

The New Age of the Techno Consumer Serf

The fledgling years of our new (as in now obvious) oligarchy are upon us. That being the case we need to ask some questions as to the how and why of its function, what drives the current policies that are being formed. We submit a few thoughts for consideration.

Policy Murder. This term for cutting so many people for Medicaid resulting in their demise is not ours, and one could argue with its usage. Nonetheless, cutting so many from medicaid will lead to deaths, sooner or later. This uptick in mortality may be fairly short lived and with the new leadership in the CDC and FDA we may well see new definitions of causes of death emerging, to make the figures more palatable. Cutting so many people for Medicaid has two purposes. The most obvious is to reduce spending, shrinking government and perhaps allowing funds to be diverted to the wealth class. More likely, in the authors' opinion, is the "reduce the burden to society" purpose. Many on Medicaid are not employed or employable, they produce little and consume little; except for medical care which is a burden to government. This will be a recurring theme, an accountant's view of the human being. Do you produce and do you consume?, the requisites for our capitalist economy. If you are not a good consumer or producer you are a burden, not a good citizen, and do not align well with the new American oligarchy. It's better that you're dead.

Degraded Environments and Healthcare. Rolling back EPA and environmental regulations are good for industrial profits and play well to the false mantra that profitable companies employ more people. They don't, they just make more money with the same number of employees as before. However, as many studies have shown, the health of the public suffers with increasing pollution. This increases the need for healthcare, which is fine if you are a good producer, consumption of healthcare does contribute to the economy. The difficulty will be when health degrades enough that you are not a good producer, and without a safety net things will not turn out well. Degraded environments also produce economic opportunity. We saw that with bottled water. False promise that it is, bottled water offers purity over contamination. Air filters offer the clean air not available outside. The purity market is a fair sized marketplace that will likely grow. Greater environmental degradation will lead to new market innovations to protect people with products that offer "purity". This will also give us more to consume and open new employment, which is generally good for economic growth, but the reason for the growth is not good for people.

Reproduction. People have sex, that's where new people come from, and it's part of the joy of being human. Where things will shake out when it comes to sex and babies is hard to tell, there is a strong anti-abortion and anti-contraception movement in the US. However, contraception, porn, and sex are big business. More babies produces more consumers, but, kids are expensive and too many kids leads to poor producers and a decline in consumption. The population and fertility decline are also in play here, with depopulation shifting demographic balances causing issues for a variety of programs, especially social security, but also defense, education and healthcare. This is an issue likely to be in flux for some time with ever changing laws and social norms constructed on the fly to maximize consumption and production.

Debt Servitude. The only thing more American than consuming is doing it with a credit card or other form of borrowing. The new oligarchy loves this. The continual tithing to the great American economy for all of your adult life is a goal of the new oligarchy. Your credit score is already valuable for loans, insurance and job interviews. It will become the new number by which you are judged. Selling debt will continue unabated and even be promoted as patriotic, good for the economy and sign of good character. In an odd twist of tax law exempting overtime from taxes will indirectly encourage debt

spending. Just a little more OT and get debt taken care of. OT tax exemption will allow companies to hire fewer workers to get the same amount done, and pay fewer people benefits. Laws will likely continue to evolve making it increasingly more difficult to declare bankruptcy and to be forever in debt.

AI Grooming. Meta has recently announced plans for an AI assistant to help you run your life. This includes scheduling, career advice and making calls...as a start. AI will soon be able to offer financial advice, loan advice, money advice and so forth. Given that AI is trained by large industry there is every reason to think that AI advice, which will begin at childhood, will groom the citizen, and the population, to behaviors that will benefit the money machine of the oligarchy. The thing is AI is *good* at persuasion. Studies have shown that AI can be more persuasive than people and has more time and patience. The persuasion will be slow and insidious and will be so taken for granted, few will question it. The world and the internet, especially so with augmented reality, will be a continuous marketplace where all problems can be solved with money, every curiosity a sales opportunity, every movement tracked and exploitable (and even blackmail-able). Constant internet, cameras on every door, stoplight, and car, and the use of augmented reality and AI will create the ultimate surveillance state, firstly for the large cyber-industries, and secondly for the government. The use of AR/AI may be so commonplace that not having wearable gear may actually put a person at a social and employment disadvantage making participation in the mass surveillance state nearly a requirement.

Related to the AI grooming of individuals will be the continued contrived strife between left and right, one religion over another, one class over another. This classic strategy of divide and conquer and distraction from the real issues and will be amplified by AI grooming, with a generous sprinkle of disinformation. Even low level armed conflict will be part of the equation so long as attention is kept away from the real sources of power and strife, and it doesn't interfere excessively with production and consumption. Outrage and the amplification of differences will be ever spiraling and the techno-serf will have been created.

The Only Purpose: Production and Consumption. Our current-future oligarchic dystopia is will give human life only the value assigned by accountants; how much do you consume and how much do you produce? If you perform above a certain level you are worth the time and effort of corporations and the subservient government, below that amount and you are a burden and not worth the time and effort of civilized society.

On The Horizon. Future-casting is always risky business, but, we'll go for it. The worst we can be is wrong. To provide a shield from the government and attendant legal challenges corporations will push for a corporate bill of rights outlining what they can do and what they are protected from. This will include clauses that will limit human rights and environmental responsibility. This will effectively eliminate labor organization and unionization and allow extensive environmental degradation. This may well include when corporations may organize and use armed forces to protect corporate rights. Perhaps more pernicious will be laws allowing the passing of debt to future generation. Right now debt liability ends at death. The legal and required inheritance of debt will form an indentured servitude class ripe for exploitation and abuse.

Welcome to the hunger games.