

# Collapse of an Economic System: “The COVID-19 Crisis is not the Result of a Single Virus”

By [Emanuel Pastreich](#)

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*The COVID-19 crisis is not the result of a single virus. No single virus could create such deep uncertainty and fear in our country; no disease could unleash such horrific ambivalence and unspeakable loathing.*

*No, we face the collapse of an economic system that has been so puffed up with air, so corrupted by derivatives and quantitative easing, so diluted by stock buybacks and other financial products cooked up by experts who know, better than you do, what is in your interest. In a word, the economy no longer has anything to do with our lives. It had become an ethereal realm, a kingdom of deception where the powerful live in cloud castles.*

*This “economy” if that is the right word for it, had nothing to do with us, with working people who try to feed our children. We watch hopelessly as our country is being torn apart, all beyond our control, beyond our knowledge, and beyond our paygrade.*

**The economy has collapsed, and we must rebuild it.**

But if we try to restore the rotted house that stood there before, our future will be grim.

**The Federal Reserve cannot print up jobs, or print up clean air or pristine water.**

In fact, as long as the government remains the prisoner of the rich and powerful, it cannot do anything at all. We must cut the strings of this devious puppet master; we must create a government, and an economy, of the people, for the people and by the people.

The currency that is driving the rapid transformation of our economy is the currency of fear; it spreads like horrific virus, mutating everything that it touches into despair and uncertainty. It is a monstrous Midas that destroys all value and all goodness.

And what about that check for a thousand dollars they said they will mail you? Will the post office still be delivering mail? Will one thousand dollars still buy the same amount of food, or

of toilet paper, in six months? Certainly, the investment banks that speculate in derivatives do not have to wait so long for payment, nor the fossil fuel companies destroying our climate.

But we do not have to have the rules dictated to us by Mammon. We, as citizens, can take control of our nation's economy and we can transform it. That transformation will not start in the cushy offices of a Senate committee, nor in the hip cafes frequented by the bankers at Blackstone or Morgan Stanley.

No, the recovery from this catastrophe will not be provided by those who intentionally created this crisis. Salvation this time will not be found by following the same bloated swine who led us to slaughter back in 2008.

## **What is the economy?**

What is the economy? It seems like such a simple question as to be beneath the dignity of financial experts who strut out on news shows to tell us how things have to be, who lecture us about interest rates and competitiveness, while preparing their own nest eggs in secret.

Let us focus on this critical question which we were supposed to forget about in the current panic.

The basics of the economy have nothing to do with the complex equations produced in the pseudoscience of economics for the purpose of intimidating us. It is a profound farce that experts assume that a person who has not taken calculus is not capable of understanding economics.

But the basics of the economy are simple. The basics of the economy are assuring that all of us have healthy food to eat, a clean place to live and meaningful work to employ us that contributes to the wellbeing of society. In addition, there should be time in our days for artistic expression, for spiritual inquiry, for the care of our beloved family members and friends, and for participating in our local community.

As we know well, those whose lives are spiritually meaningful, those who love their work and who feel comfortable with family and friends, do not feel a need to spend much money or to live in a big house. The traditional value of frugality, however, has been demolished over the past fifty years. In its place corporations have erected a shrine to the cult of the self, to greed and to narcissism.

That march towards moral decay is being led by the super rich today. I want to share with you a quote describing the very rich by the author F. Scott Fitzgerald:

“Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me. They possess and enjoy early, and it does something to them, makes them soft where we are hard, and cynical where we are trustful, in a way that, unless you were born rich, it is very difficult to understand. They think, deep in their hearts, that they are better than we are because we had to discover the compensations and refuges of life for ourselves.”

What is sold to us as an “economy” consists primarily of **the speculative activities of the stock market, and the sloshing of huge sums of money around the world by investment banks**. And those bloodthirsty banks are not even run by people anymore, but

by cold ruthless supercomputers that calculate profits to twenty decimal points.

This false economy promotes mindless and depraved consumption; it demand of us that we must buy and waste food, that we must drive cars to get to work, that we watch pornography, and buy frivolous cosmetics and clothes in order to be happy, in order to appear successful. This economy of appearances was cooked up by public relations firms and advertisers to make us buy.

Consumption is at the core of this economic system. But no one is permitted to question this false idol. It is assumed that we must waste things, the more the better, every day, so that the economy will grow. Much of the money we pay in taxes, directly or indirectly, funds consumption-based corporations, and encourages people to consume, and thereby destroy the environment. That process brings little happiness, but it does downgrade our experience, crushing spirituality, personal relations and degrading life into the pursuit of the superficial.

Growth is the conjoined twin of consumption that represents by a number how much we destroy. If we look at the extinction of species, the warming of oceans, the poverty in our nation, we can see that there is no real growth. Yet empty skyscrapers and shopping malls keep being built, plastic and meat are shipped needlessly across the oceans in the pursuit of ephemeral wealth.

If we define the economy in terms of growth and consumption, if we assume the only thing we can do to improve things is to either raise or lower interest rates, that means your love for your family, your moral struggle for a better world, your decision to be frugal, your decision to honor the traditions of your parents, have no value. You are supposed to throw everything away and to buy new things, fashionable things, at the mall.

There are other crimes lurking behind this false economy about which you must know.

You hold in your hand those printed pieces of paper, what we call money. You have been told that they have value. You can exchange them to get food, or a computer, or a lawnmower, at the store. But where does that value come from? Why can you make that exchange? And why are so many of us dependent on corporations, and not people, to provide with it?

In the old days, currency was backed by gold, and you could take your money in and exchange it for gold. But America gave up that gold standard a long time ago.

The value of that money does not come from any contract, any agreement, between you and your community. That money is made by the Federal Reserve, an ambiguous and unregulated organization run by private banks for the profit of the few.

Your wages buy less and less because the banks create money out of nowhere in that evil black box of finance. The destruction of your lives does not bother them at all. In fact, they are pleased to have you dependent on them. You are so scared of losing your job that you do not have time to question where those trillions of dollars went that they created to pay off speculators after the recent crash.

All the money they are creating through magic has opened the door to hyperinflation. When hyperinflation comes, the cost of a loaf of bread could go from \$3 to \$10 to \$100, or even to \$1000 in a short period of time. It has happened before under similar circumstances.

The lying media will not tell you anything, but the writing is on the wall. The truth is that inflation for food and for services is already far, far higher than what has been reported for the last decade. You know this from your own experience. You do not need a Harvard professor to tell you.

Money today is not anchored in anything. Its value is determined by impressions, by mood, and by culture. Money has value in that people trust the United States and trust the global system in which it plays a central role. If they cease to believe in the United States, or in that global system, then our money will not be worth much.

There are plenty of signs that such trust is dissolving as I speak.

The bankers have tried to make sure the dollar keeps its value while printing money to line their pockets. They have employed two magic tricks.

First, they have encouraged the use of military force, and cultivated militarism among the people. Militarism allowed them to make trillions of dollars from the sales of weapons, the promotion of pointless wars, and a Pentagon that has become a black hole for money. The use of military force made the United States seem powerful and that has, so far, helped to keep the value of the dollar up even though it is backed by nothing.

But the bankers also tied the dollar to petroleum, working ceaselessly to make sure that petroleum is sold in US dollars and that the major producers of oil use the dollar for all transactions. This creation of value through the promotion of petroleum is criminal in nature. Petroleum is destroying our climate and dooming our children to a bleak future. Yet, sadly, petroleum defines our economy, forcing you to use throw-away plastics, forcing you to drive automobiles, forcing you to use the electricity that they provide.

Corporations pay off experts to pretend that polluting our environment, forcing people to drive for hours every day, is natural. And the red blood of young Americans flows in foreign wars so that money can be printed with the black ooze of oil.

The dependency of our economy on petroleum was made clear in the recent crash of the price of oil. That event has led to the utter collapse of the domestic economy. The forced dependency on petroleum means that ordinary people have been devastated by obscure battles between the powerful. Enormous sections of our population have had their lives forcibly tied to the petroleum economy (whether they are building highways, working at refineries, or at gas stations, or at car repair shops).

## **An economy of the people, for the people and by the people**

The economy has not collapsed; it has rather been fundamentally transformed so that it services only a tiny group of the rich. We face doom if we follow the foolish advice of the economists telling us we have only the choices of raising or lowering interest rates, or of printing more money, or of printing even more money.

The economy must be democratic, and it must be participatory. All citizens must be provided with knowledge of the true economy in a transparent manner through honest journalism, and they must be given the education necessary to understand how that economy works. They must be provided the means to produce value, to produce goods and services that contribute to society, and the means to exchange those goods and services

with each other, or to sell them to each other, at the local and national levels.

But most such economic activities today are undertaken by massive corporations like Walmart, corporations that make tens of billions of dollars for their owners while paying starvation wages to workers. Workers, and “consumers” (as we call citizens who have no choice about where they shop) are not permitted to make suggestions as to how such markets, restaurants, convenience stores or other businesses are run. You may work for a company like Walmart for a lifetime but you will not be given any stock (any ownership) and your opinions will be completely ignored. In fact, you are encouraged to be passive, to think only about eating food, about watching silly videos, or reading fashion magazines. This passivity is no accident.

The wealth of those running these corporations is not a result of their genius, or of their innovations. Those companies get massive loans from banks, loans backed by you, for decades at low interest rates. With that money they can put all smaller competitors (like you, or like the mom and pop store your parents ran) out of business in a brutal manner. Truth be told, if the big retail chains did not have all that free money, their inefficient, wasteful and corrupt stores could not compete with a healthy local economy run by the people.

And remember, when those banks, which are neither democratic nor transparent, print up their own money out of nowhere they thereby reduce the value of your money.

But there can be an economy which brings us great richness without ecological and spiritual destruction. We can build houses that last for five hundred years. We can use furniture that lasts for a hundred years, and wear clothes that last for thirty years. We can share tools and skills with our neighbors — -and thereby reduce our expenses while improving our health. We have no need for a destructive fourth industrial revolution that uses AI to render us docile.

If we had a democratic economy, you would have as much right, more of a right, to get a loan as Walmart does. If you wanted solar panels, or a windmill, that allowed you to generate your own energy and thereby save our planet, and thereby be independent from the oil companies that prey on us, then the bank, which you would own stock in as a member, would lend you the money you need via a low-interest 50 year loan. That would make wind power, or solar power, cheaper than the dangerous fossil fuels that the banks want to pour down your throat.

There will be no more of the brainwashing perpetrated on us by advertising firms that encourages narcissism, the cult of the self, and mindless consumption. This dangerous business has destroyed families and has torn our neighborhoods apart.

A lot of us, most of us, are now unemployed; we find ourselves under lockdown at home. We are made even more dependent on a corrupt government. Suddenly we need someone to send us a check to help us buy food.

This is the stage before a slave economy. My words are so harsh that many do not want to hear them. They want to dismiss such talk as the blather of conspiracy theorists. But that is where we find ourselves today.

## What do we do?

There are two critical steps to creating a democratic, participatory and sustainable economy.

First, we need to organize ourselves at the local level to create real villages made up of the members of our community. We will transcend ethnicity and culture, working together for the common good. These communities will create their own value and plan their own activities. They will not let the multinational banks and corporations interfere. Eventually we will create our own banks and cooperatives that are entirely independent. The first step will be to sign a contract between the individual members of our communities and hold a series of meetings for us where we, not overpaid politicians, start thinking for ourselves about what needs to be done and how we will do it.

The second stage will be to create local, national and international institutions in government, and in civil society, that will protect the efforts by citizens from interference by the rich and the powerful. The government must be transformed into an institution that can seize the trillions of dollars squirreled away by the rich, and that can assure that the decision-making process in our nation is never for sale.

But we must not be naïve. Governments can be used to restore democracy and equality, but they can be used just as easily for nefarious purposes. Moreover, even the bravest reformers can be overwhelmed, or put in a gilded cage, if they try to make revolutionary changes, or even little improvements, in a corrupt system.

We will not be able to implement policies at the national and international level unless we have powerful support from citizens at the local level who are organized and informed. They will not be organized for some fleeting election, but rather to fight for an honest and just economy every day.

Our participatory and democratic groups will create our own economy, one that is honest, transparent and ethical.

We do not need, and do not expect, approval or support from Washington, or from any authority figures. If your organization is administered like an ethical and committed government, then the “so-called” government will start to learn from you, to take inspiration from you. That would be a far smarter way to change our country than to elect magicians.

Unlike the United States of sixty years ago, most of us have literally no way to produce food, or furniture, or tools locally. All that was taken away during the abominable rites held to satisfy the dark gods of technology and globalization. We buy unnecessary items because the media tells us we must be more fashionable, more modern, than our neighbors.

We do not recognize the authority of banks, billionaires and other elite players to create money out of nowhere and sprinkle it on their friends.

This time we are not going to bail out those criminals; no, my administration is going to confiscate all the assets that they amassed illegally and to cancel all the fake money that they have created with their pals at the Federal Reserve. Truly, the party is over.

We will build an economy that is shared between us, the citizens, an economy that we

create, and develop, at the local level, and the national level, and through cooperation with other citizens around the world, people like us.

You know much better than elite bankers, people who speculate in futures and in foreign currencies, what is necessary for a healthy economy and for your community.

I am certain that once you are in the driver's seat, you will feel a deep sense of commitment to help your children and your neighbors. If there is profit to be made from the food you eat, or from the tools you use, that profit should come back to you, to your children and to your neighbors — and not go to speculators.

And what about this COVID-19 pandemic? It has become a bonanza for the rich and the powerful. America's richest have added another \$280 billion to their pile just as many Americans find themselves locked down at home, facing the possibility, for the first time since the 1930s, of starvation.

But please, Mr. Banker, don't get me wrong! I completely understand your position. You have made such a fortune from COVID-19 that I am sure you can hardly wait for COVID-20! You would love more vaccines for viruses, but most definitely not for parasites.

Let me close with a few words about our campaign. A close friend asked me yesterday where our funding comes from. She said that it is impossible for an independent, especially one who is not popular with the rich, the powerful, with the lobbyists and consultants, to raise the money required for a campaign.

This is what I told her,

"I discovered a remarkable fact the other day. I discovered that the most valuable thing in the world is truth and that although one may pay a terrible price for it, in monetary terms, the truth is absolutely free. In fact, the truth will set you free."

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**Emanuel Pastreich** served as the president of the Asia Institute, a think tank with offices in Washington DC, Seoul, Tokyo and Hanoi. Pastreich also serves as director general of the Institute for Future Urban Environments. Pastreich declared his candidacy for president of the United States as an independent in February, 2020.

*He is a regular contributor to Global Research.*

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