rate increase.

EUROPE'S NATURAL GAS PRICES SET ANOTHER NEW RECORD HIGH

Last week, the price of natural gas at Europe's main trading hub in the Netherlands reached $41 per million Btu's, ten times the U.S. price and equivalent to an oil price of $230 a barrel, according to

gas analyst Laura Page at Kpler, a research firm.

Benchmark Brent crude is now selling at a little above $70 a barrel.

The price is soaring because Europe drained its gas reserves during a spring cold wave early this year.

Also, much of Europe's gas comes through pipelines from Russia, which has been slow to turn on the taps in what some view as a political pressure tactic.

Russia has massed troops on its border with Ukraine, through which Europe's gas pipelines flow, demanding that NATO halt any future expansion.

Gas prices rocketed up on 13 December when Annalena Baerbock, Germany's new foreign minister, declared the recently completed Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia could not be certified to begin operations because it violated European Union rules.

Now that winter has set in, European gas storage reserves "depleted at the fastest rate since records began," Page said.

Higher gas prices will send electricity prices skyward in countries such as Italy and the U.K., which use gas as a primary fuel for electric generators.

Higher electric rates will flow through into consumer prices, driving inflation higher, a rate that already reached a decade-high 5.1 percent in Britain last month and 4.9 percent across the continent, the fastest rise since at least 1997.

The U.S., with abundant domestic gas reserves, has seen gas prices plunge since October, although they still remain about 50 percent higher than last January.

TREND FORECAST: *Today, European gas prices spiked 23 per cent, hitting a new record of €182 per megawatt hour after Russia stopped gas flows on a key pipeline.*

Barring an unexpected event, gas prices will remain at record levels through this winter, fueling inflation.

INVESTORS FLOCK TO ASSETS DUE TO RISE WITH INFLATION

Investors are grabbing inflation-safe government bonds, real estate investment trusts, commodities funds, and other assets whose value will rise with inflation, the *Financial Times* reported.

Abundant government stimulus, heavy consumer demand, kinked supply chains, and rising energy costs have contributed to a pace of inflation not seen since 1982 and is likely to continue at least through mid-2022, many analysts have said.

In November, U.S. inflation rose to 6.8 percent and Europe's to a record 4.9 percent.

Three-quarters of countries surveyed by Pew Research showed a higher rate of inflation in this year's third quarter than for the same period in 2019.

"We expect inflation to remain elevated in the next year, well above the Fed target [of 2 percent], particularly as supply-demand imbalances take time to sort out," Vanguard economist Roger Aliaga-Diaz, told the *FT*.

So far this year, funds holding Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities (TIPS), which are government bonds indexed to inflation, have collected a record $66.8 billion, according to data service EPFR.

Asset manager Blackrock has an overweighted position in TIPS because it expects inflation to persist at higher levels than before the COVID War, the company said.

In Britain, last month's auction of inflation-protected bonds maturing in 2073 brought the highest prices, and lowest yields, on record.

U.S. bonds tied to inflation may see "some fairly strange movements" as the Fed extracts itself from the bond market and begins to tweak interest rates, according to Sonal Desai, Franklin Templeton's chief investment officer.

Instead, currencies or certain energy-related commodities make a better hedge, Desai believes. Energy prices tend to be key drivers of inflation.

Indeed, "real" assets such as commodities and real estate are doing well as investors shield their portfolios against higher prices. An Invesco commodities fund collected $2.4 billion this year through November.

Gold, historically a first choice as an inflation shelter, has less interest for investors; the leading gold-focused exchange-traded fund had $10 billion in outflows this year, according to EFT.com.

While digital currencies have been touted as inflation protection, Bitcoin's price has shed almost 25 percent since mid-November.

TREND FORECAST: *Investment markets are being reshaped by inflation and central banks' response to it.*

"Value" stocks that rise with inflation, such as consumer goods and energy, will be popular, as will inflation-indexed government securities.

Equities seen as speculative will decline until markets adjust to the new reality imposed by central banks and the COVID virus eases once again. Should nations continue to impose harsh COVID mandates and lockdown measures, tech stocks will again rise, as they did when the COVID War was launched in 2020.

LITHIUM PRICES SOAR ON FEARS OF LOOMING SHORTAGE

The lithium price index maintained by Benchmark Mineral Intelligence doubled from May through November and has shot up 240 percent this year to its highest level in at least five years, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

The Global X Lithium & Battery Tech exchange-traded fund has climbed 40 percent this year, with share prices of some lithium companies up as much as 70 percent.

Lithium, which has been dubbed “white gold,” is the currency of the electronic economy and the key battery ingredient powering portable devices from smartphones to electric vehicles.

The world is rich in lithium, with most of the world’s reserves concentrated in South America and the U.S., with additional deposits in China and Australia.

However, it takes years to bring a new mine into production and refining the metal to battery-grade quality is a laborious process. Companies that do the work already are struggling to meet demand.

The “white gold rush” and subsequent rise in price reflects fears of a coming shortage and companies’ attempts to lock up future supplies to continue to meet consumers’ demands and manufacturers’ targets, especially auto companies’ plans to be making all-electric vehicles by 2030 or 2035.

However, proposals to open new lithium mines are meeting strong opposition from environmental groups.

A plan to mine the deposit in Nevada's Thacker Pass, one of the world's largest, is under protest by activists fearing pollution of local water sources and other damage. Mining giant Rio Tinto has committed $2 billion to create a lithium mine in Serbia, but thousands of protesters filled city streets to oppose the mine's risk of environmental desecration.

Lithium supplies will run short of demand into 2025, Citigroup analysts predicted in a recent research note.

TREND FORECAST: *An increasing number of electric vehicle models have been coming to the market every year.*

That pace will slow due to shortages of lithium and other key minerals, as we reported in "Commodities Supercycle Underway?" (11 May 2021).

In that article, we noted that electric vehicles require six times the mineral content of conventional cars and trucks and cited the International Energy Agency's statement that there is not enough lithium, copper, or other rare earth metals available to make carmakers' green ambitions a near-term reality.

As a result, electric vehicle adoption will proceed at a moderate pace, despite rising demand, through this decade as supplies of metals and minerals gradually expand to meet vehicle makers' needs.

TRENDS IN SURVIVALISM

GET IN GOOD SHAPE AND STAY THERE

by Bradley J. Steiner, American Combato

While physical strength and condition will never, alone, guarantee that you will be prepared to react well to violence, there is no doubt whatever that strength and condition—and internal good health—are assets in any physical encounter. They may enable you to survive an attack.

In order to be in the best possible all round condition, and be as strong as your genetics permit, you must follow a physical training program in addition to your close combat and self-defense program.

Take particular note here if you train in a classical art that has students devoting anywhere from 20 to 40 minutes or so to stretching, limbering, and calisthenic strength building at the outset of each class: this is not an adequate or even necessarily relevant routine of exercise for the purpose of supplementing and bolstering unarmed and armed close combat and self-defense skills.

What you need is some seriously demanding routine of progressive resistance exercise. This usually means the tried and proven approach to strength development and super-fitness through training with plate-loading barbells and dumbbells. Nautilus machines are also excellent, as are pulleys and portable "chest expanders".

The important thing is that your exercise program enables you to gradually increase the amount of effort required of you to do the exercises. Our hands-down preference is for simple, plate-loading adjustable barbells and dumbells. They can build a person to the limit of his genetic potential; they are safe, they are relatively inexpensive, and they can be done at home.

There is no need to join a gym or health club. This is especially important because of the need for regularity and consistency in exercising. Having your equipment at home makes training at any time and on any day possible, despite inclement weather, and possibly not having the time to travel to and from an exercise facility on some scheduled training days. There is certainly nothing wrong with joining a good gym, but we believe that training at home offers many advantages over gym training.

You decide . . . but make sure that you do one or the other!

One of the great advantages of weight training is its efficiency. In 30 minutes you can give your body a workout that is harder than an hour and a half of calisthenic exercise. And ultimately, no matter how far you advance along the road to strength and conditioning, building up with weights, you need never exceed one and a half hours per workout, three times a week—even if you have developed world class power!

Weights don't wear out. They require no maintenance. They can be stored under a bed. And the exercises you should do are simple, easily learned, and will serve you for a lifetime.

We will add a couple of serious cautions for anyone starting out in weight training as a program to supplement combatives work:

- You must practice your combat and defense skills. Weight training augments and bolsters the physical qualities that you need in order to render combat techniques with maximum authority. But weight training does not serve as an alternative to combat skills; it merely ensures their optimum effectiveness.

- Pay no attention to the nay-sayers in and outside of the martial arts field who may attempt to discourage you from weight-training. The “strength is useless” myth still persists among many in the martial arts field. And as far as “muscle-boundness”, “muscles slow you down”, or any of the other long-disproven nonsense myths just smile and walk away when anyone attempts to sell you that crap.

- Never, ever use steroid drugs. Rely upon good, hard, sensible exercise, a balanced diet, adequate sleep and rest, and a positive, healthy attitude to build yourself up and to maintain optimum condition and strength. Those in the UFC or MMA (or any other martial arts sport or activity who use steroids are self-defeating fools). The use of these drugs can kill you.

- The best way to workout is to train your entire body at every workout. Three such workouts a week, on alternate days, is plenty. In some cases two such workouts (one every four days) will be sufficient. This will be determined by your experience and your time in training.

- Weight training, exactly like unarmed and armed combat/defense skills, is for life. You do not “retire” from training . . . you merely adjust it as age and your varying life and physical conditions change over the passing years.

- Do not compete when you train; except with yourself. Your objective is to become as strong, fit, resilient, tough, and ruggedly healthy as you are able to become. Your goal has nothing to do with how you compare with anyone else. How much less or how much more anyone else has developed is irrelevant. Judge your gains by how much you are improving, and how much stronger you are becoming.

- Omitting certain exercise movements when and if you have an injury makes sense. Train as your condition permits, but NEVER train when you are ill! When you are sick your strength and development must then be thrown into assisting your recovery, as you rest and get well, and follow whatever advice your physician has given you.

- Always train on the key, basic exercises.

- If you are already warmed up from physical work or perhaps a combatives training session, then go right into your weight-training workout. Otherwise, spend some minutes doing simple twisting, bending, and turning calisthenics to prepare your body for the efforts of weight training.

- Remember that there are no “weight training for martial arts”- specific workout routines! You want an all round general physical training workout. All of the major muscle groups should be worked hard using presses, squats, bench presses, rowing, curling, and deadlifting. One or two abdominal exercises should also be included in the training schedule.

A book that we wrote quite some years ago, *Complete Guide To Effective Barbell Training*, has been reprinted and will teach you everything you might need to know and use in order to reap all of the gains you are after from your weight training.

TRENDS IN TECHNOCRACY

By Joe Doran

AMAZON HELPED XI SOLIDIFY GRIP ON CHINA

Who would've guessed—big tech profiteers not only manipulated the 2020 American election, they helped Xi Jinping cement dictator for life status in China.

According to newly released documents, Jeff Bezos and Amazon haven't just been busy using illegal tactics to compete with businesses using their selling platform, and suppressing info that might turn down the spigot of their COVID profits.

Newly revealed documents show that in 2019, Amazon.com Inc promoted a collection of President Xi Jinping's speeches and writings on its Chinese website approximately two years ago at Beijing's ordering.

Xi's own attempt at a "little red book" has been a familiar site the world over.

But in China, at least, Amazon worked with the Communist Chinese to strip out reviews of the book that were less than five stars.

"I think the issue was anything under five stars," an inside source at the tech behemoth said about what qualified for censorship.

According to one of the persons, the demand was sparked by a poor review of Xi's book. "I suppose the problem was anything under five stars," the second guy stated, referring to Amazon's five-star rating system.

Amazon's e-commerce operation was built around customer reviews and ratings.

But Amazon.cn, the Chinese portal of Amazon, currently has no consumer reviews or ratings for Xi’s book, and all comments have been disabled.

The propaganda collusion goes well beyond the book, however.

Amazon, like Apple, the NBA, Hollywood and other American based companies and sectors, have engaged in craven measures to try to appease the Chinese communist government to gain access to their market.

That has included helping the Chinese in spying on their citizens, suppressing the origins of the COVID virus, and even abetting and benefitting from the slave labor of dissident minorities in China like the Uighers.

"Ideological control and propaganda is the core of the toolkit for the communist party to achieve and maintain its success," a 2018 internal Amazon document acknowledged.

But the tech giant didn’t let the prospect of having to partner in propaganda get in the way of their bottom line. The document went on to state: "We are not making judgment on whether it is right or wrong."

According to Newsmax, the briefing document, which only recently became public, as well as interviews with more than two dozen individuals who have worked in Amazon's China division, show how Amazon has survived and grown in China by assisting the governing Communist Party's worldwide economic and political goals.

Amazon teamed with a branch of China's propaganda apparatus to build a selling gateway on Amazon.com, the company's American site—a project known as China Books. In other words, Amazon allowed the Chinese government to control a section of its website featuring what information was promoted or suppressed concerning the Communist state.

The **Trends Journal** has extensively detailed how China has engaged in massive IP theft and rigged access to their markets, systematically violating their pledged obligations on admittance to the World Trade Organization in 2000.

The willingness of American businesses to undercut fundamental values and freedoms both at home and abroad to pursue corporate goals and profits has also made them active accomplices to Chinese interests.

For touchstone articles, see:

- "AMERICA DRIFTS TOWARD CHINA'S 'TECHNO-AUTOCRACY'" (9 Feb 2021)
- "APPLE BETRAYS CHINESE USERS FOR PROFIT" (1 Jun 2021)
- "CHINA CHALLENGING U.S. HI-TECH DOMINANCE" (13 Jul 2021)
- "U.S. MEDIA PUSHED NARRATIVE OF CHINA LOCKDOWN "SUCCESS" IN EARLY 2020" (27 Jul 2021)
- "CHINA BUSINESS ESPIONAGE NETS $500 BILLION A YEAR" (29 Jun 2021)
- "HOW THE CCP WENT VIRAL ON THE WINGS OF COVID" (5 Oct 2021)
- "U.S. FIRMS BOOST CHINA'S BID FOR GLOBAL DOMINANCE" (16 Nov 2021)
- "CHINA 'TALENT PROGRAM' GIFTED AT STEALING AMERICAN IP" (26 Oct 2021)

- “UNIVERSITIES HIDING CCP CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES” (12 Oct 2021)
- “COMMISSION WARNS WHITE HOUSE OF COMMERCIAL TIES WITH BEIJING” (23 Nov 2021)
- “1984 TO 2021: HOW APPLE LEARNED TO LOVE BIG BROTHER” (17 Aug 2021)

TRENDS IN CRYPTOS

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NFTs HELP SOTHEBY'S TO RECORD YEAR

The world of NFTs helped fuel a record year of profits for the world-renowned auction firm Sotheby's in 2021.

According to a report released this past week, Southebys recorded $100 million in sales from its new NFT category, with first-time buyers coming to its virtual Decentraland gallery in search of Bored Ape Yacht Club, CryptoPunk memorabilia and more.

According to its research, the debut of Sotheby's Metaverse marketplace helped to attract a larger audience, with 78 percent of NFT buyers being new to the auction house, and more than half being under 40 years old.

The sales contributed to the company's total revenues of $7.3 billion.

NFTs are one-of-a-kind digital assets that are used to establish ownership of virtual objects, including assets like songs by recording artists, visual art and more. They can also be used to record ownership of real world assets, and be employed along with smart contracts and other crypto-fueled network technology to distribute royalties, etc.

Unlike Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, NFTs are “one of a kind” digital tokens, encapsulating specific information and value.

This notion is ideal for collecting artworks and has sparked an unprecedented wave of digital consumerism: in March, American digital artist Mike Winklemann, aka Beeple, sold an NFT of his work Everydays: The First 5000 Days for an astounding $69 million at Christie's in London.

Al Jazeera reported that Sotheby's entered the NFT ring in April with a sale of a collection known as "The Fungible," which brought in $16.8 million.

Among the auction house's other significant transactions, a bundle of NFTs from the Bored Ape Yacht Club went for $24.4 million, breaking the record for the largest single item sold online.

Banksy's "Love is in the Bin" also set a new high after triple its original estimate, while Kanye West's 2008 "Grammy worn" Nike Air Yeezy sample became the most valuable shoe ever sold.

BLOCKCHAIN BATTLES

U.S. GROUP SAYS CRYPTOS, NOT CENTRAL BANK ABUSES, A THREAT TO STABILITY. The United States Financial Stability Oversight Council, or FSOC, expressed alarm about the adoption of

stablecoins and other digital assets in an annual report released on Friday.

Consumer trust in stablecoins might be harmed by issues like illiquidity, a lack of proper protections, opacity surrounding redemption rights, and cyber assaults, according to the FSOC.

"A run on stablecoins during strained market conditions may have the potential to amplify a shock to the economy and the financial system," the report noted, according to cointelegraph.com.

The paper also warned about recent advancements in decentralized finance, or DeFi, in which the usage of heavy leverage might result in a fire sale if the underlying asset's price falls. This would set off a chain reaction of margin calls and price falls. Furthermore, "users of these services incur risk of loss owing to market value changes, operational concerns, and cybersecurity attacks, among other dangers," according to the paper. The FSOC recommends that federal and state authorities work together to pass laws on stablecoins and digital currencies, according to the report's recommendations.

REDDIT CO-FOUNDER TEAMS UP WITH POLYGON FOR WEB 3. Polygon blockchain and Alexis Ohanian's Seven Seven Six venture capital business launched a $200 million fund to support social media and Web 3.0. Gaming app development projects.

Ohanian co-founded Reddit in 2005, and after leaving in 2010, returned for several years before stepping down in 2020. He has been a seed investor in prominent internet and blockchain companies including Coinbase and Instacart.

Polygon is a layer two blockchain network that runs decentralized apps over Ethereum with improved transaction times and other scaling benefits. Over 3,000 decentralized apps have been deployed on its network.

Sandeep Nailwal of Polygon commented on the joint venture, saying that through Web 3.0, he envisions platforms where “Users create the value, control the network and reap the rewards.”

MID-CAP MOVERS BUCK CRYPTO HOLIDAY HUMBUG. For those who thought they missed the boat on the largest cap cryptos, a confluence of factors is creating chances, via a Christmas crypto swoon.

Meanwhile, there were a few standout mid-cap projects bucking the general malaise, at least through the weekend.

Hedera (HBAR), a decentralized ledger that boasts associations with some leading tech companies and international banks experimenting with crypto innovations like Shinhan in South Korea, increased by 12.79 percent in a 24 hour period.

Arweave, a decentralized blockchain that promises “forever storage” of documents using Web3 tech, increased by 10.33 percent, and Decred and yearn.finance (YFI), two DeFi focused projects, by near double digits.

Metaverse Helps Fuel HBAR

The HBAR Foundation got on the Metaverse bandwagon with a new agreement with MetaVRse to assist the development of metaverse-related apps. HBAR was up almost 40% in the last week, as of the late weekend, though the token remains far off it’s late summer highs of 56 cents.

The fresh interest in HBAR was also sparked by the company's Tweet regarding Google accepting crypto-currencies for Google Cloud, as well as the fact that it "also has agreements with Hedera and others."

Hedera, which uses a unique patented “hash graph” system to store and verify info, is an enterprise-grade, proof-of-stake public network.

Its native token has witnessed a nearly sevenfold increase in price year to date. Though solid, other top 50 cryptos like Solana and Polygon have seen much steeper climbs in 2021.

Nonetheless, as Ambcrypto.com noted, HBAR had a network utilization of over 2K+ TPS on December 18th, demonstrating significant network usage activity on the blockchain.

TRENDS IN THE COVID WAR

NYC: HIGHLY VAXXED, BUSINESS SLUMPING

In terms of lost jobs and economic downturns suffered in the COVID War, New York City, with 80 percent of Manhattan residents fully vaxxed, is suffering one of the deepest slumps of the major cities in America.

While the rest of the nation has regained 9 out of 10 jobs lost since the COVID War began, NYC has regained fewer than 6. So says an article in *The New York Times* on 14 December, which reports that the city's tourism and hospitality industries have been the hardest hit, and are responsible for NYC lagging behind the rest of the nation in recovery.

Across the U.S., nearly six million jobs have been added since the beginning of 2021, and the unemployment rate has fallen to 4.2 percent. But in NYC, where thousands of businesses shut down and a million people became unemployed in the first months of the COVID War, the city has added back only a little over half the jobs it lost, and the unemployment rate still stands at 9.4 percent, more than twice that of the rest of the country.

One factor in that high unemployment rate is people dropping out of the job market, a nationwide phenomenon that is apparently hitting NYC harder; see "LOW JOBLESS CLAIMS, LESS WORKERS: THE GREAT RESIGNATION" (14 Dec 2021).

For NYC, the COVID War brought on the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. In June 2020 the unemployment rate hit 20 percent, and nearly every industry still has fewer people employed now than in March of 2020, when the COVID War began.

For some, the COVID War merely ramped up a negative trend that was already underway. Retail shopping, for example, was already impacted by the rise of online shopping; see "BLACK FRIDAY IN-STORE SALES CRASH, ONLINE SALES SOAR" (1 Dec 2020).

But it was the rather sudden disappearance of millions of tourists and commuting office workers—the lifeblood of so many NYC businesses— that caused over 100,000 of the city's bar, restaurant and hotel jobs to evaporate, along with some 60,000 jobs in the retail, entertainment and recreation industries.

According to the state comptroller's office, under normal conditions NYC's tourism industry accounted for almost a quarter-million jobs; by the end of 2020, that number had been reduced by about one-third. Almost all the city's tour guides, for example, were laid off and as yet have not been re-hired.

And while the re-opening of Broadway theaters and high vaccination rates have aided in the city's recovery, all that is now threatened by the specter of a new COVID variant, Omicron, bringing back restrictions that keep people hunkered down at home.

The union representing more than 30,000 of the city's hotel workers still has thousands of members who have been unemployed for two years; the union is counseling them to find work in other fields, but matching the pay and benefits they had enjoyed isn't proving easy.

The *NYT* article cites, as an example, a hotel bartender for 35 years who is now living on money borrowed from his own retirement funds while waiting to see if his job, or a comparable one, will ever come back.

Stay Home

With office occupancy rate at around 31 percent, on the subway front, weekday ridership is 60 percent of what it used to be before the COVID War in 2019.

TRENDPOST: *So, what's the point? This is all simply more proof, as if more proof were needed, of what* ***Trends Journal*** *has been saying since this all started: that the economic and societal toll of the COVID War—the impact on lives and livelihoods—will, in the long run, far exceed the death and suffering wrought by the disease itself, especially since so many impacted by the precautions against the disease were never really at risk from the disease.*

See "THE CURE IS WORSE THAN THE DISEASE" (14 Apr 2020), "LOCKDOWN MADNESS: CURE WORSE THAN THE DISEASE" (10 Nov 2020), and "COVID WAR COLLATERAL DAMAGE OUTWEIGHS DISEASE" (15 Jun 2021).

J&J VAX: ONE DOSE WON'T DO YOU

The COVID-19 vaccine from Johnson & Johnson, the one that, unlike those from Pfizer and Moderna, that was sold by the drug lords as requiring only one original dose, has now fallen out of favor with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC now recommends against the J&J jab.

As reported by *The New York Times* on 17 December, the J&J vax was already running a distant third behind the other two drugmakers' products in the U.S.,

with only about 16 million having received it, compared to 73 million fully vaccinated with Moderna's and 114 million with Pfizer's. And among Americans receiving booster shots, only 1.6 percent have chosen Johnson & Johnson's.

TRENDPOST: *Remember that the NYT has, from the beginning, touted the notion that the benefits of COVID vaccines far outweighed any risks; see "NY TIMES: GET JABBED, IGNORE THE FACTS" (20 Apr 2021).*

The CDC has not removed the J&J jab from the market; it will still be available for those "unable or unwilling" to receive either of the others. But the new recommendation is driven by new data confirming earlier suspicions of a link between the J&J vaccine and a rare blot clot disorder which has caused at least nine U.S. deaths in the last year. Those at the greatest risk are women 30 to 49 years old; see "VACCINE FAST FACTS" (18 May 2021).

Of the nine deaths, obesity was the most common underlying condition, although two had no underlying conditions. Seven of the fatalities were women; all were white, and aged 28 to 62.

The onset of the clotting condition occurred within nine days of vaccination, so those who received the J&J shot months ago are not thought to be at any risk.

In April, shortly after the J&J vaccine's debut in the U.S., officials briefly halted its use out of concern over the risk of blood clots. The condition has also been linked to the AstraZeneca vaccine, which is not approved for U.S. use. See "ASTRAZENECA VAX STILL UNDER FIRE" (13 Apr 2021); a TRENDPOST attached to that article stated:

> "*...After reports of several Americans developing blood clots some two weeks after getting jabbed with the 'Operation Warp Speed' Johnson & Johnson single-dose COVID Vax, U.S. Federal health agencies recommended a 'pause' in giving the shots. Following the U.S. decision to halt the jab, Johnson & Johnson announced, 'We have been reviewing these cases with European health authorities...and have made the decision to proactively delay the rollout of our vaccine in Europe'*"

Finland, Denmark and Slovenia have stopped using the J&J shot, and other nations have, like the U.S., ranked it below Pfizer and Moderna. It's also been found to be generally less effective against COVID than the others; see "YET ANOTHER 'NON-CONSPIRACY' REPORT SHOWS VACCINES ARE A CRAPSHOOT" (2 Nov 2021).

TRENDPOST: *So far there has been no reported links between the blood clot condition and either the Moderna nor Pfizer vaccine. However, the same NYT article tells of a CDC report of eight cases of myocarditis (swelling of the heart muscle) in children 5 to 11 who have received the Pfizer vaccine in the last several weeks. An increased risk of myocarditis was previously seen in males between 16 and 29; 11 out of 100,000 developed it a few days after vaccination; see "YET ANOTHER REASON FOR VACCINE HESITANCY" (29 Jun 2021).*

TRENDPOST: *As the late Gilda Radner's classic character, Roseanne Roseannadanna used to say, "It's always somethin'!" There's really no end to the list of side effects associated with the various COVID vaccines, and while some of them are quite rare, that's small comfort to those whose lives are seriously impacted; see "LATEST VAX SIDE EFFECTS STATISTICS" (28 Sep 2021).*

VAXXED OR NOT, OMICRON'S GONNA GET YA!

As the Omicron variant of COVID-19 is being sold as becoming the dominant strain outpacing both the original strain and the Delta variant, a study by 20 scientists at Columbia University and the University of Hong Kong warns that even a third booster shot may not offer adequate protection, given the highly vaccine-resistant nature of Omicron.

Want more proof of the vaccine's ineffectiveness despite it being sold as "no need to worry after you get the booster? Listen to the out-of-shape CNBC shill Jim Cramer—with an unblemished track record of spewing out Wall Street crap—who attacked the un-vaxxed in late November saying vaccines should be required universally: "Have the military run it. If you don't want to get vaccinated, you better be ready to prove your conscientious objector status in court," he said.

Yesterday, the fat-mouth-triple vaccinated with two shots of Moderna and a Moderna booster cried, "I have COVID. I came down with COVID on Thursday night." Cramer said on "Squawk on the Street. "I know exactly how I got it. I was at an event where you had to have PCR [tests]."

TRENDPOST: *So there you have it. All the people at the event were fully vaxxed, one tested positive and the CNBC triple vaxxed clown got COVID, yet the media, politicians and "health officials" keep selling the line that all must get vaxxed so they won't get the virus.*

Omicron Will Get You

As reported on 16 December in the *New York Post,* The Omicron variant is some 70 times more transmissible than Delta; it's capable, through its "extensive mutations," to "greatly compromise" the vaccines and even "neutralize" them.

"Emerging clinical data" shows the Omicron variant causing higher rates of infection and vaccine breakthroughs; see "'BREAKTHROUGH': NEW TERM FOR VACCINE FAILURE" (13 Apr 2021).

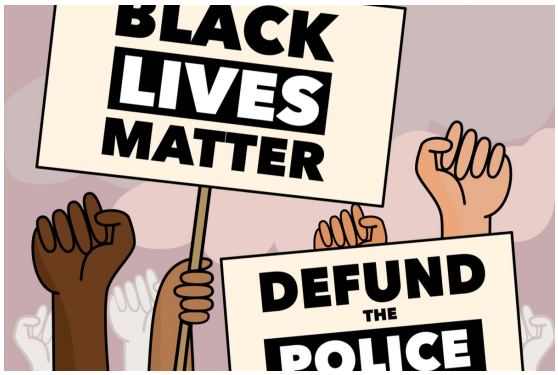
Although booster shots may still provide some protection, the variant still presents a risk. But booster shots are still recommended; it's still Pres. Joe Biden's feeling that nobody should pass up an opportunity to get a booster shot; see "BIDEN'S BOOSTER PLAN: VAX YOU!" (21 Sep 2021).

TRENDPOST: *While Presstitutes and politicians keep selling Omicron Fear and stressing the rising "case" levels, they ignore the one hard fact. The seven day*

COVID death rate in the U.S. is less than half of what it was a year ago. Indeed, the seven day rate as of yesterday, 20 December, was 1,285 compared to 2,639 in December 2020.

And as we have reported, while the Omicron "cases" are climbing, the symptoms are mostly mild and to date, there have been just 7 reported Omicron related deaths... of a global population of 8 billion people.

COVID WAR: ORGANIZED THIEVES GROW BOLDER



Trends Journal has already reported on (and had even forecast) the rise in crime, and organized retail theft as a result of the COVID War; see "COVID CRIME WAVE SPIKES, STORES CLOSE" (19 Oct 2021) and "COVID WAVE OF ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT CONTINUES" (1 Dec 2021).

An article in the *Financial Times*, on 16 December, continues to report on the phenomenon of brazen looting of stores by organized gangs of thieves, which shows no sign of abating. A National Retail Federation survey showed that 57 percent of its members had experienced an increase in such crime, and two-thirds reported that the gangs are growing more violent.

Stores that have the resources are hiring more private security officers; the article cites an outdoor mall in California that has hired off-duty police and even has SWAT officers. But for stores already challenged by COVID protocols, supply-chain issues, and the proliferation of online shopping, the expense of extra security measures may be prohibitive.

Chicago's Mayor Lori Lightfoot, her city beset by rising retail crime—see "CHICAGO'S COVID CRIME WAVE FOLLOWS SAN FRAN'S MODEL" (26 Oct

2021)—in addition to a staggering murder rate, actually blames businesses for not taking more security measures.

Online shopping is seen as one reason for the rise in such looting, as the stolen goods can be easily sold online. Heads of 20 retailers have jointly appealed to members of Congress to tighten restrictions on online marketplaces, including those run by Amazon and eBay, to limit thieves' ability to sell stolen goods. A proposed bill, the Inform Consumers Act, would force disclosure of identities and banking information of high volume online sellers.

But another reason for the proliferation of this type of crime is how policing and prosecuting priorities have changed. California's Proposition 47 has, since 2014, re-classified as misdemeanor thefts under $950, which used to be felonies. Similar laws and so-called "bail- and sentencing reform" have removed deterrents to theft. The criminal theft gangs operate with relative impunity.

California governor Gavin Newsome says such thefts are "unacceptable," but at the same time supports Proposition 47.

TRENDPOST: *Around the country, in jurisdictions including Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore, there are prosecutors, their election campaigns funded by George Soros, who are believed to be deliberately following an agenda of unilaterally not enforcing duly enacted laws, thereby fundamentally transforming the criminal justice system; see "OLD FASHIONED CRIME ON THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO" (20 Jul 2021).*

TREND FORECAST: *While city and state governments are now re-imposing tougher crime mandates, the deeper economies and equity markets fall, the higher the crime rate will spike. And, as we are noting, those falls are accelerating and the worst is yet to come.*

OMICRON FEARS = NO-SHOWS AT LIVE MUSIC EVENTS

"No Show" used to be the nickname of a legendary Country & Western performer; George "No Show" Jones was called that because of the many times he let down his fans by being too messed up on booze and drugs to perform or even show up.

But the term is also used by concert promoters to describe folks who buy tickets to attend live shows but then don't use them. And it's in the news because the phenomenon is on the rise.

The *Wall Street Journal* reports, on 17 December, that the live music business has, since it re-started this summer, been marred by no-show rates of up to 20 percent, even for major acts, a significant increase over the 1 to 3 percent no-show rate in pre-COVID times.

The phenomenon is more common for shows that have been rescheduled. And promoters theorize that some ticket holders may have simply forgotten about tickets that had been purchased far in advance. Or, they might have missed the deadline for getting a refund.

But COVID-19, and the protocols in practice at the concert venues, is seen as the major factor. Some people object to protocols being too stringent; they may not wish to wear a mask or prove their vaccination status in order to attend a concert; others may object to safety rules being too lax.

Small indoor shows have seen even higher no-show rates (sometimes 25 to 30 percent), possibly because people are more worried about catching COVID in more confined spaces. And the new, more contagious Omicron variant is bound to make some people even more cautious.

One might think that, because the tickets have been paid for, the promoters don't care if the ticket holders show up or not. While they don't lose money on the tickets *per se*, no-shows certainly hurt business by reducing concession sales. And nobody in the business—least of all the performers (who, after all, have egos and reputations to protect)—likes to see empty seats. Besides, eventually people will just stop buying the tickets.

TREND FORECAST: *We've said this so many times, but this is one more example of the far-reaching socio-economic ripple-effects of COVID-19; call it the law of unintended consequences; see "THE LAST PICTURE SHOW? COVID KILLING THE MOVIE BIZ" (7 Dec 2021), about another industry that likes to see its seats filled and its concession stands busy.*

And last week it was reported that because of spreading OMICRON, The Radio City Rockettes' 'Christmas Spectacular' shows were canceled.

Again, as we keep reporting, these mandates will hit retail, restaurant and hospitality sectors that rely on tourism and the theater business.

DIRE (AND PUZZLING) PREDICTIONS FROM BIDEN AND FAUCI

CNN reported on 16 December that Pres. Joe Biden had, that day, taken credit for slowing the spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, but had also issued a dire warning that those who remain unvaccinated will face "a winter of severe illness and death."

"Due to the steps we've taken, Omicron has not yet spread as fast as it would have otherwise done," Biden claimed. He then predicted that Omicron would soon increase its spread to the point that hospitals would be overwhelmed.

"But there's good news," the president added. "If you're vaccinated and you have your booster shot, you're protected from severe illness and death."

The president also said vaccinations and boosters would protect the nation's economic recovery: "We're gonna protect our economic recovery. If we do this, we're gonna keep schools and businesses open...and I want to see everyone around enjoy that. I want to see them enjoy the fact that they're able to be in school, that businesses are open and the holidays are coming."

CNN reported that, as of 15 December, only about 1 in 6 Americans have been fully vaccinated and had booster shots against COVID-19; that means that hundreds of millions are still at risk, especially given the threat of the new, more transmissible Omicron variant.

CNN also reported that Dr. Anthony Fauci had appeared on ABC's "Good Morning, America" on 16 December and had expressed his certainty that Omicron would soon be the dominant strain of COVID-19 in the U.S.

Fauci has also said that, despite having "no doubt" that there would be breakthrough infections, he saw no current need for an Omicron-specific booster shot. But that is contrary to what he said according to the 1 December *New York Times:* “Get boosted now,” as “we may not need a variant-specific boost.”

And as all the Presstitutes do, they refer to Fauci as “the nation’s top infectious disease expert,” who they also quote as saying, in public settings where it is unclear if everyone is vaccinated, people should wear masks except to eat or drink.

TRENDPOST: *Never, ever, is it questioned: Why is it OK to sit down and eat and drink without a mask on but they must be put back on after eating and drinking whether in a public setting or an airplane? Does the virus know when someone is not eating or drinking?*

Of course not! They make this crap up. The same as they do with mandates requiring people to wear masks when entering a restaurant, but it is OK to take them off sitting down.

Why? Because the virus never goes down to table heights?

Again, these clowns, dubbed "health officials" are making up COVID mandates, just as they did back in the heat of the Cold War when they had children hiding under desks in air-raid drills, as though being under a desk would protect them from an atomic blast and the fallout.

TRENDPOST: *Elsewhere in this issue of* ***Trends Journal*** [in "COLLEGES FREAKING OUT OVER OMICRON"] *we reported that, at Cornell University, almost every student who recently tested positive with "evidence of Omicron" had previously been vaccinated and had received a booster shot.*

But wait! Our president just told us that vaccinations and booster shots will protect us from severe illness and death. But, if that's the case, why should a person who enjoys such protection even care if anyone else is vaccinated or not? Why should a person who has been vaccinated and received a booster shot be at any risk from a person who has not?

What's even more puzzling is that Dr. Fauci, who is Pres. Biden's Oracle of Epidemiology, says that being vaccinated and getting a booster shot may not stop Omicron at all! See "DARING TO DOUBT VACCINE EFFICACY" (29 Jun 2021).

TREND UPDATE: *A report in The New York Times, on 19 December, states that evidence is now showing that most of the COVID vaccines in use worldwide—those from Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca, the Sinopharm and Sinovac shots made in China, and the Sputnik vaccine made in Russia—may do little to nothing to prevent infection by the Omicron variant.*

This raises the specter of not only greater spread of the Omicron variant among vaccinated persons, but of depressed demand for vaccinations worldwide, as

people (who may already be vaccine-hesitant) see little point in getting the jab if it offers little or no protection.

GOV'T MANDATE OR NOT: COMPANIES PUSH VAX MANDATE

The *Financial Times* reported, on 14 December, that a survey of 6,000 U.S. employers indicated that nearly two-thirds expected to impose a COVID-19 vaccination mandate on their workforces, whether legally compelled to do so or not.

At the time of the *FT* report, Pres. Biden's proposed vax mandate, under which private companies with 100 or more employees would have to require those employees to be vaccinated, was still stalled under a ruling by a federal court—see "COURT BLOCKS BIDEN VACCINE MANDATE" (16 Nov 2021)—that has now been overruled and the mandate will proceed.

A similar survey in March had shown only 4 percent of companies intended to order employees vaxxed. Now 27 percent will require double vaccinations and 18 percent will require three shots. Another 18 percent will require only some staff to be vaccinated.

By contrast, only half of European companies surveyed intended to require vaccinations, even though vaccination rates are generally higher in Europe and some governments have imposed vax mandates on individuals. Larger companies tended to favor such vaccination requirements, whereas, globally, only 54 percent of smaller companies had such intentions.

TRENDPOST: *Why are companies forcing vaccinations when the efficacy rate of the COVID Jab stopping the Omicron variant is only one third effective? This calculation is not what the mainstream media would call a "conspiracy theory" since we quote from yesterday's CNBC's "Health and Science" article that "The*

original two-dose vaccination series... offers only 33% protection against infection…," according to real-world data from South Africa.

GO TO WORK. NO VAX REQUIRED

Boeing, the aerospace giant, announced that it will no longer keep in place its vaccine mandate after a court's decision to prohibit the enforcement of President Biden's federal contractor executive order.

Boeing's move came after the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia agreed with the Associated Builders and Contractors, a trade group that represents construction workers, that Biden's order likely exceeded his authority under the Procurement Act.

The New York Times reported that Amtrak, General Electric, Union Pacific, and other companies jettisoned their mandates after the ruling. The reports said that these companies have been finding it challenging to hire new employees under the new guidelines.

Boeing has said about 92 percent of its more than 110,000 U.S. employees have been vaccinated. The company has urged employees to get vaccinated.

The **Trends Journal** has reported on the Biden mandate and likely legal challenge. (See: "WANT TO KEEP YOUR JOB? GET THE JAB!" "NEW YORK UNIONS FIGHTING VAX JAB DEMANDS," and "UCLA DOCTOR: NO JAB NO JOB, CALL THE POLICE.")

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

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

Biden had announced an unprecedented new order that would force any employer with over 100 workers to either mandate vaccines or offer weekly testing.

Millions of Americans who work as employees for the federal government—or as contractors—will not have the option to take these weekly tests. The rule would be enforced by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Businesses that do not comply could face up to $14,000 fines per offense. Employers must also give workers paid time off to get vaccinated "or to recover from any side effects" from the vaccine.

TREND FORECAST: *Last Friday, in a 2-1 decision, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati reversed a decision by a federal judge in a separate court that had paused the mandate nationwide. Thus as we had noted when this occurred, considering the Federal court's pro and con must get vaxxed rulings, we forecast the case will go to the Supreme Court.*

TRENDPOST: *Before President Biden imposed his latest round of his "Get vaxxed or get lost" COVID mandates, he was being chastised in the media, across the nation, and around the world for his disastrous Afghan War withdrawal.*

But now that he has imposed his Imperial Powers upon the citizens of Slavelandia to get vaxxed and do what they are told, the mainstream media, as we have continued to detail, and the mass majority, are supporting his mandates.

However, we maintain our forecast for a new anti-vax, anti-establishment, anti-tax, anti-immigration political movement in the coming years in the United States and abroad.

COLLEGES OMICRON FREAK OUT

The Associated Press reports, on 15 December, that colleges across the U.S., which had considered themselves on the verge of a return to normalcy, are reacting to the Omicron variant of COVID-19 with a return to precautions such as online classes, limited social gatherings, and mandating virus testing, mask-wearing and booster shots.

Examples include Cornell University, which moved final exams online and shut down all campus activity in response to 883 students testing positive in about a week, including "evidence" of Omicron in a "significant" number of samples. The school's president said it was important to "follow the science" in order to protect students, faculty and staff. Vaccinated students, including those who had received booster shots, accounted for almost every case where Omicron was detected.

Of all the students who tested positive for COVID-19, as of 14 December, Cornell "has not seen severe illness."

Similar reactions occurred at Princeton (which urged students to leave campus "at their earliest convenience") and New York University; at all three schools, more than 98 percent of students had already been vaccinated.

Syracuse University also reinstated precautions "until we know more" about the Omicron variant, including requiring booster shots for students and employees before the spring term, and a possible extension of an existing mask mandate.

More than 30 other colleges are requiring booster shots and more are contemplating such requirements. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends boosters for those 17 and older, and Pfizer has announced that a booster of its COVID-19 vaccine might offer protection against Omicron, even though the initial two doses appear less effective.

TRENDPOST: *Are you getting this? The first two doses of Pfizer's vax have offered little protection from a variant that so far poses only the most minuscule risk of serious illness, so go ahead and get a third dose! And as we note in quoting the CNBC Cramer Jim Clown, he got three jabs and still got COVID. See: "OMICRON: WE DON'T KNOW IF VACCINES ARE EFFECTIVE, BUT YOU MUST TAKE THE JAB" (7 Dec 2021).*

While many schools are postponing returns to campus and going to online classes and exams, when students at Stanford University return to campus in January they'll be tested weekly, wear masks and be barred from holding parties or large gatherings for two weeks.

TRENDPOST: *Who decides that two weeks is the time frame for banning social gatherings? Why not one week, or three? Where's the "science" behind these rules? It certainly seems that Gerald Celente is correct in saying "They just make this stuff up as they go along"; see "FORGET THE FACTS: MAKE UP RULES" (23 Jun 2020).*

Epidemiologists who aren't in thrall to the Drug Lords or a political agenda make the case that a highly-transmissible but far less dangerous variant, such as Omicron (which, so far, appears to have caused, at tops, seven deaths worldwide!), might be the key to achieving widespread natural immunity; see "DON'T LOCK DOWN, DOCS DEMAND" (20 Oct 2020). But it is proving far too valuable as a means of continuing to manipulate and control people by keeping fear alive.

MERCK'S NEW COVID: DRUG DEALERS DELIGHT

Just two weeks or so after gaining the tacit approval of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the very properties that enable Merck's new oral COVID-19 drug, molnupiravir, to fight the virus are fueling concerns that it may have other, deleterious effects on the body.

The New York Times reports, on 14 December, that molnupiravir operates by altering the virus's genetic code, inserting enough errors that the virus loses the ability to replicate itself.

The drug targets dividing cells, which are only a small percentage of the cells in a human adult. But it might prove as mutagenic—having the ability to cause mutations—in dividing cells like those in the bones, the intestinal lining, the cells of a fetus developing in the womb, or in male sperm cells, as it does in the cells to which COVID-19 attaches.

In an independent study using hamster cells, the drug, over 32 days, was found to induce mutations in DNA. It's feared that such mutations could cause birth defects or cancer in humans.

Merck has countered that the term of the hamster experiments was far longer than the five days or so that the drug would be administered to humans to combat COVID-19. The company said it had tested the drug on rodents and found no evidence of DNA mutagenicity.

However, the *NYT* article states that an infectious disease specialist at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center noted that Merck had found that high doses of the drug in pregnant rats could cause abnormal development or death of the fetus; also, women who were pregnant or likely to become pregnant had been excluded from Merck's clinical trials.

In the U.K., health authorities have advised women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, or who may become pregnant, to avoid the drug. Members of the FDA expert committee expressed similar concerns.

Full approval from the FDA may turn on the benefits of molnupiravir in fighting COVID-19 weighed against the risks related to pregnancy, especially when pregnancy can be avoided or pregnant women not given the drug.

Meanwhile, Pfizer is expected to introduce its own COVID pill that is said to be more effective but less mutagenic than Merck's, although, in the short term, Merck's drug will be more readily available, especially during the anticipated surges in infections by the Omicron variant.

TRENDPOST: *Tinkering with DNA can open up a world of medical miracles, and at the same time can be fraught with peril; see "GENE THERAPY STUDIES RAISE CONCERNS: NOT A PEEP ABOUT COVID GENE JAB" (5 Oct 2021). Also see "'BIO-PHARMA' PROFITING OFF A TRANSHUMAN FUTURE" (27 Jul 2021).*

ANOTHER INDUSTRY BITES THE DUST

One early casualty of the COVID War is an industry that's been devastated: the expo and convention industry. All manner of gatherings, such as conventions, trade shows, state and county fairs, exhibitions etc. have been canceled, cut back or otherwise curtailed; many livelihoods that depended on such events have been ruined, not just in the U.S. but worldwide; see "VIRUS VICTIMS: TOURISM, TRADE SHOWS, THEATERS, SPECIAL EVENTS" (10 Mar 2020) and "U.K. EVENTS INDUSTRY DYING" (14 Jul 2020).

One such event is the annual healthcare conference conducted by JPMorgan Chase & Co., one of the biggest events for healthcare professionals worldwide; this year's conference—the 40th in the event's history—had been scheduled to take place in mid-January in San Francisco and would have drawn hundreds of exhibitors and thousands of attendees.

But the attendees will not be traveling to San Francisco, because the event will now be conducted only virtually.

The *Wall Street Journal* reports, on 16 December, that plans to hold the event in person had been changed, after several bio-technology companies announced cancellation of their planned and previously announced appearances.

Reasons cited included the headline-grabbing crime wave going on in San Francisco—see "COVID CRIME WAVE SPIKES, DRUG STORES CLOSE" (19 Oct 2021)—but COVID-19 was more of a factor, especially with participants voicing concern over the industry "setting a bad example" by holding such a large in-person event in the midst of a surge in COVID cases, particularly the Omicron variant, which appeared just when such events were poised to make a comeback. Many participants expressed the need to avoid a repeat of the 2020 Biogen Inc. meeting in Boston that had resulted in thousands of COVID cases in attendees from around the world.

TREND FORECAST: *The fallout from formerly big, well-attended in-person events now going virtual is far-reaching, impacting far more than those directly involved in the events. Hotels and restaurants suffer, as do travel-related businesses and all those local businesses that would have been patronized by the influx of visitors to the host city; tax revenues are lost as well.*

Any business that depends on crowds, right down to the guy who sells hot dogs outside the exhibit hall, takes a hit as such venues become ghost towns, and some will never recover.

Another industry set up to suffer (and perhaps never recover) is commercial real estate, as so many functions that once required offices now no longer do,

replaced by Zoom meetings and virtual conferences; see "FACEBOOK WORLD 2021: AN ARTIFICIAL REALITY THAT WILL DESTROY THE HUMAN SPIRIT AND COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE" (2 Nov 2021).

BIDEN HOSPITAL VAX MANDATE LOSING SUPPORT

As court rulings take the wind out of the sails of the Biden administration's vaccine mandates—see "BIDEN VAX MANDATE CONTESTED" (9 Nov 2021) and "COURT BLOCKS BIDEN VACCINE MANDATE" (16 Nov 2021) —a number of hospitals have decided that they'd been shanghaied on board and are now choosing to jump ship.

The Biden administration's directive aimed to compel all health facilities that receive Medicare or Medicaid funds to require their workers to be vaccinated, under pain of penalties and loss of funding for non-compliance. It was announced on the same day as the directive that private employers of 100 or more workers also require vaccination of all workers. In both cases, non-compliant workers faced termination.

UPDATE: *A federal appeals court panel on 17 December reversed a previous decision by another court, thereby allowing the Biden vax mandate for private employers to proceed. The mandate for healthcare facilities remains stalled by legal challenges.*

The Biden hospital mandate would have applied to some 17 million workers at some 76,000 facilities around the country. But now the *Washington Post* reports, on 12 December, that a number of hospital groups, including AdventHealth, the Cleveland Clinic, Tenet Healthcare and HCA Healthcare, which together account for more than 300 hospitals and half-a-million employees, have decided to drop the requirements.

The American Hospital Association says that such changes are merely anecdotal, and that most hospitals are still going along with the mandate, although it does acknowledge that some have decided not to terminate unvaxxed workers.

Although the healthcare industry has, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, been hit hard by COVID-19, with many workers falling ill and over 3000 deaths, it's also been affected by the labor shortage and can ill afford to lose more workers; see "SPOTLIGHT: WORKERS ON DEMAND" (26 Oct 2021).

Hospitals in rural areas in particular are challenged by lower vaccination rates and find it more difficult to replace workers; the National Rural Health Association says its members' reluctance to enforce vaccine mandates have been fueled by fears of losing too many workers, making it impossible for them to operate.

While physicians tend to have a high vaccination rate, the same cannot be said for nurses, support staff, and EMS workers. And, in many cases, such workers react to vaccine mandates by seeking work in other facilities where mandates are not enforced, even at the cost of more strenuous workloads and commutes.

TREND FORECAST: *The death of what used to be called "Journalism" is front and center.*

This past Sunday, President Trump, speaking at an event in Dallas, Texas was booed when he said he got the COVID booster shot. In an interview with The Wall Street Journal in September, the former president said he was "in good shape from that standpoint" and "probably won't" get the booster.

We note this because the Presstitutes from the Cartoon News Network, CNN, commenting on the crowd's displeasure of Trump getting the booster said it was typical of Trump supporters since "... this speaks of the exact problem here, with

which Americans, to a large degree, are still very resistant to getting these booster or the vaccines in the first place."

Following this statement, the Presstitue's colleague commented, "Hopefully his supporters let it sink in and go get boosted or go get that first vaccine now that they know the former President ... didn't sound like it there, they like to resist."

This is not journalism, it is selling an agenda.

First, they blame Trump supporters as those in America who do not want to get the jab, while ignoring all the health care workers and others who refuse to get the Operation Warp Speed vaccine because of religious or other reasons that have nothing to do with political beliefs.

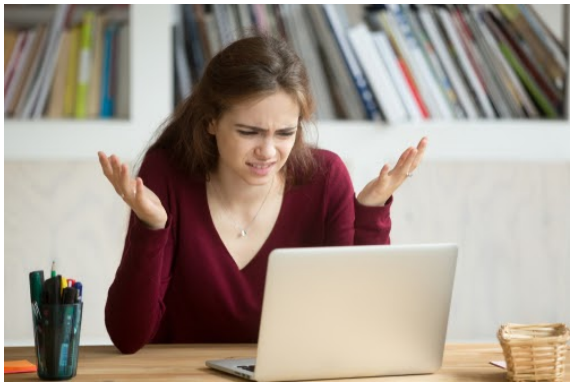
The media clowns also totally ignore the massive protests raging across Europe of the hundreds of thousands of people who are clearly not Trump supporters that are refusing the jab and taking to the streets.

Secondly, it is clearly not "journalism" when you have an arrogant Pressstitute telling the people to go out and get vaxxed and get booster shots. But, considering all the drug ads CNN runs daily, the media whores were putting out for their corporate whore masters.

***TRENDPOST:** Again, as we note in this article, health care workers have seen the negative effects of vaccines and they are not Trump supporters.*

What accounts for healthcare workers' vaccine hesitancy? See "HOSPITALS' JAB-WARY WORKERS: VAXX MANDATES" (27 Jul 2021), "WHY VAX RATES LAG AMONG NURSING HOME AIDES" (21 Sep 2021), and "HEALTHCARE WORKERS SAY "TAKE THIS JOB -- AND JAB -- AND SHOVE IT!" (2 Nov 2021).

CDC'S VAX STATS ARE FUBAR



So here's the story.

The politicians and media keep promoting the tale that most people are getting the COVID Jab, and it is only the vocal minority that refuse to listen to what their government and "scientific experts tell them.

Go back over **Trends Journal** articles pertaining to information disseminated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and you'll run across terms like "major statistical flaw," "twisted facts," "another piece of teleological propaganda," "manipulated data," and even "meaningless gibberish." See, for example:

- "A TALE OF TWO STUDIES: CDC LYING?" (9 Nov 2021)
- "CDC MANIPULATES DATA TO SUPPORT NARRATIVE (AGAIN)" (14 Sep 2021)
- "CDC CHANGES TESTING TO ERASE 'BREAKTHROUGH' CASES" (25 May 2021)
- "CDC VAX FACTS: IS THE TRUTH BEING TOLD?" (3 Aug 2021)

Even the agency's director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, seems to have issues regarding personal credibility; see "COVID FRAUDSTER" (18 May 2021) and "THE WALENSKY WAFFLE: DOING THE BACKTRACK SHUFFLE" (3 Aug 2021).

So, a story from Bloomberg.com News, on 18 December, while it contains what could be called revelations, might not qualify as actually surprising.

What is revealed is that the CDC last week revised its statistics on how many Americans 65 and older had received at least one COVID-19 shot, from 99 percent down to 95 percent, without changing its totals.

And in so doing the agency exposed that its vaccination data has been routinely, systematically corrupted; the CDC has been mis-counting the number of people vaccinated. It has been inflating the number of people vaccinated by counting as first doses what are actually second doses or booster shots.

The agency had claimed that, of 240 million people who had received at least one shot, only 203 million were fully vaccinated. Revisions in data from three states—Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Illinois—found enough over-counting of first shots to shoot holes in the CDC's numbers and, extrapolated nationally, to indicate that the actual number of unvaccinated Americans is at least 10 million more than the CDC had been claiming.

A spokesman for the Philadelphia Dept. of Public Health, quoted by Bloomberg, said "We don't have any faith in the numbers on the CDC website, and we never refer to them." West Virginia's "COVID Czar" said simply, "The truth is, we have no idea."

Illinois, for example, found it had over a half-million more completely unvaccinated people than it had previously thought. The counting is so fouled up that the state also has close to three-quarters of a million fully vaccinated persons who had never been counted as such. Pennsylvania discovered that fully vaccinated people had been counted twice as half-vaccinated.

The CDC—and the Bloomberg article—tend to blame our "fragmented" American system of 50 states and various state and local agencies administering shots and keeping records; not like in Europe where nationwide data is more easily tracked. The new figures show that the U.S. has 72.5 percent of its population with one shot and only 61.3 percent fully vaxxed; that 11 percent gap, the article notes, "is far larger than in other developed countries."

One of the CDC's statements on the matter said, "Given the complex nature of vaccine administration and data reporting in the United States, CDC has been actively working with partners at state and local levels to enhance the quality of vaccine data."

TRENDPOST: *The folks at the CDC may not be able to count, but they sure know how to speak bureaucrat-ese! Seriously, though, did you follow any of this? The best assessment of the story may be from the fellow who said "The truth is, we have no idea."*

Gerald Celente likes to say "As we would say in The Bronx, 'You can't make this shit up.'" But he also frequently reminds us that "In reality, the establishment can make up any shit they want and the masses will follow...facts and data don't matter. They buy sound-bites. The masses are clueless. They swallow the crap that the establishment shoves down their throats."

Whether these official statistics, like the COVID narrative itself, are real or spurious, one thing we can count on is that, like Dr. Walensky's pronouncements of when we need to mask up, or Dr. Fauci's pronouncements of how many booster shots will be needed, they could all change tomorrow.

VAX: "SAFE & EFFECTIVE" TRUE OR FALSE?

Whether categorized as "side effects," "adverse reactions," or simply "the dark sides of vax"—actually, one of **Trends Journal**'s articles on the topic bore that very title; see "THE DARK SIDES OF VAX" (24 Aug 2021) —there's plenty of negativity associated with the COVID vaccines, and plenty of reasons to distrust the official mantra that "The vaccines are safe and effective."

The alleged safety and effectiveness of the COVID vaccines has been the topic of numerous **Trends Journal** articles, and in case you missed them or care to revisit them, here's a partial suggested reading list:

- "STATS, SIDE EFFECTS & DEATHS" (2 Feb 2021)
- "COVID VACCINE: 'SIGNIFICANT SAFETY CONCERNS'" (15 Dec 2020)
- "WARNING: VACCINE-RELATED DEATHS AMONG THE ELDERLY" (16 Feb 2021)
- "COVID-19 VACCINES: TRACKING ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS" (19 Jan 2021)

Now comes a report, from RT.com on 12 December, that documents from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (and recently released under the Freedom of Information Act) reveal that, by the time Pfizer's vaccine was made available (on an "emergency" basis) worldwide, the vaccine had been responsible for some 160,000 adverse reactions.

The majority of those reactions were noted in persons in the U.S. between 31 and 50 years old. Along with incidences of heart failure, strokes and epilepsy there were 25,000 nervous system disorders, 17,000 musculoskeletal disorders and 14,000 gastrointestinal disorders. A variety of autoimmune disorders were included, as well as "spontaneous abortions". There were also 1223 deaths.

RT.com notes that the current toll of deaths following vaccination with Pfizer's vaccine stands, as of 12 December, at 3,300, and while some believe not all can be conclusively linked to the vaccine, others believe that deaths, as well as adverse effects, are underreported.

The FDA says that to release all 451,000 pages that informed its decision to approve the Pfizer jab could take until 2096.

RT.com also reports that a South African study shows that the Pfizer vaccine is up to 40 times less effective against the Omicron variant of COVID-19 than against earlier variants, but Pfizer expects to have an Omicron-specific vaccine available by March 2022; meanwhile, the U.S. government continues to say that vaccines are the way to defeat COVID-19, and Pfizer's CEO advises that a fourth shot is now advisable to keep up individual immunity levels; see "PFIZER'S COVID JAB: JOKESTER'S WILD" (14 Dec 2021).

TREND FORECAST: *First it was two jabs, then three; see "PFIZER CEO: THIRD TIME IS A CHARM" (20 Apr 2021); now it's four. The Drug Lords' (and the government's) long-term plan is "Vaccines for Everyone, in Perpetuity"; see "NO LETUP IN SURGE OF VAX BIZ REVENUES" (3 Aug 2021).*

Nothing, least of all revelations of "what the Drug Lords (and the government) knew about the vaccines, and when they knew it," —revelations that clearly put the lie to the "safe and effective" mantra—will be permitted to derail or undermine that plan.

CALIFORNIA: NO MASK, NO FREEDOM

Jab, mask, repeat. Jab, mask, repeat.

Despite the widespread use of face coverings and vaccinations in California, the Golden State announced last week that residents will be required to, once again, mask up again while indoors—regardless of their vaccination status.

The state lifted its mandate on 15 June for those who were vaccinated.

The new mandate will stay in place until 15 January. The state's Department of Public Health said the seven-day average increased by 47 percent since the Thanksgiving holiday and hospitalizations have also jumped by 14 percent. There were 3,109 people hospitalized in the state of nearly 40 million on 23 November, and—as of Tuesday—3,613 were being treated in hospitals.

Dr. Sara Cody, Santa Clara's public health officer, told Cal Matters that the state's health system needs to get prepared for a "deluge of Omicron." (See: "PLAY SCRAMBLE: DOES OMICRON=MORONIC?," "OMICRON: WE DON'T KNOW IF VACCINES ARE EFFECTIVE, BUT YOU MUST TAKE THE JAB," "OMICRON VARIAN RATTLES MARKETS.")

As of Thursday, the U.S. recorded 319 Omicron cases, including 49 within California. Of those, 30 cases were in Los Angeles County and 24 were fully vaccinated. *The Los Angeles Times* reported that none were hospitalized and there were no deaths.

Along with the mask mandate, the state will also crackdown on unvaccinated individuals attending indoor events with more than 1,000 people. Those unvaccinated will have to present a negative COVID test within 48 hours, and health officials in the state have recommended that visitors get tested within three to five days upon arrival in the state.

"What I see is perhaps one of the most challenging moments that we've had yet in the pandemic," Dr. Sara Cody, a local public health director, told *The New York Times.* "And I think it's challenging because it's not what we're expecting. We've all come to learn to live with COVID over the last two years, and we're all a bit tired. But I want to let you know that when I look around the corner, I see a lot of COVID and a lot of Omicron."

President Biden—who has been urging Americans to get vaccinated and accused by some of skirting the Constitution in the process—tried once more to scare those who have refused the jab into compliance.

> "For unvaccinated, we are looking at a winter of severe illness and death—if you're unvaccinated—for themselves, their families, and the hospitals they'll soon overwhelm. But there's good news: If you're vaccinated and you had your booster shot you're protected from severe illness and death—period."

California has been leading the charge of COVID-19 mandates, and the state has seen more than double the amount of residents leaving than before the outbreak. California has also seen a decrease of those interested in moving there from other states.

The number of people leaving the state has jumped by 12 percent, according to the study, which was viewed by *The Wall Street Journal.* About 150,000 more people left the state than domestically migrated there in the third quarter of 2021, the report said.

TRENDPOST: *Go back 20 months ago when California was the first state in the nation to lock down. Remember the bullshit spewing out of the Governor's and "Health Authorities" mouths?*

"Lock down for two weeks and we will "flatten the curve."

That's right. Do as you are told. Stay in your house. Don't go out. We know what's best. And in two weeks, the COVID curve will be flattened and everything will be OK.

Could it be the broken mandate promises and subsequent communication failures of political scum who suck off the public tit and never work a day in their lives and bureau-craps who can't get jobs in the real world but are elevated to "officials" when they join the political gang... are the reason so many people refuse the shot and want to burn their face masks?

We were assured that keeping six feet away from someone was "safe social distancing, which turned out to be wrong. (See: "SOCIAL DISTANCE RULES 'PULLED OUT OF THIN AIR.'") Then we were told to wear masks. When that didn't work, we were told to wear more masks. (See: "NEW CDC CLAIM: 'TWO MASKS BETTER THAN ONE.")

And then there was the "herd mentality" lie that when 70 percent of the herd got two shots the coronavirus would evaporate. (See, "HERD IMMUNITY HERESY: LIES AND DAMN LIES," 12 Oct 2021)

And now, nobody talks about that unicorn called "herd immunity" anymore?

TREND FORECAST: *The world needs to learn to live with this virus because vaccines—despite minting new billionaires—not only didn't stop the spread but*

didn't even slow down transmission. Now doctors are celebrating that those vaccinated aren't getting seriously ill? Of course they're not. Since the start of the Omicron outbreak, the vast majority of people didn't get seriously ill... as we detailed in our 30 November 2021 ***Trends Journal****:*

> *"And while the mainstream media was hyping the new variant which the World Health Organization first labeled Xi Omicron, but then omitted the "Xi" because President Xi of China might be offended... Dr. Angelique Coetzee, the chairwoman of the South African Medical Association, who first sounded the variant alarm, said those who got it had "unusual but mild symptoms."*
>
> *In response to the media and politicians selling the new virus strain as "deadly," Dr. Coetzee said the new variant "... presents mild disease with symptoms being sore muscles and tiredness for a day or two not feeling well. So far, we have detected that those infected do not suffer the loss of taste or smell. They might have a slight cough. There are no prominent symptoms. Of those infected some are currently being treated at home."*

Bullshit Has Its Own Sound

"We have to get comfortable with fully vaccinated folks testing positive, that's going to be our new normal," Dr. Vin Gupta from the University of Washington spewed out his bullshit on the Today show. "But people should not worry about that because the purpose of vaccines is not to prevent a positive test or a respiratory virus like Omicron, it's to keep you out of the hospital, and that's exactly what they're doing."

This is a total lie. People like the Gupta group were the ones selling the line back in 2020 and most of 2021 that the COVID Jab had a 96 percent efficacy rate and two jabs would be all that was needed.

NEW GERMAN CHANCELLOR: ANOTHER POLITICIAN WHO LIED HIS WAY INTO OFFICE

Following the political routine of lying his way into office, as a candidate for Chancellor of Germany, Olaf Shoz, along other establishment politicians in Germany, had campaigned on the promise of not forcing its citizens to get the COVID Jab.

But after getting elected, Scholz told the newspaper *Bild* that due to the country's high infection rates he changed his mind. In his inaugural speech last Wednesday, Sholz condemned COVID-19 "truth denial," just as special police forces carried out raids across the country against what was called a network accused of plotting to kill politicians who played a role in COVID-19 restrictions.

"We will accept no attempt by a tiny minority of uninhibited extremists to impose their will on our entire society," Scholz said. "Our democracy can defend itself."

The group called itself "Dresden Offline Network," and police said members discussed attacking Saxony State Premier Michael Kretschmer, a member of Angela Merkel's conservative Christian Democratic Union, and other officials, *The Wall Street Journal* reported. The paper said the members—six German nationals—rejected the vaccines and guidelines handed down from Berlin.

Police called the raids in Dresden a terror investigation and said they recovered weapons, including crossbows.

TREND FORECAST: *The* ***Trends Journal*** *has reported extensively on economy-killing lockdowns and protests that attract thousands in an attempt to reclaim their freedom and right to earn a living for their families.*

*Governments and media have tried to marginalize anyone opposed to these dictates as right-wing extremists. Or if they were in the United States, as detailed in this **Trends Journal** article "BIDEN HOSPITAL VAX MANDATE LOSING SUPPORT," Donald Trump supporters. Also see: (See: "ITALIANS PROTESTING VACCINE MANDATES DENOUNCED AS FASCISTS," and "ITALIANS TAKE TO THE STREETS TO RAIL AGAINST WORKPLACE 'GREEN PASS.")*

*Again, we maintain our forecast for strong anti-vax, anti-establishment, anti-immigration political movements to sweep across the continent. And, the faster economies decline the faster these movements will rise. And as for Germany, as we have noted in our **Trends Journal**, the nation is teetering on Recession. Thus, the deeper economies decline, the faster, higher and stronger these anti-establishment movements will rise.*

Eurozone Backlash

Dresden, the capital of Saxony, is considered to be a "stronghold of the Alternative for Germany (AfD)," France 24 reported. Kretschmer has been lobbying for a hard lockdown to get cases in the county under control.

"Of course you can say what you don't like," Kretschmer told reporters. "But when violence comes into play, it's over. A line has been crossed which we will not tolerate."

***TRENDPOST:** We had long forecast that governments would use agents provocateurs and other government inspired incidents to discredit anti-establishment movements.*

The Italian Forza Nuova party has also faced criticism after members were accused of trying to break into Prime Minister Mario Draghi's office in Rome. The group has been labeled by the media and political establishment as a "fringe neo-fascist party."

***TRENDPOST:** We are happy to hear that Michael Kretschmer draws the line at violence. We will expect another statement the next time German police use gas*

canisters and batons to break up protests in the country as they have done and continue to do.

It is not new to hear that Germany has one of Europe's most vocal anti-lockdown movements, and politicians have voiced concerns that right-wing groups will become more appealing to moderates in the country who want to resume a normal life.

As we have been noting, anyone disagreeing with the wide range of draconian lockdown walls that are destroying tens of millions of businesses, lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions are labeled by politicians and the media as radicals or "right wing."

NO FREEDOM IN NETHERLANDS

Mark Rutte, the Dutch prime minister, announced Saturday that the Netherlands will enforce a new nationwide lockdown to stop the spread of the Omicron variant in the country.

He called the new restrictions that close bars, restaurants and other non-essential shops—"unavoidable," according to the *Financial Times.*

"We have to intervene now to prevent it from getting worse," he said. He said if the government did not act, they would face an "unmanageable situation in hospitals."

The lockdown will span over both Christmas and New Year holidays, lasting until 14 January. Reuters reported that all schools will be shut until—at the minimum—9 January. The country will allow two guests—13 years old or

over—per household and four during the holidays. Rutte justified his decision by saying the country needs to brace for its fifth wave of infections.

The BBC reported that residents have been urged by the government to stay home as much as possible during the lockdown.

"I can hear the whole of the Netherlands sighing," Rutte said. "This is exactly one week before Christmas, another Christmas that is completely different from what we would like."

TRENDPOST: *Reuters reports that 85 percent of the Netherlands population has received their first two jabs, but only nine percent of adults in the country have received the booster, which health officials now say is key to preventing serious illness when it comes to Omicron.*

Long forgotten is the drug dealer hype that the COVID Jab would have an 96 percent efficacy rate. Now it's three Jabs will do the job... but as we have reported, even those who have had three shots are getting the virus.

Furthermore, the little boys and girls playing Presstitutes, politicians and "health officials" no longer spew their crap of herd immunity now, that in nations like the Netherlands, the "herd" should be immune. And these are the same propagandists who now ignore what America's #1 top infectious disease bullshit artist Anthony Fauci declared back in May 2020... that the herd would reach immunity at 70 percent. See, "NO HERD IMMUNITY FOR THE HERD," 17 Aug 2021; "HERD IMMUNITY HERESY: LIES AND DAMN LIES," 12 Oct 2021.

CANADA: MORE COVID MANDATE BLUES

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year! It's not the season to be jolly. The latest round of COVID-19 restrictions in Nova Scotia are coming at a "Worse time for the restaurant

industry." Gordan Stewart, the president of the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia, said the new capacity and seating restrictions put in place to stop the spread of COVID-19 could not have come at a worse time for the industry.

"All the meetings, receptions, events are now canceled and it's worth millions of dollars," he told *Halifax's City News.* He continued, "It's the kind of thing where if there is no pre planning for it, then there's obviously going to be a lot more damage around it. People don't think of things like consumer competence, which is totally damaged."

He told the outlet that many restaurants in the city did not make ends meet last year, and these new restrictions put them behind the eight ball going into 2022.

The **Trends Journal** reported on the lockdowns that upended the economy there. (See: "NOVA SCOTIA: MINOR # OF COVID DEATHS, MAJOR LOCKDOWN," and "HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA: 22 FINED $22K.") The new restrictions also limit 20 people per table (indeed, not 19, 22, or 13 per table... since politicians and bureau-craps make up these numbers which lack scientific data).

"What would have been better as if the government had some pre-consultation with us that we could have advised them on some of the outcomes and we might have been able to mitigate some of those outcomes. Some of them are easy to modify but some are not and I'm sure they don't understand the full implications of all the things that are going to happen because of this position," Stewart said.

TRENDPOST: *Nova Scotia on Saturday reported 426 new COVID-19 cases, which is a new record for one-day increases, and the ninth day in a row that the province of nearly one million recorded over 100 cases. Absent the Presstitutes reporting is that no one has died of the Omicron virus in Canada, and as we had detailed, the symptoms are mild.*

And, of those hospitalized, how many were obese, overweight, suffering from respiratory ailments or pre-existing comorbidities?

Also absent the Presstitute reporting is the fact that of the 30,000 Canadians that allegedly died of the virus over the last 20 months (out of a country for 38 million people), 24,500 were aged 70 and above, while of those, 18,200, or over half of all alleged COVID deaths, were people over 80 years of age.

Ontario Omicron Mandates

The unhealthy, overweight Ontario Premier Doug Ford announced Friday that there is little that his government can do to completely stop the spread of the highly transmissible Omicron variant, but what they can do is slow the pace of infections by putting in place new capacity restrictions at restaurants and retail shops.

“The experts have been very clear: nothing will stop the spread of Omicron. It’s just too transmissible. What we can do, and what we're doing, he's slowing it as much as possible to allow more time for shots to get into arms.”

The government announced a 50 percent capacity limit in indoor settings ranging from restaurants and bars to strip clubs. Tables are not allowed to have more than 10 occupants and bars and strip clubs will be forced to close up shop at 11 p.m., according to Global News. The report said alcohol sales will also be restricted after 10 p.m. Ford admitted that he is not sure what will happen to schools as students are supposed to return from winter break.

The report said that there were 3,124 new cases reported on Friday in the province of 14.57 million. There were 382 people hospitalized as of early Sunday, including 154 in the ICU. Ford said out of 1,000 confirmed Omicron cases, two have been hospitalized, the report said.

The new mandate took effect at 12:01 a.m. ET on Sunday. Under the mandate, outdoor gatherings cannot have more than 25 people, which is reduced from 100.

"Omicron will not take a holiday," Kieran Moore, the chief medical officer of health, said.

TRENDPOST: *Doug Ford, the premier from Ontario, told residents there that he feels their pain and takes no pleasure in putting these new mandates in place.*

"Over the last 20 months, you've been asked to sacrifice so much. We've all dug so deep. And now we need to dig a little deeper. We'll get through this," he assured them.

Ford and his "health officials" haven't missed a paycheck, nor will they.

Politicians who pretend that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a shared misery are just lying. It has not. By and large, the rich have gotten richer, and the poor, poorer.

The ***Trends Journal*** *has reported on how billionaires increased their net worth, while average people find themselves working in dead-end service jobs. (See: "SPOTLIGHT: BIGS GET BIGGER, RICH GET RICHER," "COVID WAR MAKES THE RICH RICHER," and "LOW PAY TREND: DOLLAR GENERAL HIRING BOOM."*

MORE COVID, LESS MENU OPTIONS

Restaurants across the U.S. are looking for ways to survive COVID-19 mandates that have impacted the entire industry, ranging from occupancy limitations to spacing requirements.

The Wall Street Journal, citing Datassential, reported that in 2021, about 60 percent of restaurants polled said they reduced their menu size in an effort to "keep the quality, not quantity."

The **Trends Journal** has reported extensively on the disastrous past two years for restaurants due to the virus outbreak, see:

- "RESTAURANT INDUSTRY: MORE SHUTDOWNS, MORE BANKRUPTCIES,"
- "RESTAURANT BIZ STRUGGLE,"
- "WORKER SHORTAGES, VIRUS HOBBLE RESTAURANTS' RECOVERY."

As we had forecast, with the media's non-stop spreading of variant fears 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)
- "RESTAURANTS FACE BLEAK WINTER" (21 Sep 2021)

The Journal said Datassential studied nearly 5,000 menus in U.S. and found that offerings at fine-dining establishments were hit particularly hard, with the number of items on the menu dropping by 23 percent.

TREND FORECAST: *As winter sets in across the U.S. and more Omicron 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.*

States across the U.S. have imposed new COVID-19 restrictions, and major corporations have canceled holiday party plans, throwing a wrench into hopes of ending 2021 on a high note. Besides COVID-19, about 77 percent of the 3,000 restaurants polled in a recent survey said they did not have enough workers to meet the demand, the Associated Press reported.

Jada Sartor, who lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, told the AP that she left her restaurant job despite making $16 an hour, which represented a $6 raise. "The cost of living is just so high you can't afford to really live," she told the outlet.

Another problem for the industry is a jump in costs for ingredients. One restaurant owner from Salt Lake City said some of her ingredients increased by 40 percent.

"The margins on food are never going to be astronomical, even in good times. But paying 40 percent more for protein? I can't pass that along to the customer."

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.

And according to the OpenTable website of reservation service, restaurant seatings were down 12 percent from 2019 levels in the week ending 12 December.

'TEST-TO-STAY' IN SCHOOL, THE NEW COVID RULE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Friday moved to update its guidance for elementary schools to allow them to implement a "test-to-stay" strategy that employs frequent testing when students were exposed to COVID-19.

"Test-to-stay is an encouraging public-health practice to keep our children in school," Rochelle Walensky, the C.D.C. director, said, according to *The Wall Street Journal.*

The C.D.C. said that frequent testing of children who were exposed to the virus could be an effective tool—when combined with other safety precautions like wearing face masks—and help keep students at their desks. The report said that under the plan, students exposed to someone with COVID will essentially undergo daily testing. One of the main issues is that the method could be costly for schools with fewer resources.

The C.D.C.'s official guidance has been that when someone in a school tests positive, those in close contact should stay out of the school for 10 days. The agency revised its guidance and said both test-to-stay programs and quarantining approaches are equally good options.

TREND FORECAST: *The* ***Trends Journal*** *has reported extensively on lockdowns and the impact they have on school-aged children. (See: "LOCKDOWN MADNESS: CURE WORSE THAN THE DISEASE," "SCHOOL LOCKDOWNS KILLING STUDENTS," and "DETROIT SCHOOLS: MAJORITY OF KIDS ABSENT. CLASSES GOING ONLINE.")*

The magazine has pointed out that the lockdowns in 2020 helped speed up the transition to online learning, which is here to stay. (See: "MEGA-TREND OF THE FUTURE: RICE UNIVERSITY TURNS TO ONLINE LEARNING," "INDIA'S ONLINE-LEARNING AN INVESTMENT WINDFALL, SOLIDIFYING 'INTERACTIVE U' FORECAST IN TRENDS JOURNAL.")

With interactive education, students will be able to access the best and most accomplished experts in selected fields of study rather than the one-size-fits-all, outdated educational programming that is now the norm.

Trends are born, they grow, mature, reach old age, and die. The Industrial Age education model is dying, and the "Interactive U" model Gerald Celente had forecast in his bestselling book, "Trends 2000" (Warner Books, 1997), is still in its infancy.

Thus, the Ontrendpreneur® opportunities that seize upon its growth will provide great rewards.

SPOTLIGHT: COVID VAX WARS. NO VAX NO FREEDOM

Each week we have been reporting on the protests erupting around the world following government lockdowns, vaccine requirements, travel bans and other draconian mandates. Protesters took to the streets across Europe last weekend to rail against new COVID-19 measures that governments insist will help limit the spread of the Omicron variant.

The demonstrators say their freedoms are being trampled on, and businesses say they cannot survive another holiday season where they are forced to limit occupancy or close altogether.

TREND FORECAST: *It should be noted that these massive demonstrations that are barely reported by the mainstream media, are just the beginning of a major march to Freedom. And, as we had forecast, new anti-vax, anti-establishment, anti-immigration populist movements will rapidly accelerate.*

GERMANY: Protests broke out Saturday in major German cities to voice their opposition to vaccine mandates and new COVID-19 restrictions.

Düsseldorf police estimated that 4,000 protesters marched on Saturday and several thousand gathered in Hamburg. One sign was translated from German to, “My child is not your superhero, Pfizer!” Another read, “Hands Off Our Children,” and another, “No to Compulsory Vaccination!”

Berlin announced that it will ban most travelers from Britain with the hope of slowing the spread of the Omicron variant. Under the new guidelines, visitors from Britain must provide a negative test and quarantine for two weeks, regardless of their vaccination status, the BBC reported.

Germany recorded 50,968 cases on Friday with another 437 deaths. Karl Lauterbach, the German health minister, said he believes the Omicron variant will unleash a “massive fifth wave” of infections, the BBC reported.

BELGIUM: Belgians marched in Brussels on Sunday waving banners that read “I’ve had my fair dose” and “enough is enough.” Belgium United for Freedom, the group that organized to protest, urged those who attended to remain peaceful.

The protesters took issue with the country’s use of the COVID Safe Ticket and what they see as a “vaccine obligation,” *The Brussels Times* reported.

“We are not anti-vaxxers,” Tom Meert, the president of Europeans United, said. “But first you say vaccination is a choice, and then you start punishing people when they have made a choice.”

Health care workers in the country will have three weeks to be fully vaccinated or face losing their jobs.

The country of 11.5 million has seen an average 9,998 new infections per day. About two million have been infected since the start of the outbreak and 27,895 have died. About 88.6 percent of the population is vaccinated, Reuters reported. There were about 1,200 people in the hospital as of Monday.

Brussels introduced new measures to counter the spread of the Omicron variant weeks ago after Prime Minister Alexander De Croo warned that country to brace for an autumn wave of infection.

The measures called for a reduced number of people permitted at large events and the presentation of these COVID-19 passes for events with more than 50 people, the paper reported. Face masks are now required on public transportation and in shops for all residents over the age of six. Protesters see new measures being taken by neighboring countries and believe Brussels will follow their lead.

The protests remained largely peaceful, but ITV.com reported that some protesters could be seen lobbing objects at police.

PARIS: Video emerged on social media that showed thousands in Paris protesting new COVID-19 measures, which include a travel ban to or from Britain.

France announced that residents cannot travel to the U.K. for tourism or professional reasons. Those who travel to the country from the U.K. will be forced to take a PCR test and quarantine for seven days. *The Guardian* reported that the latest measure is an example of the icy relationship between the two countries over Brexit, migration, and fishing in the region.

French Prime Minister Jean Castex also announced that major public parties and fireworks will be banned on New Year's Eve and said residents should give holiday parties a second thought and take a self-test before getting together, France 24 reported.

The government said that a bill will be voted on early next year to further solidify the vaccination pass to enter restaurants or use public transportation.

"We cannot allow that the refusal of a few French people to get vaccinated affect the life of the entire country," he said. He did not mention that those vaccinated can still come down with the virus and transmit it.

Euronews reported that protests broke out in various cities across France over the new restrictions. Some held signs that called the government in Paris a "dictatorship."

Hoteliers at the Morzine resort in the French Alps told the *Financial Times* that they were slammed with cancellations after the announcement of the travel ban.

"Every British booking we've got as of this Saturday is going to be canceling, which represents well over 50 percent of all Christmas and new year bookings

and over 60 percent of January bookings," Sara Burdon, the communications manager at the Morzine tourism office, told the paper.

The paper pointed out that she said the new restrictions could hurt their businesses even more than when the ski lifts were closed in 2020, because there is no more government support.

The report said other countries like Italy, Greece, and Portugal have taken new measures to limit the spread of the virus through tourism by mandating that even those vaccinated be tested upon arrival in the countries.

NEW ZEALAND: Thousands of New Zealanders joined a rally in Wellington on Thursday to voice opposition against COVID-19 restrictions, with some holding signs that read: "Plandemic" and "Is this the future you want?"

NDTV reported that the country has reached a 90 percent vaccination rate, and the island nation is known to have among the strictest COVID-19 guidelines in the world and has essentially sealed off its border to visitors.

The protests were out to demand an end to the mandatory vaccination requirement, Reuters reported. The report said Wellington has mandated vaccinations for teachers, workers in the healthcare field, and other sectors.

The protests were peaceful and placards read "lockdowns destroy lives."

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern reportedly eased some restrictions prior to the Christmas holiday and the government approved the Pfizer vaccine for children five years old and older.

The country's COVID-19 safety monitoring board said Monday that the death of a 26-year-old man with myocarditis was likely due to the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

"With the current available information, the Board has considered that the myocarditis was probably due to vaccination in this individual," the board said,

according to Bloomberg. "The Board noted that Covid-19 infection can itself be a cause of myocarditis as well as other serious illnesses and it remains safer to be vaccinated than to be infected with the virus."

UNITED KINGDOM: Thousands of protesters took to the streets in London to voice their opposition to vaccine passports and new COVID-19 mandates that have been put in place to slow the spread of the Omicron variant.

The rally in Parliament Square was attended by protesters carrying signs that read, “Truth, Rights, Freedom,” “No Vaccine Passports,” and “No Medical Apartheid.” Some of the demonstrators shouted “shame on you” as police clashed with protesters who were accused of hurling eggs at a shop in Regent Street at about 3pm Some police officers said they sustained minor injuries during the clash.

About an hour later, protesters were accused of throwing beer cans and launching flares at officers on Whitehall, *The Guardian* reported. No arrests were made.

The protest sparked online debate. Some saw the demonstrators as misguided, while others praised them for standing up for their personal freedoms.

“I’m not there but watching the huge London protest!” Emma Kenny, a psychologist for “This Morning TV,” tweeted. “These are people from all walks of life, with one common goal, to ensure liberty remains and tyranny is brought down. Drs, nurses, religious groups, mums, dads, triple vaccinated and the vaccine hesitant all sharing this moment.”

Together Declaration has been identified as the umbrella that is calling for an end to mandatory vaccinations and vaccine passports. The group has obtained over 170,000 signatures in support.

Local reports said the protest was organized by groups called Take a Stand London, Save Our Rights UK, and The Great Reopening. Video emerged that

showed the protesters aggressively confronting police and chanting “shame on you.”

Sky News reported that the protesters defied warnings from Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, who raised alarm about the “huge surge” in cases.

The report pointed out that there were 1,534 patients in the city, which is up 28.6 percent from last week. There were 26,418 new cases on Saturday, which marks the highest number since the start of the outbreak. The report said scientific advisers have warned that hospital admissions could reach 3,000 a day without new restrictions.

Sajid Javid, Britain's health minister, told the BBC that he, too, is preparing for a new-look to the holiday season in light of the new infections and said he will not be hugging his elderly mother as frequently as he would like.

“It’s time to be more cautious,” he said. “We know this thing is spreading rapidly.” He told the network that he will not rule out a new “circuit breaker,” which would mean a dramatic lockdown.

Last week, The **Trends Journal** published a story titled, “U.K. FU: COVID RULES FOR THEE, BUT NOT FOR ME.” We pointed out that Prime Minister Boris Johnson has faced criticism over a holiday bash in 2020—at the height of the lockdowns—that occurred inside Number 10 Downing Street. He claimed to have known nothing about it, but he lost serious political capital.

Weeks after reports of the party emerged, Johnson’s Conservative Party lost a special election for Parliament that his party had held for 200 years.

“Tonight the people of North Shropshire have spoken on behalf of the British people,” Helen Morgan of the centrist Liberal Democrats, said. “They have said loudly and clearly, ‘Boris Johnson, the party is over.’”

TREND FORECAST: *These re-imposed COVID War measures will further drag down economic growth while escalating populist anti-vax, anti-establishment*

movements. Ignoring the facts of broad based citizen outrage against draconian measures being imposed upon them by politicians and bureaucrats, the media will continue to moronically label those fighting for freedom as right-wing conspiracy theorists... just as they label those opposed to the mandates in America as Trump supporters.

TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS

RUSSIA, CHINA VS. USA: THE WINNER IS?

Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin last week made it clear that the two countries shared a common interest in countering Western intrusion in their regions and promised to strengthen their alliance.

The Wall Street Journal pointed out that the countries did not always have such a close relationship, and—in 1969—were on the brink of war. But Putin said the alliance between the two has never been stronger and he hopes to meet Xi when he attends the Winter Games, which the U.S. is diplomatically boycotting.

Gordon Chang, the expert on China, wrote in *The Hill* that the news means the "three-decade-old nightmare of Washington policymakers has now come true: Beijing and Moscow have ganged up on America."

Citing the readouts from their virtual call, Chang wrote that Putin came out in support of Beijing's "legitimate position" on Taiwan, and Xi backed Russia's call for assurances that Ukraine will never be admitted into NATO.

He pointed out that Putin—for the first time—referred to China as an ally. He said Putin's position on Taiwan should shock nobody. In 2016, the militaries from the two countries practiced "joint island-seizing missions."

Putin said the countries have gotten closer because neither interferes in the other's sphere of interest. Xi called out the "certain forces in the world" that have interfered in both countries' interests. They did not say Washington by name but Xi said "efforts must be made to firmly reject hegemonic acts and the Cold War mentality under the disguise of multilateralism and rules."

TRENDPOST: *The* ***Trends Journal*** *has reported extensively on the challenge that China and Russia pose for the U.S., and the Biden administration's attempt to counter them. See:*

- *"KREMLIN BLAMES UKRAINE FOR STOKING TENSIONS AT THE BORDER"*
- *"U.S. VOWS UKRAINE SUPPORT"*
- *"BLINKEN BELLOWS: U.S. COMMITMENT TO UKRAINE'S SOVEREIGNTY IS 'IRONCLAD'"*
- *"CHINA WON'T STOP AT TAIWAN, SO WHERE SHOULD THE U.S. DRAW THE LINE?"*
- *"TAIWAN MILITARY RAMP-UP WILL NOT STOP CHINA"*
- *"BIDEN SAYS (AGAIN) U.S. WILL DEFEND TAIWAN IF CHINA INVADES"*

TREND FORECAST: *Gerald Celente, has said that the U.S.—despite having the largest and most expensive military in history—has not won a war since World War II and cannot even win against third-world nations, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, etc.*

The U.S.'s disastrous withdrawal from Kabul has further negated America's military's reputation. By their deeds you shall know them, and considering the U.S. unbroken line of military defeats, Beijing and Moscow see the U.S. as a fading power.

TREND FORECAST: *Beijing has long declared that Taiwan is part of its territory under its "One China Principle," and it is the mainland's territory under its Constitution. We forecast that just as Beijing has clamped down on Hong Kong protests and taken full control, so, too, will they take control of Taiwan when they are ready.*

Despite condemnations when they do so, there will be no military forces from other nations that will challenge Communist China's military might.

The U.S. will not go to war with Russia over Ukraine and we forecast, minus a wild card event, Russia will not invade Ukraine. Furthermore, the military in Ukraine is no match against the Russians, and its only hope for security in the future is to become a member of NATO, which Blinken did not indicate is any closer today than it was before Russians amassed at the border.

Jens Stoltenberg, the secretary-general of NATO, has indicated that European defenses may not like it—but they certainly will not go to war to save Ukraine. He, too, vowed sanctions.

The Financial Times reported that Putin has published a set of demands that would essentially end any chance of Ukraine becoming a full NATO member.

The Russians have said that NATO states are increasing tensions in the region including the placement of weapons systems near Russia's borders. He warned against putting similar missile systems that are already in place in Romania and Poland. He said Tomahawk missiles could hit Moscow in minutes. Putin is concerned about NATO's move east, which included Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia being named member states.

Russia has demanded that NATO stops accepting former Soviet states into the alliance and any new base in a former Soviet state needs to be approved by the Kremlin.

"U.S. and NATO have aggressively escalated the security situation in recent years, which is absolutely unacceptable and extremely dangerous," Putin said,

according to the FT. The U.S. has denied the claim that Ukraine is picking a fight with its neighbor and said it is concerned about Moscow's "increasingly harsh rhetoric."

Robert Habeck, the German Economic Affairs and Climate Action minister, warned the Kremlin of—wait for it—"severe consequences" if there's an invasion. He said blocking the Nord Stream 2 pipeline would be on the table.

However, as we have reported, under pressure from the United States, the pipeline has not been approved despite rapidly rising natural gas prices. Yesterday, derivatives linked to TTF, Europe's wholesale gas price, broke another record hitting €148.50 per megawatt hour.

Ukrainian officials said the construction of the pipeline could cost the country about $2 billion in "annual transit revenue" and "makes it more susceptible to energy extortion by Russia."

BIDEN BLACKLISTS CHINESE GROUPS

Just days after the U.S. announced that no troops will be punished for the deadly Kabul drone strike that killed 10 civilians, the Biden administration laid out new plans to punish Chinese groups allegedly tied to the mistreatment of the Uyghur minority in the country.

The eight groups were added to the Treasury Department's "Chinese-military-industrial complex companies" blacklist, officials told the *Financial Times*. Under the guidelines, U.S. investors are not allowed to invest in these entities.

China criticized the U.S. for the “unreasonable suppression of Chinese companies.”

Zhao Lijian, a spokesman for the Chinese foreign ministry, said Beijing has been truthful when it comes to Xinjiang and the country will “resolutely defend the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies.”

One of the countries on the list is DJI, the world’s largest commercial drone maker. The paper reported that the company once criticized the decision to be placed on the U.S. Commerce Department’s “entity list,” saying it did “nothing to justify being placed” on the list.

The Biden administration’s Commerce Department also added 11 groups to its export blacklist and more than a dozen to its blacklist over their ambitions to assist the Chinese military.

“The scientific pursuit of biotechnology and medical innovation can save lives,” Gina Raimondo, the Commerce Secretary, said in a statement.

> “Unfortunately, [China] is choosing to use these technologies to pursue control over its people and its repression of members of ethnic and religious minority groups. We cannot allow US commodities, technologies, and software that support meta-cool science and biotechnical innovation to be diverted toward uses contrary to U.S. national security.”

China said its development of biotechnology “has always been for the well-being of mankind.” A spokesman for the Chinese Embassy told *The Washington Post* that the actions by the Biden administration are “groundless” and in violation of free trade rules.

The Chinese said the moves “gravely threatens the security of global industrial and supply chains, hinders the development of science and technology of human beings, and seriously undermines the well-being and interest of the people in all countries including the United States.”

The **Trends Journal** has reported on the Biden administration's effort to counter China's growth and global influence. (See: "TOP TRENDS 2021: THE RISE OF CHINA," "CHINA CHALLENGING U.S. HI-TECH DOMINANCE," "U.S. LAUNCHES COLD WAR 2.0: CHINA LAMBASTS 'COLD-WAR MENTALITY," and "DUH! PENTAGON SURPRISED BY CHINA'S TEST OF HYPERSONIC MISSILE.")

The U.S. State Department has called China's treatment of Uyghurs "genocide." A senior administration official told *The Post* that the Chinese use a "high tech surveillance system," across Xinjiang "as part of its apparatus of oppression."

TRENDPOST: *While the mainstream media supports the Biden administration's attack on China's treatment of its Uyghur minority, they are silent on America's ongoing support of the Yemen war that has killed tens of thousands and created the worst humanitarian crisis on earth. And, unmentioned by the media and Washington are the tens of trillions America has spent to kill millions and destroy entire nations such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya etc.*

We note this, because the ill, but little informed, Americans are now aware of China's treatment of the Uyghurs and will support Washington's mandates against China while ignoring America's long list of past and present military and human atrocities.

TREND FORECAST: *We maintain our forecast of "The Rise of China" as one of the Top Trends of 2021. We predicted that the 21st century will be the Chinese century because the business of China is business; the business of America since World War II has been war.*

Both China's manufacturing abilities and tech innovation were at third-world levels before Bill Clinton and George W. Bush brought the communist nation into the World Trade Organization at the turn of the century.

It was U.S. and European companies that exported their manufacturing facilities and high technology to China so they could use its cheap labor to make their

products... and sell them back to the citizens around the world at much higher prices so they could boost their profit margins.

Thus, with the U.S. workforce having slid into the service sector economy—working at Walmarts, janitorial jobs, hospitality sector, restaurant workers, packing and shipping for Amazon, stocking shelves and cashiers at Dollar General, Kroger's etc.—what was once a nation of manufacturing innovation and creativity has descended into Slavelandia. (Read "SLAVELANDIA: RICH GET RICHER, POOR GET POORER." 13 Oct 2020)

As we have long forecast, the only way the United States—which is rich in natural and human resources—will halt its economic decline is to become a self-sustaining economy.

Therefore, in the absence of a Renaissance whereby the people raise their emotional, physical, moral and spiritual levels to their highest degrees, the country will continue its "end-of-empire" decline.

US LOSES WARS, MILITARY AWARDED WITH RECORD BREAKING BILLIONS

The Senate last week easily passed a $768 billion defense bill that its supporters say will continue to give the U.S. an edge over rivals, namely Russia and China.

The **Trends Journal** has reported on the U.S.'s massive investment into its military, with little to show for it. Gerald Celente has pointed out that the American military has not won a war since WWII and has been stacking up defeats, including the recent retreat from Afghanistan. (See: "DUH! PENTAGON SURPRISED BY CHINA'S TEST OF HYPERSONIC MISSILE," "PENTAGON:

TARGET CHINA," and "U.S. 'ALREADY LOST' AI WAR WITH CHINA, PENTAGON'S FORMER SOFTWARE CHIEF SAYS.")

Sen. Jack Reed, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, brushed off criticism of the size of the bill, and said the U.S. "faces an enormous range of security challenges."

Reed said in a statement that the bill "addresses a broad range of pressing issues from strategic competition with China and Russia; to disruptive technologies like hypersonics, A.I. and quantum computing; to modernizing our ships, aircraft, and vehicles."

The Senate vote followed the House's vote that representatives "rejected" Biden's request to "keep military spending essentially flat, and instead overwhelmingly called for increasing it substantially."

"One of the major challenges our military faces right now is dealing with the rapid pace of technology is getting the Pentagon to better and more quickly adopt the innovative technologies that we need to meet our national security threats," Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., told the paper. "Those threats are very real."

The Senate passed the bill in an 89-10 vote, *The New York Times* reported. The paper said $5 billion alone will be earmarked for shipbuilding with the hope of developing five additional battle force ships and a dozen more Boeing fighter jets. The paper wrote, "Such projects can bring coveted jobs and development to lawmakers' districts and states, helping to ensure their continued support and expansion regardless of which political party is in power in Washington."

TREND FORECAST: *As the saying goes, "Generals are always fighting the last war." And America's post WWII war track record is an unblemished failure. From their weaponry to tactics, the U.S. military have exemplified a common misconception and/or misunderstanding of technology and development in warfare... regardless of who they are fighting.*

And the U.S. $768 billion 2022 military budget of more tanks, planes, ships and antiquated artillery for the 21st century further exemplifies their backwardness. We are planning to fight an enemy that does not exist.

In addition, as we have forecast, war with China will be the War that ends all wars.

And if America stays on the trend lines drawn since the War on Terror launched by US President George W. Bush following 9/11, it will be the last world war. As we have quoted Albert Einstein, "I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones."

TRENDPOST: *There were no public protests of the large increase that takes tax payer dollars to enrich the military industrial complex. And as noted, the vast majority of the Washington crime syndicate, i.e. Congress, supports America's war mongering agenda.*

Also ignored by the Presstitutes who get paid to put out by their corporate pimps and government whoremasters are the facts of the millions of innocent people the United States has murdered in the name of bringing "freedom and democracy" to nations they invaded and the countless trillions of dollars spent to enrich the corporate war machine.

ISRAEL PLAYED ROLE IN SOLEIMANI'S ASSASSINATION

Tamir Hayman, the former head of Israel's military intelligence, said in an interview published Monday that Tel Aviv played a role in the high-profile assassination of Qasem Soleimani, the top Iranian commander.

Soleimani met his fate on 3 January 2020 when reportedly killed in a U.S. airstrike at Baghdad's international airport. Former President Trump said at the time that he ordered the precision strike to kill the commander because he was planning "imminent and sinister attacks" on U.S. forces in the region.

Iran called the strike an act of terrorism in a letter to the United Nations.

Few details were ever released about the strike, but few had any doubt that Israel played a role.

Hayman told *Malam* magazine that Israel "played a role" in the strike.

"Soleimani's assassination is an achievement, since our main enemy, in my eyes, are the Iranians," he said. "Two significant and important assassinations can be noted in my term," he said, without mentioning the other killing.

The **Trends Journal** has reported on the stealth war being played out between Israel and Iran. (See: "IRAN BLAMES ISRAEL FOR NUCLEAR FACILITY EXPLOSION," "ISRAEL BLAMES ROCKET ATTACK ON HEZBOLLAH, RESPONDS," and "ISRAEL TO ATTACK IRAN? WASHINGTON GIVES THE GREEN LIGHT TO THE 'MILITARY OPTION.'")

Axios reported last week that the killing of Soleimani ended up hurting the relationship between the U.S. and Israel because Trump thought that Jerusalem should have played a larger role in the attack. He reportedly said that former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was "willing to fight Iran to the last American soldier."

"I can't talk about this story," Trump told the news website. "But I was very disappointed in Israel having to do with that event…People will be hearing about that at the right time."

Israel rejected Trump's claim and said the U.S. insisted on being in the driver's seat during the strike. NBC News pointed out at the time that Israeli intelligence

followed Soleimani from Damascus international airport to Baghdad and kept Americans informed.

TRENDPOST: *"All available evidence," is the same bullshit line like the little vile of nothing that U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell flashed at the United Nations to deceive the world that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.*

Once again, the U.S. is ready to incite and support more wars.

Will Israel attack Iran? Read "Major Israeli Strike Imminent?" in the Featured Article section of the ***Trends Journal*** *(10 Aug 2021), by Daniel McAdams, Executive Director, Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity.*

TREND FORECAST: *Should military tensions between Israel and Iran escalate and war breaks out between the two nations, oil prices will spike to well over $100 a barrel, which will, in turn, spike inflation rates and trigger a global equity market crash. It will also mark the beginning of World War III.*

TRENDS-EYE VIEW

CONGRESS AND STAFFERS' DIRTY DEALING EXPOSED

Congress passed the "Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge Act of 2012," known as "the STOCK Act," to combat insider trading and conflicts of interest by lawmakers; among its provisions, the law requires prompt and public disclosure of any stock trade made by officials, their spouses or their dependent children.

TRENDPOST: *The STOCK Act figured in another* ***Trends Journal*** *article not long ago; see "GEN Z USING LAWMAKERS AS STOCK ORACLES" (28 Sep 2021). Many of our lawmakers, it would appear, do a good bit of stock trading (or their spouses do), and their trades often seem to be informed by an uncanny knack for knowing how stocks will move; see, also, "PELOSIS PROFIT FROM PENTAGON SWITCH TO AMAZON" (13 Jul 2021).*

Now an investigation by Business Insider, called the "Conflicted Congress Project," with results published on 13 December, rates every member of Congress on his or her financial conflicts and transparency, and finds that 52 of them have violated the act.

The violations exposed among members of Congress almost pale in comparison to those committed by their various staffers, such as chiefs of staff, legislative directors, communications directors and other professional staff members. Such staffers not only influence the lawmakers they serve, but they also are in contact with lobbyists and representatives of special interests, and their own investments are subject to disclosure laws.

182 such staffers were found to have violated those disclosure laws.

Many of the violations amounted to late filings of disclosure statements; such late filings were regularly committed by roughly equal numbers of Republicans and Democrats.

Excuses for violations included claiming to not understand the rules, claiming clerical errors, and blaming accountants, financial advisors and even spouses.

The rules do tend to be murky, enforcement spotty, and penalties minimal, often just $200. There are liberal "grace periods" for violators, and the Senate Select Committee on Ethics often waives penalties in cases where "a reasonable excuse" is presented. Prior to the Business Insider investigation, very few disclosures were available to the public, nor were they required to be.

The Business Insider concludes that, although greater transparency is desired, it's unlikely because of privacy concerns and the potential that publicly-accessed disclosure statements might enable abuse of the information revealed.

Two bills reintroduced this congressional session could make the STOCK Act stronger: one, the Transparent Representation Upholding Service and Trust (TRUST) in Congress would require all assets of lawmakers, their spouses and dependent children be placed in blind trusts, out of the lawmakers' and families' control; the other, the Ban Conflicted Trading Act, would simply bar members of Congress and their staffers from buying individual stocks. Both bills have "languished," with no votes or formal hearings on them appearing imminent.

TRENDPOST: *One would have to have a Pollyanna-ish sense of idealism (and perhaps be deaf and blind) to avoid being deeply cynical and depressed at the level of hypocrisy exhibited by what has become our ruling class, particularly if one has been reading* ***Trends Journal****; consider, for example:*

- *"ETHICS? WE'RE JUDGES. WE DON'T NEED NO STINKIN' ETHICS!" (26 Oct 2021)*
- *"SUSAN RICE: WORTH $37.9M, PLUS VAX DRUG STOCK" (30 Mar 2021)*
- *"WALL ST. CRIME GANG" (23 Nov 2021)*
- *"VAX DRUG GANG ON PARADE: FOLLOW THE MONEY" (14 Dec 2021)*
- *"BIG PHARMA BRIBES U.S. POLITICIANS. MORONS CALL IT 'CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS'" (28 Sep 2021)*

WORKERS' WANTS AND NEEDS DRIVE LABOR MARKET SHAKEUP

The United States is currently in the midst of a puzzling supply-and-demand situation: while there are near-record numbers of jobs available, most go unfilled because of the dearth of available workers.

The latest "American Opportunity Survey," conducted by McKinsey and Co., published on 13 December and reported on that same day by Al Jazeera, attempts to explain why 11 million jobs went unfilled in October— just shy of the 11.1 million record set in July—while, at the same time, 4.2 million quit their jobs; see "'THE GREAT RESIGNATION': WILL JOBS COME BACK?" (16 Nov 2021).

Of the 5,000 workers surveyed, 30 percent cited physical health issues as reasons for their unemployment, while 15 percent said their health issues were mental. Another 12 percent cited their need to care for children or elderly

relatives. These numbers reflect that lack of access to healthcare, mental health care and childcare are seen as barriers to full employment.

Despite the statistical plethora of available jobs, unemployed survey participants said that limited job availability was the biggest barrier they faced. McKinsey said its findings suggested that some workers were passing up available entry-level jobs while seeking those with higher pay and more flexibility.

Workers are, in general, now being paid more, with wages up 4.8 percent in November, but inflation is rising faster, with consumer prices up 6.8 percent. That may be why workers tend to be more optimistic about their opportunities in the short term, but less so about the next five years. The survey breaks this down by ethnicity, and finds that African-American, Latino and Asian respondents suffered the greatest declines in optimism, along with those from lower-income households.

The disparity between jobs and workers has given workers more bargaining power to demand better pay and benefits; many are taking advantage of this by organizing; labor unions are undergoing a resurgence; see "LABOR UNION COMEBACK" (30 Nov 2021).

TREND FORECAST: *Again, one of our Top Trends for 2022 is Unionization. The labor unionizing trend will continue, and employers who wish to incentivize and retain workers will, whether under pressure from unions or otherwise, try to keep parity between pay rates and inflation, and may offer childcare and additional physical and mental healthcare benefits.*

TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE

By Ben Daviss

HYDROGEN-POWERED CRAFT TAKE TO THE AIR

United Airlines will take delivery of 50 jet engines that will run on compressed hydrogen, the airline has announced, and has an option to buy up to 50 more.

The zero-emission engines can be retrofitted onto smaller jets that fly regional or short-hop routes, and will serve as testbeds for the technology while engineers figure out how to scale hydrogen-electric power systems to the size needed by passenger liners designed for cross-country or trans-ocean travel.

United, along with Alaska Air Group, has bought an ownership stake in ZeroAvia, the start-up building the engines.

Aviation is one of the most greenhouse-gas-intensive human activities, with both airlines and environmental activists focusing attention in recent years on “green” air travel.

ZeroAvia debuted its first hydrogen-fueled plane in September 2020, the same month that Airbus unveiled designs for three hydrogen-powered jets that it said could take to the skies by 2035.

Earlier this year, Rolls Royce's hydrogen-driven fuel cell test plane made a 15-minute maiden flight.

But California's H2 Clipper start-up is thinking outside the airplane.

The company envisions the return of dirigibles, the hydrogen-filled blimps that were fashionable a century ago until the 1937 Hindenburg disaster killed the industry.

Clipper's high-tech version could carry payloads of at least 340,000 pounds, twice the weight of any of today's cargo planes except the Antonov An-225, and deliver cargo at a quarter of the price of today's airships, according to company calculations.

Offering as much as 265,000 cubic feet of cargo space, the giant balloon would cruise at 175 mph, much slower than an airplane but as much as 10 times faster than a freight boat, with the blimp crossing the Pacific Ocean between the U.S. and China in 36 hours, the company claims, and at 75 percent less cost than a plane.

Also, the blimps would have a 6,000-mile range, the company says, allowing to travel between any two points on Planet Earth with only one fuel stop on the way.

That could eliminate clogged shipping ports, especially because the blimps could take off and land vertically.

Not only would the blimp's balloon be filled with hydrogen, but the craft's electric engine would be powered by liquid hydrogen, making an entirely emissions-free flight.

If the balloon could sport solar panels and the power train was fitted with an electrolyzer, the blimp could theoretically make its own hydrogen fuel, Clipper engineers say.

The company expects to loft a prototype in 2024, build a commercial version before 2027, and have 100 hydrogen clippers ferrying cargo by 2034.

TRENDPOST: *The engineering challenges to put hydrogen fuel-cell power into a full-size passenger jet won't be solved in this decade but will arrive within 15 years.*

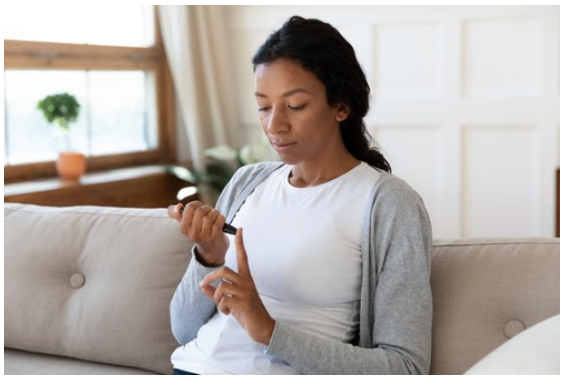
Blimps, dirigibles, and zeppelins all but disappeared from the air after a series of disasters in the early 20th century, culminating in the Hindenburg catastrophe. However, new technologies have convinced a significant number of engineers that the giant hydrogen-filled balloons can be safe enough to haul freight.

As we have said for years, the Oil Age is waning. There is no better evidence of that than the air transport industry beginning to make the transition from petroleum-based fuels to renewable energy.

Artist's concept of H2 Clipper's hydrogen cargo aircraft.

Credit: H2 Clipper

MAKING DIABETES A CURABLE ILLNESS



Harvard University scientists have linked a newly discovered hormone they've named fabkin to the onset of diabetes and found a way to neutralize it, preventing and even reversing the disease in mice.

They found the new hormone by tracking a protein called FAB4 on its journey through the body. Fat cells release the protein into the bloodstream when a person is starving.

The researchers saw that when FAB4 enters the bloodstream, it binds with two enzymes to create the fabkin hormone. The binding process alters the way the enzymes work, which reduces blood levels of ATP and ADP, which are essential in breaking down and processing nutrients.

Nearby cells react to these changes, which can be particularly damaging to insulin-producing cells in the pancreas.

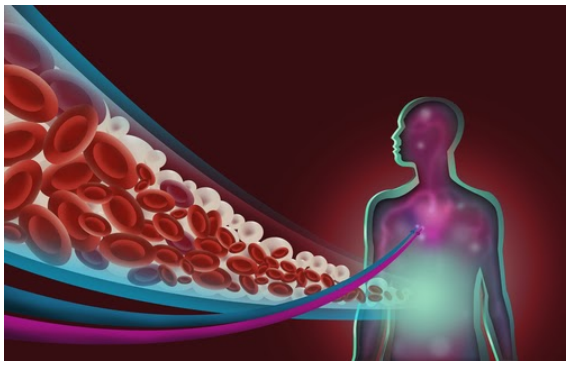
People with types 1 and 2 diabetes have abnormally high levels of FAB4 in their blood, leading the researchers to make the connection among FAB4, fabkin, and diabetes.

When the scientists treated diabetic mice with a biochemical reducing levels of FAB4 in their blood, the disease disappeared; in mice at risk of diabetes, the treatment prevented diabetes from taking hold.

TRENDPOST: *Scientists continue to find ways to use the body's own compounds to counter disease. As a result, future generations will be far less*

reliant on synthetic pharmaceuticals, seeing them, with their noxious side effects, as a last resort instead of a first choice.

STUDY IMPLICATES PLASTIC WASTE IN CARDIOPULMONARY DISEASE



Microplastic—particles of plastic invisible to the unaided eye that remain when plastic bottles, film, and similar objects decompose—have become part of the human diet, with the typical person ingesting around 100,000 of the bits each year ("Drinking the Bottle Along With the Water," 10 Jul 2019).

Studies have shown that, once in the body, the granules impair cognition in hermit crabs, disrupt fishes' hormone balance, damage human lung cells, and cross the blood-brain barrier to lodge in the brains of mice.

New research from the University of California at Riverside has found that microbits of phthalates—a common plastic softener used in everything from shampoos to food packaging—can raise the risk of cholesterol hardening in arteries.

The plastic residue binds to receptors in the gut that would deal with cholesterol. Because the receptors are attaching to plastic bits and not to globs of cholesterol, the fats flow into the bloodstream and lodge in the arteries, a condition known as atherosclerosis and a common cause of heart attacks and strokes.

Phthalates are known to disrupt endocrine systems and have been linked to bizarre deformities and biochemical changes in water creatures' reproductive systems.

In October, scientists at New York University published data showing that as many as 100,000 people in the U.S. die of coronary disease each year as a result of exposure to phthalates and called for urgent regulation to limit, or outright ban, their use.

TRENDPOST: *While research develops plastics from less harmful substances than petroleum, humans will continue to confront the dilemma that pits the convenience of plastics against the mounting evidence that they damage ecological systems, wildlife, especially in the oceans, and human health.*

Consumers will continue to switch their purchases and brand allegiance to products that minimize chemicals and practices that damage health and the natural environment.

A TJ CHRISTMAS TREAT

RETRO CHRISTMAS CARTOON FUN WITH A SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE

They don't make Christmas cartoons like they used to—or do they?

We had the idea of producing a throwback retro-holiday special with just a few pokes at current civilizational human silliness.

It's called *The Fiddle Faddles Christmas Special*, written by yours truly, Joe Doran, and featuring a guest appearance by my friend, Gerald Celente.

At a recent get together, I asked Gerald if he might consider taking a part in the project I was working on along with my lovely longtime partner, Amy Byrne.

He happily agreed, and the result is a treat we can probably all use this season!

To watch the cartoon special, click here:

https://youtu.be/HdlPqxz3oxM

We wish all our **Trends Journal** family peace, joy and freedom at this special time, and throughout the coming year!

—Joe Doran