



**WEEKLY UPDATE
AUGUST 2 - 8, 2020**

THIS WEEK

NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

SLOCOG LITE

**PARENT LED MICRO POD SCHOOLS
FAINT GLIMMERS OF A BETTER SYSTEM & FUTURE**

LAST WEEK

**NO BOS MEETING
OTHER REGIONAL AGENCIES OFF AS WELL**

**TURMOIL CONTINUES IN SOME CITIES
SLO WAS RIOT LITE – BUT COULD HURT DOWNTOWN’S FUTURE**

**COVID-19 PANDEMIC USED TO EXPAND THE
WELFARE STATE AND SOCIALISM/
STATEWIDE TAX INCREASES, DEBT, AND RENT
CONTROL, PLUS HIRING AND STUDENT ADMISSION
RACIAL QUOTAS ON NOVEMBER 3, 2020 BALLOT**

**SHERIFF'S COMMENTS DELIBERATELY
MISINTERPRETED & EXPLOITED TO PROMOTE
DISORDER**

**COLAB IN DEPTH
SEE PAGE 14**

WHERE ARE THE HEROES OF THE REVOLUTION?

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

CALIFORNIA'S WOKE HYPOCRISY

Leaders offer platitudes and counterproductive policies rather than opportunities and better living standards for the state's minorities

BY JOEL KOTKIN

THE YEAR THAT BOILED THE FROG

A catalog of things we've lost this year (so far)

BY MALCOLM POLLACK

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, August 4, 2020 (Not Scheduled)

The next scheduled Supervisor’s meeting is on Tuesday, August 11, 2020. Issues which are likely to appear and/or should appear on the Board agenda in August and September include:

1. Revised cannabis regulations that include more severe distance separation, energy conservation, and odor control provisions.
2. Revisions to the Paso Water Basin boundary and revisions to areas in the Paso Basin area which are defined as being in severe decline.
3. COVID updates related to the status of the disease and measures to combat it within the county and state. It is hoped that reporting could be expanded to include economic impacts such as number of businesses permanently closed, unemployment data, impact on safety net programs including welfare, child care, Cal Fresh (food stamps), foreclosures, and rental evictions.
4. County Budget impacts due to revenue losses, increased expenditure, and receipt of various forms of State and Federal aid. Impact of the adopted State budget is also likely to be included.
5. The Board should develop analysis and planning attendant to the impacts of the effective closure of K -12 education. Schools could be closed for a year. There will be myriad impacts to County services across the functional board. Physical health, mental health, income maintenance, childcare, unemployment, family dissolution, and all the rest require early contingency planning.

These issues should be expanded from the narrow budgetary accounting and program impacts to higher-level strategies to deal with the crises which will inevitably result. Relatedly, some of the not-for-profit agencies that provide County services may go broke and cease functioning as a result of revenue losses and the inability to conduct fundraisers. Faith groups may be particularly vulnerable in this regard.

6. The ultimate suspension of COVID income replacement payments and enhanced unemployment insurance payments has become a huge and intractable issue. As this is written, Congress and President are struggling with how to continue the \$600 addition to unemployment payments. It is likely that some amount will be continued until the end of the year. What happens then? Tens of millions of people have become dependent on these payments for their rent, mortgages, utility bills, and other necessities. What if the COVID lockdown recession becomes a major depression that lasts for years? (Even if a vaccine is developed, the damage may have already occurred).

Similarly those states and localities which have implemented rent deferrals also face a cliff. For example, some people stopped paying rent in April and now may not be required to pay until December. What happens when they owe seven months back rent and the new December payment? If evictions begin to occur on a large scale, what do the State, counties, and cities plan. If the income maintenance programs are continued indefinitely, huge inflationary tax increases will eventually be required to service the trillions in added debt. These in turn will damage the economy, perpetuating the ongoing depression and generating social instability.

If the landlords can’t pay their property taxes, mortgages, insurance, maintenance bills, and utilities, and banks are faced with increasing defaults, what happens? Beginning in the late 1960s, exploding in the ’70s and into the ’80s, this happened in slow motion as the middle class fled many urban cities in the Northeast, middle Atlantic, and upper Midwest. Landlords simply walked away from

apartment houses. Whole neighborhoods burned and eventually had to be leveled. Many of the impacted cities have never recovered.

Becoming disentangled from the current programs will be very difficult as tens of millions of people are now in arrears. At the local level, the County needs to understand the picture and potential here.



Bronx in the '70s, but it could be Newark, Hartford, Baltimore, Springfield, Philadelphia, Akron, and Hunts Point in San Francisco, Detroit, Oakland, and scores more

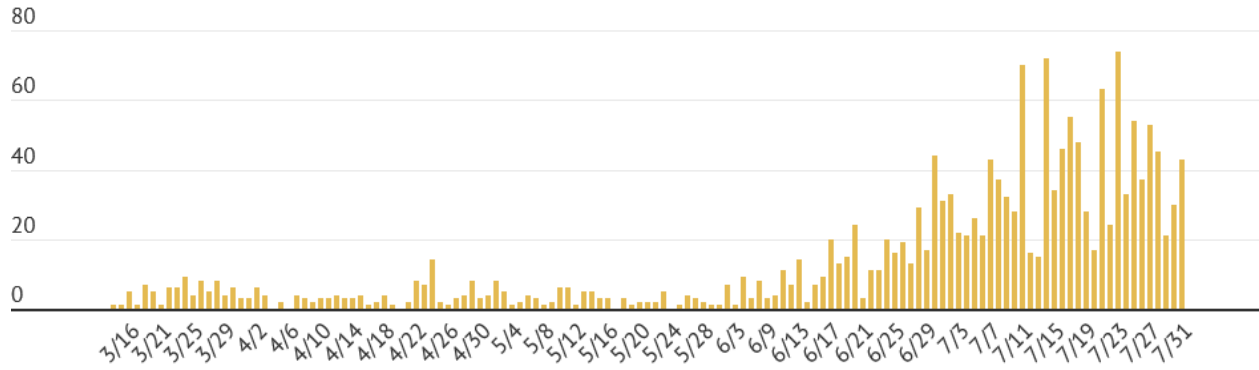


DETROIT TODAY

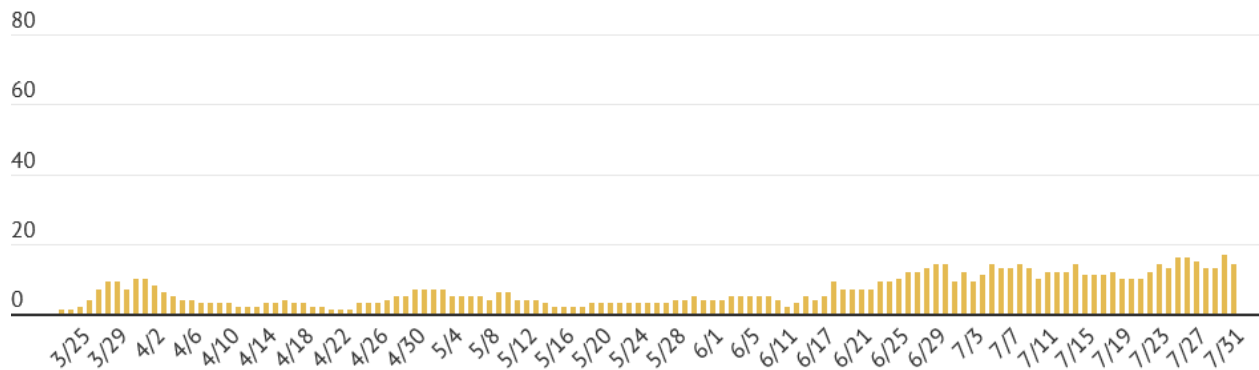
COVID Cases in SLO County Data

Daily COVID-19 Cases

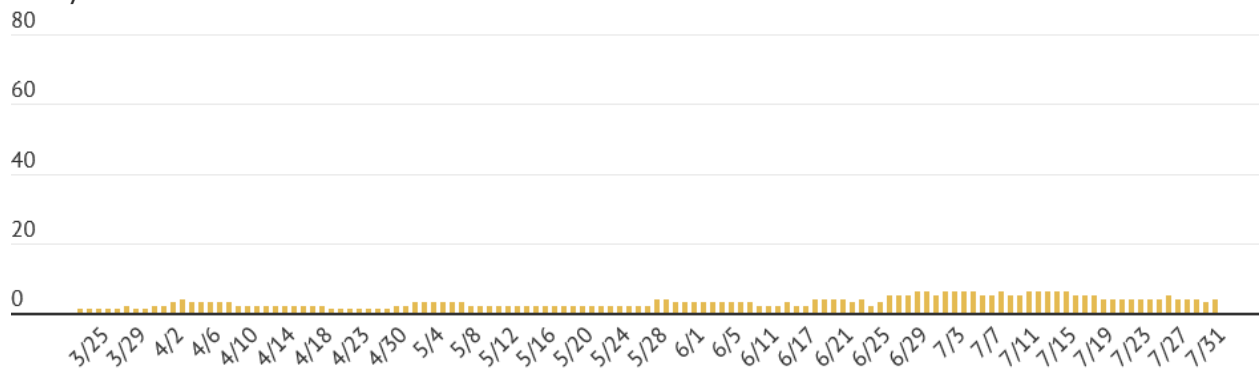
Daily New Cases



Daily Hospitalized Cases



Daily ICU Patients



San Luis Obispo County Council of Governments meeting of Wednesday, August 5, 2020 (Scheduled)

B-1 Update on COVID-19 Impacts on Transportation. The staff report lists some of the trends resulting from the COVID lockdown:

- *SLO County's average vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by day was 64% lower, according to Streetlight data from mid-March through mid-May.*
 - *Less travel on California highways increased travel speeds by an average of 4-6 mph.*
 - *Fixed-route transit ridership on RTA buses was down 70-80%.*
 - *A Rideshare survey found that 71.4% of workers began working from home at least part-time during the pandemic. Prior to COVID-19, just 7.2% of employees in SLO County worked from home.*
 - *COVID-19 has increased managers' trust in work from home productivity, creating a high likelihood that some increased telecommute mode-share "stick".*
 - *Some experts predicted a higher single-occupant vehicle mode share after shelter-in-place restrictions loosened, due to less traffic and shorter commute times ("induced demand").*
- B-1-2*

- *Other contributors to induced demand include lower gas prices, pent-up demand for postponed services (hair styling, dog grooming, routine doctor's visits, etc.), reservations about using public transportation, and the replacement of some long-distance vacation travel by car.*
- *Observations made by SLOCOG staff, advisory committee members, and Board members noted an increase in the number of people in SLO County biking and walking for recreation. Since June, staff has continued collecting data and information on the effects of COVID.*

Whether the member cities and the County will work up plans to deal with prolonged economic disruption is a question. What if the disease continues indefinitely?

Is COVID breaking the public school monopoly?

As COLAB and others have been pointing out for several weeks now, California Public K-12 schools are essentially shut down, probably at least until September 2021. To this end, the Legislature approved and the Governor signed a bill guaranteeing the teachers and others full pay and benefits through June 2021. This fact should alert the more gullible public that talk of returning in the spring is rhetoric and that the Sacramento politicians, education unions, and other progressive powers have no intention of physically reopening the schools.

In an attempt to see how on line learning will be set up for the San Luis Coastal School District operations, we found the following notice on its website:

School Board Votes on Reopening Plan (A non reopening plan)

Thursday, Jul 16th

On [Thursday, July 16, 2020](#), after careful consideration and hearing from hundreds of parents and staff, the Board of Education approved a resolution and a plan to reopen schools for the 2020-2021 school **year in distance learning** (Plan C). This decision by our school board was extraordinarily difficult. We've taken your feedback seriously. We are committed to leaning into this challenge.

Key Information:

- SLCUSD will begin the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning to continue through the winter break.
- The first day of school will be Monday, August 24. **Parents and students should expect rigorous, full-day instruction for our students, including synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning opportunities.** Daily attendance will be required for all students, Monday - Friday.
- Families wishing to select the Virtual Learning Program (VLP) for the entire 2020-2021 year must do so by July 24, 2020.
- SLCUSD is currently negotiating with our labor partners.

We're not sure what synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning opportunities are and could not find any real detail. For example, how do I get my class list for my sophomore year in high school, which would probably contain Geometry, English, Geography, Biology, and Spanish?

During which periods will the classes be conducted and by which teachers? Will they be interactive on Zoom or a similar platform or remote? How will roll be taken? Will homework be emailed in each day or what? Will all teachers teach their regular classes, or for example, if there are 5 sophomore English sections, will one teacher conduct them all? Who is in my class? Will there be a phone roster so study groups can be formed?

Using the diagram shown, find the value of x and the measure of each missing angle in the triangle.

$$12x + 8 + 55 + 8x - 3 = 180$$
$$20x + 60 = 180$$
$$\begin{array}{r} -60 \\ \hline 20x - 120 \\ \hline 20 \quad 20 \\ \hline x = 6 \end{array}$$

She doesn't get her stuff at Nordies

How will this stuff work from home?

What if I'm a first grader with a single mom who is an essential worker like a nurse, bus driver, grocery checker, or corrections officer? Who's going to watch me while I'm doing distance learning? There is little detail on the website about how all this is going to work.

What is the plan for Phys Ed? Many seniors will be heading for Marine, Army, or other service basic training after next June. Some will be heading for a service academy. They need to be able to run 2 miles in less than 14 minutes (preferably in the 12's) with all their gear on, do a minimum of 46 push-ups (preferably many more), innumerable sit-ups, and 25 pull-ups on the bars, run everywhere, night and day in full gear all the while sounding off and being screamed at by the DIs.

If things get stickier with China, Iran, Korea, or even the Socialist California Republic, many more than just the motivated may be headed for drill instructor land. In other words, the School District needs to prepare the people who are not going off to six leisurely years of Sociology and Gender Studies at Cal State El Rancho Relaxo.



Aye, Aye—Sir!! When you are greeted by these DIs next July 2021 down in San Diego, you don't want to be slow, weak, stupid, or overly sensitive

There did not seem to be a link or connection to Distance Learning Plan C, which is referenced in the notice.

Ominously, the notice states that the SLCUSD is "currently negotiating with our labor partners." Does that mean that the teachers union has not agreed to the operational structure and process necessary to effectuate the Plan on August 24th? What leverage, if any, does the School Board have, since the State has already legislated full pay and benefits through June 2021?

Neighborhoods Rising to Take Matters Into Their Own Hands:

News articles indicate that families in neighborhoods all over the country are forming small home school groups to work with the online content provided by the school districts. These provide social interaction, mutual support, and childcare, as parents can rotate in and out over the workweek. This seems particularly beneficial for the lower grades.

If this system catches on, the government run schools may lose considerable market share as parents figure out they can do a better job and customize the programs. \$40 million elementary schools and \$100 million high schools, which look like factories, could become relics of the past like shopping centers. Will armies of woke and socialist-oriented unionized pensioned teachers be necessary?

Such a trend is in its infancy, but sometimes as societal changes occur, stimulated by plagues, technology (dare we say climate change?) and other externals force government, production, and education forms to change. See the article below:

Marin parents seek ‘micro-pods’ to share homeschool, distance learning duties

If they can find the right combination of kindred families and qualified teachers or tutors, Marin moms Darcy Alkus-Barrow and Malissa Reyes are planning to go “micro-pod” for the upcoming school year.

“I know that distance learning was not working for us,” said Alkus-Barrow, of San Rafael, who has a 6-year-old daughter and a 1-year-old son. “I’ve known that for a long time.”

She posted on Facebook last Sunday inquiring if Marin people were interested in joining the “micro-pod” concept. By Sunday night, more than 200 people had responded.

“It’s all happening very fast,” Alkus-Barrow said.

Like Alkus-Barrow, Reyes said she and her husband both work full time — and are doing that work from home now due to the coronavirus stay-at-home order. Getting anything done at home while kids are needing help with distance learning has been difficult at best, she said.

“A lot of families where the parents both work said they could not do the homeschooling for their kids too,” said Reyes, of San Anselmo, who has two daughters ages 7 and 5.

Reyes said she posted a note in Nextdoor last week seeking a qualified teacher, but instead received numerous replies from parents who said they wanted to join her group too.

Alkus-Barrow and Reyes are two of an increasing number of Marin parents looking at “micro-pods,” an apparent educational creation arising from the pandemic. “Micro-pods,” or “micro-school pods,” are small groups of four to six same-age students whose families pool resources to hire a part-time teacher to tutor their kids with distance learning from the public schools or independent homeschooling curricula.

The details, timing and locations are varied, but the benefits are the same: Kids avoid the social and emotional isolation of learning alone on a computer screen, while parents who work at home get their private office time back for most of the weekdays.

“My daughter did well with distance learning in the spring — she enjoyed it and was active in class,” Reyes said. “But that wasn’t the case for a lot of kids. Some kids wouldn’t do it, they fought it, they got upset.”

With Gov. Gavin Newsom’s mandate Friday that Marin schools — and those in other counties on the state virus “watchlist” — are [not free](#) to reopen for in-classroom learning for the 2020-21 school year until their virus numbers improve, distance learning is the only option on the educational menu for the foreseeable future.

That said, even the pods will need to have strict agreements among member families for masks, social distancing and restrictions on contacts outside of the group.

“We may not be having circle times and Fun Fridays,” said Kimberly Gomoll, a special education paraeducator in the Miller Creek School District in San Rafael.

Gomoll, who is planning to work as a tutor in a Marin pod this fall, said she doesn’t feel safe returning to a full in-person classroom environment — if and when that happens in Marin, she said.

“Here’s the thing,” she said. “Even if you’re not an educator, a parent or a child, this affects us all,” she said. “Kids don’t live in a bubble. To me at least, it affects the whole community. I worry about my elderly parents.”

Julie Schiffman, organizer of a local group Marin Homeschoolers, said micro-pods are different than homeschooling and so governed by different rules. In any case, potential members need to get educated because “there is no short answer” on how to do it, she said.

Schiffman has mapped out some her thoughts on what she calls “micro-schools” and “learning pods” on her website at tentoad.com/faqs

According to Arkus-Barrow and Reyes, the schedules and locations for the pods are to be negotiated with each group. Some may choose to have the teacher come to one of the members’ homes two or three days a week, with rotating parents teaching the other days. Other groups may have a tutor four days a week at different family homes.

Curriculum is also a matter of negotiation among the groups.

“We have very high expectations for the distance learning we will see in the fall,” said Reyes, who plans that her pod will use the Ross Valley School District online curriculum. “We think it will be Distance Learning 2.0.”

**Wonder if the teachers unions will agree to support neighborhood micro pods?
Their attitude will be a good forecast of the future of government public education.**

LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, July 28, 2020 (Not Scheduled)

The Board is scheduled to meet next on August 11, 2020.

Things Continued to Unravel Statewide, Nationally, and Locally

1. Governor orders K-12 schools to remain shut down and provide distance learning. There is no clear evidence that opening the schools will result in pandemic spread. In fact the damage to the students, including falling behind, social isolation, lack of nutrition programs, and other services will be highly detrimental. The damage to the economy as parents cannot return to work or must find expensive childcare will be severe.

Last week we pointed out that the LA School District's Teachers Union has seized upon the COVID problem to attempt to blackmail the School District and City into supporting a long list of nasty progressive/socialist platform goals. These go far beyond normal union bargaining demands over wages, conditions of work, benefits, and hours. They are so radical, and the fact that they are being advocated by a 60,000-member labor organization, makes them of huge concern for the future. We repeat them here for your convenience:

A. Congress passes the HEROES Act, which would allocate an additional \$116 billion in federal-education funding to the states. Obviously this one is not under control of the LA School Board or Mayor and City Council.

B. The state must pass a ballot initiative that would reassess property values for the purposes of raising local taxes. This is a demand for the passage of Prop 15, which would remove commercial, industrial, and agricultural buildings from Prop 13 protection.

C. There should also be a new wealth tax, appropriating (perhaps they meant "expropriating") the existing assets of the wealthy, as well as a surtax on all incomes over \$1 million annually.

D. Schools will remain closed until and unless some form of "Medicare-for-all" becomes law, thwarting the "boundless greed of the for-profit health industry" which, "combined with this country's deeply ingrained racism," has led to worse outcomes for black Americans.

E. Los Angeles must commit to "defund police."

F. The state must expand the criteria by which residents without U.S. citizenship are eligible for financial and legal protections to the extent that it allows those benefits to flow without even having to apply for them.

G. There must be a moratorium on the licensing of charter schools.

In addition, the union insisted that even if lockdowns do not continue in perpetuity, the City must commit to an ongoing program of “rental relief” and eviction protections. A concern is that these or similar provisions will be adopted by other public sector labor unions. So far it appears that the Service Employee’s International (SEIU), the American Federation of State, Municipal, and County Employees (AFSCME), and the various safety unions have not adopted such radical polemics. The California Federation of Teachers’ website expresses solidarity with Black Rights, but so far does not posit any radical actions.

On the other hand and significantly, the California Faculty Association (CFA), which represents 29,000 professors, lecturers, librarians, and other instructors within the entire CSU system, has promulgated its own polemic, which is narrower than the LA Teachers Union version, while focusing on Black and minority faculty issues:

The white supremacist ideology that is part of this structured racism is reflected in the media and gives rise to microaggressions and criminalization of Black bodies that characterize our daily social interactions on the street, in the park, in stores, schools and workplaces.

Structured racism and white supremacy are unavoidable. Only systemic change can cure the centuries-long pandemic of racism.

- *Value Black lives.*
- *Uphold rights to protest anti-Black racism.*
- *Protect Black LGBTQIA+.*
- *Defund and remove armed, militarized policing from our campuses.*
- *Support the Ethnic Studies requirement Assembly Bill 1460.*
- *Resource/establish Black Studies Departments and Black Student/Resource Centers on each campus.*
- *Provide free tuition for Black, Native, and Indigenous students.*
- *Prioritize resources for mental health counseling, including Black counselors.*
- *Establish and resource programs for criminal justice system-impacted students.*
- *Implement racial pay equity.*
- *Recognize and reward the scholarship/creative works of Black faculty.*
- *Relieve cultural taxation of Black faculty.¹*
- *Transform the leadership of the CSUs so that it is truly representative of the communities served by the CSU.*

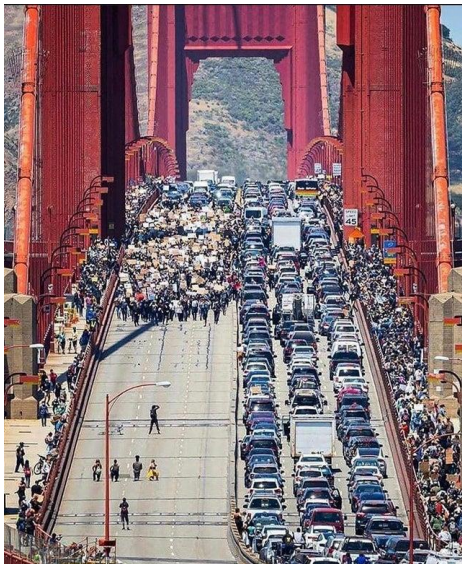
These demands are significant in that they are issued by the faculty union of the largest public university system in the nation, a faculty that teaches the overwhelming number of Californians who receive bachelor’s degrees, teaching credentials, and master’s degrees. The radicalization of this group is having profound impacts on what Californians believe about fairness, society, politics, and history.

¹ **According to the CFA:** “Cultural taxation” is a stealth workload escalator for faculty of color. And like stress, it can be a silent killer of professional careers and aspirations. Clearly, serving on university and department committees as the “minority” representative is taxing in itself. But being expected to “speak for your people” as well, is a form of “taxation without representation” at whose mere consideration, would make most faculties shudder.

2. Racial and class conflict continue across the State, Nation, and in SLO County. Police use of deadly force against African Americans and alleged disproportionate routine stops of African Americans have been catalyzed into a revolutionary-like movement to dismantle society. The issues have also been appropriated to help defeat the President's reelection attempt. Major components include direct action and replacement of cultural and institutional forms including:

- Lawful demonstrations designed to be converted into riots
- Attack on law and justice institutions
- Cultural & historical iconoclasm
- Rejection of western science, English language, and Judeo-Christian heritage (as being innately white supremacist)
- Open borders
- Negation of private property
- Rejection of the primacy of the nuclear family
- Suppression of the Judeo-Christian spirit and heritage and their physical symbols

It is nastier if you have a real choke point like the Golden Gate Bridge and burn the whole strip mall down. Will weakness in SLO beckon the worst?



3. Use of the COVID-19 Pandemic to expand the welfare state and expand socialism including:

- Free income distribution programs
- Government imposed rent holidays

- Extension and potential permanentization of unemployment insurance payments
- Demands for national free healthcare for both citizens and non-citizens, including people who are in the country illegally
- Massive expansion of Federal debt
- At county level, many cities are using the COVID revenue losses as an excuse to place sales tax increases on the November 3, 2020 ballot. Some of these were already in the works before anyone had ever heard of COVID

4. Statewide Tax Increase, Debt, and Socialization of Private Property Measures on November 3, 2020 ballot. See last week's Update for details at the link:

http://www.colabslo.org/prior_actions/2020/Weekly%20Update_July-26_Aug-1_2020.pdf

COLAB IN DEPTH

IN FIGHTING THE TROUBLESOME, LOCAL DAY-TO-DAY ASSAULTS ON OUR FREEDOM AND PROPERTY, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THE LARGER UNDERLYING IDEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CAUSES

WHERE ARE THE HEROES OF THE REVOLUTION?

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Cultural revolutions are suicidal, nihilistic, and incoherent. Those who survive such cannibalism do so by arbitrarily exempting their leaders from their own rules of mandated purity and no statute of limitations.

Since late May, the United States has been convulsed by a cultural revolution unlike any seen in its recent history. Statues have been toppled, often without any logic or consistent grievance. Institutions have been renamed, again without coherent consistency.

Christian iconography has been a common target. Television shows have been taken off the air; particular corporations boycotted; professional sports recalibrated into social activist spectacles.

If there is any common denominator to this madness, it is apparently that the past was toxic, and erasing it in the present will make for a more just and united future.

For example, because of the glorification of the imperialist and spoiler of native paradise Christopher Columbus, his statue in Chicago must be removed nocturnally by the order of the mayor—in order to restore peace of mind, social justice, and calm. That act of iconoclasm will rectify things in the present, and thus there will not be another 500 annual homicides in Chicago.

But once names are replaced and commemoration destroyed, what exactly follows the erased?

Anarchy Is the Replacement

Mao and Stalin had their pictures put up everywhere—while making the prior czars and the warlords amateurs in the arithmetic of genocide. The revolutionary Castro Brothers and Muammar Gaddafi turned the streets of Havana and Tripoli into Disney-like ads for their persons. So did Saddam Hussein—as thousands were rounded up and murdered.

Will the founders of Black Lives Matter demand such statues for themselves?

In truth, the iconoclasts and revolutionaries are guided by an informal set of chaotic rules that ensures their movement must remain anarchical and nihilist. They cannot really replace what they have destroyed—at least according to their own ad hoc rules of political correctness. And after over two months of constant protests, we know what those protocols are.

One, we do *not* judge famous people by weighing their bad and good deeds. One sin—with or without confession—condemns you to politically incorrect Hell. One bad characteristic—especially supposed racism—cancels whatever good one otherwise accomplished.

Liberals idolize President Woodrow Wilson for his progressive politics and one-world utopian foreign policy. But because Wilson was also by our standards an inveterate racist, he is now canceled.

Global pacifist Mahatma Gandhi is also out, because in his earlier incarnation as a South African barrister he said and wrote things that now are deemed racist. George Washington may have been unique in terms of his superior morality and achievements, especially in comparison with other slave-holders. But as a slave-holder, his virtue does not matter; and so Washington is relegated to the toxic column, lumped together with any otherwise criminal-minded person who also owned slaves.

Two, the revolutionaries are morally censorious but selective in their outrage. They despise Christopher Columbus but are more than happy to live in a Westernized America. They do not eschew it for other indigenous areas that are less contaminated by supposedly toxic Western capitalism and constitutional government. They claim they despise the corporate state, but can't leave home without their corporate mass-produced smartphones. The selfie, not the clenched fist, is the new emblem of the revolution.

Three, there are no statutes of limitations. One insensitive remark in one's youth, one errant and regrettable deed in the past, will be ferreted out by the social media and internet lynch mob to cancel present lives and livelihoods. The #MeToo movement reached back to then high-schooler Brett Kavanaugh's late teens to claim falsely that he was a sexual assaulter in efforts to stop a conservative trending Supreme Court. Such is the new standard.

These informal rules explain perhaps why when statues go down, none go back up.

No Heroes Are Good Heroes

Destroy Robert E. Lee and replace him with whom exactly? John Brown, abolitionist hero—or, in his past, tit-for-tat Kansas murderer?

Mao Zedong, Communist heartthrob and greatest genocidal killer in history?

Get rid of Columbus to put on a pedestal Martin Luther King, Jr.? Not according to present revolutionary standards: the great civil rights leader's great good is canceled by his plagiarism, his callous womanizing, and, according to a recent biographer, his serial demeaning of women.

Maybe we could replace statues with more progressive heroes like Franklin D. Roosevelt?

Not so fast. He green-lighted the amoral and forced internment of Japanese-Americans and Japanese resident aliens during World War II. He voiced anti-Semitic tropes and did little to allow Jews to reach America as a sanctuary. Against that and under the new rules, what does the New Deal or leading the United States in World War II against fascism matter?

Perhaps we should look to more contemporary new heroes that could replace now toppled statues of old Stonewall Jackson the racist or the late 18th-century Father Junipero Serra the severe Catholic disciplinarian? Why not someone of the squad, like Representative Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.)?

Aside from the fact that so far young Omar has had few if any legislative accomplishments, her rhetoric and personal life, by the rules of the revolutionary council, would also cancel her. She has tweeted and uttered statements that are clearly anti-Semitic. There is some evidence, so far not rebutted, that she married her own brother to skirt U.S. immigration law. And she is currently under investigation for campaign finance and income tax irregularities. Not the stuff of a crusading hero.

Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger? She's fading fast, given her eugenics-inspired racism. The icon of the Sierra Club, John Muir, might as well have been an armed robber, given he said things now deemed racist that cancel out his other path breaking work as the father of Sierra Nevada mountain preservation.

Safe Zones for Cosplay Revolutionaries

How about finding a place free of the world of Columbus, Washington, Lincoln, Edison, Bell, the Wright Brothers, and all those old toxic white males?

There are plenty of safe zones in the world where the "system" operates on more pre-Columbian assumptions and has over time cleansed itself from much of past Western racism, colonialism, and imperialism—to the point that such places can now brag of being non-Western.

Southern and rural Mexico might be an ideal place for protestors to emigrate. There are few toxic white people there. Indigenous pre-Columbian customs and language still survive, and it is nominally under the jurisdiction of an often anti-American Mexican government.

Ditto the mountains of Peru. Cuba has restructured itself as the antitheses of the West and could be an ideal home with accessible healthcare for the Antifa youth of Seattle and Portland.

The strange reluctance to flee from a hated system, while enjoying its affluence and leisure to attack the source, suggests that most protestors, alas, are Western to the core. They apparently secretly know why they have the freedom, the money, the time, the health, and the security—all dividends of America—to cosplay as Che Guevara without having to delve into the mud and humidity of the Bolivian jungle.

Then we come to the revolutionaries themselves and their insistence that any past racist or illiberal utterance condemns one to the cancel-culture guillotine.

How about the godhead of the *New York Times*' "1619 Project," Nikole Hannah-Jones? Nope—a quarter-century ago, according to the revolution's own rules, she remains still guilty for expressing youthful and vile racism. As a college student, she stereotyped an entire race as murderous, prone to rape, theft, and innately savage in their role as "bloodsuckers."

Maybe ascendant progressive pathbreaker Joy Reid of MSNBC is worthy of a pedestal in place of the now toppled Miguel de Cervantes or Frederick Douglass?

Nope. She has a now decade-old history of unhinged homophobic and gay-bashing rants, and she compounded her sins by lying that she never wrote them. Perhaps then we can rename the Woodrow Wilson School either the Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, or Jeremiah Wright school of diplomacy? All, unfortunately, have a long history of anti-Semitic slurs.

No One Measures Up

The truth is that there are few progressive icons past or present: Margaret Sanger, John Muir, Woodrow Wilson, FDR, JFK, LBJ, Joe Biden, Louis Farrakhan—the list is endless—who by the rules of the revolution would not be canceled out.

How about we at least consider the legendary founder of the revered Southern Poverty Law Center, Morris Dees? Again nope. No statue or named university wing there either. Dees once worked for the racist George Wallace. And the now dethroned Dees seems to have run his center like a cultish Synanon, in the sense that the money-making enterprise made him quite wealthy, and according to some of his own employees was a hotbed of "mistreatment, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and racism." The anti-racist SPLC racist?

The iconic center of the Civil Rights movement might be the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture on the Washington Mall. Alas, it just took down a display that by any standard was utterly vile and racist. It claimed "whites" (that is all 240 million apparently herd-like whites) typically demand toxic values like being on time, the Protestant work ethic and good grammar—as if millions of blacks do not find such values key to their success, without considering them "white" at all, but innate to their own history and values.

No statues are going up, because there can be no heroes by the revolution's own 360-degree rules. No leaders emerge, because the moment they do—"warlord" (and capitalist landlord) Raz Simone, "trained Marxist" and BLM co-founder Patrisse Cullors, or iconic moneyman for the revolution George Soros—they would be found guilty of the same crimes of having a past that is often quite less than honorable.

The Unspoken Hypocrisy and Arbitrariness of the Revolution

So what in the end has kept the revolution going? An unspoken hypocrisy or rather an arbitrary red line.

Some people must be above revolutionary law and deserve exemption from violating the values of tolerance and diversity that they espouse. So LeBron James cannot be anti-Semitic even though his past tweets and statements might suggest just that. Tara Reade has to be a liar to dare to accuse Joe Biden of a long-ago rather creepy, violent, and ugly sexual assault. Joy Reid, to continue her good work, simply has to make up an imaginary hacker who magically put all those ugly homophobic remarks into her own social media accounts.

Cultural revolutions are suicidal, nihilistic, and incoherent. Those who survive such cannibalism do so by arbitrarily exempting their leaders from their own rules of mandated purity, anti-Western cant, and no statute of limitations. Otherwise, in truth, Che becomes a middle-class spoiled brat homicidal thug, Mao's China would still be a country of genocide and starving peasants pounding out non-Western pot-iron in their ovens, and Colin Kaepernick would be erased from the Nike brand for once smearing another NFL player with the N-word.

If there is any coherent message in this otherwise incoherent summer, it is that a few thousand wannabees have launched a revolution with the full expectation that their own careers in the universities, media, sports, and politics will be thereby enhanced—and enhanced in the most remuneratively Western and capitalist fashion possible.

This article first appeared in the July 26, 2020 of American Greatness. Victor Davis Hanson is the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution; his focus is classics and military history.

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In 1991 he was awarded an American Philological Association Excellence in Teaching Award. He received the Eric Breindel Award for Excellence in Opinion Journalism (2002), presented the

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CALIFORNIA'S WOKE HYPOCRISY

Leaders offer platitudes and counterproductive policies rather than opportunities and better living standards for the state's minorities.

BY JOEL KOTKIN

No state wears its multicultural veneer more ostentatiously than California. The Golden State's leaders believe that they lead a progressive paradise, ushering in what theorists [Laura Tyson and Lenny Mendonca](#) call "a new progressive era." Others see [California](#) as deserving of nationhood; it reflects, as a New York Times columnist put it, "the shared values of our increasingly tolerant and pluralistic society."

In response to the brutal killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Los Angeles [mayor Eric Garcetti](#) announced plans to defund the police—a move applauded by Senator [Kamala Harris](#), a prospective Democratic vice presidential candidate, despite the city's [steep rise](#) in homicides. [San Francisco mayor London Breed](#) wants to do the same in her increasingly [crime-ridden](#), disordered city. This follows state attorney general Xavier Becerra's numerous immigration-related lawsuits against the Trump administration, even as his [state](#) has become a sanctuary for illegal immigrants—complete with [driver's licenses for some 1 million](#) and [free health care](#).

Despite these progressive intentions, Hispanics and African-Americans—some 45 percent of California’s total population—fare worse in the state than almost anywhere nationwide. Based on cost-of-living estimates from the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), 28 percent of California’s African-Americans live in poverty, compared with 22 percent nationally. Fully one-third of Latinos, now the state’s largest ethnic group, live in poverty, compared with 21 percent outside the state. “For Latinos,” notes longtime political consultant [Mike Madrid](#), “the California Dream is becoming an unattainable fantasy.”

Since 1990, Los Angeles’s black share of the population has dropped in half. In [San Francisco](#), blacks constitute barely 5 percent of the population, down from 13 percent four decades ago. As a recent [University of California at Berkeley poll](#) indicates, 58 percent of African-Americans express interest in leaving the state—more than any ethnic group—while 45 percent of Asians and Latinos are also considering moving out. These residents may appreciate California’s celebration of diversity, but they find the state increasingly inhospitable to their needs and those of their families.

More than 30 years ago, the Population Reference Bureau predicted that California was creating a two-tier economy, with a more affluent white and Asian population and a largely poor Latino and African-American class. Rather than find ways to increase opportunity for blue-collar workers, the state imposed strict business regulations that drove an exodus of the industries—notably, manufacturing and middle-management service jobs—that historically provided gateways to the middle class for minorities. As a recent [Chapman University study](#) reveals, California is the worst state in the U.S. when it comes to creating middle-class jobs; it tops the nation in creating below-average and low-paying jobs.

Following Floyd’s death, even environmental groups like [the Sierra Club](#) issued bold proclamations against racism, but they still push policies that, in the name of fighting climate change, only lead to [higher energy and housing costs](#), which hurt the aspirational poor. Many businesses, including small firms, must convert from cheap natural gas to expensive, green-generated electricity, a policy [adamantly opposed](#) by the state’s [African-American, Latino, and Asian-Pacific chambers of commerce](#).

Meantime, California’s [strict Covid-19 lockdown policies](#), imposed by a well-compensated (and still-employed) public sector, have imperiled small firms. “There’s a sense that there was major discrimination against local small businesses,” said Armen Ross, who runs the 200-member Crenshaw Chamber of Commerce in South Los Angeles. “They allowed Target and Costco to stay open while they were closed. Many mom-and-pops may never come back.” Many restaurants—roughly 60 percent are minority-owned—may never recover, notes the [California Restaurant Association](#).

In the past, poor Californians, whether from the Deep South, Mexico, or the Dust Bowl, could look to the education system to help them advance. But [California now ranks 49th](#) nationally in the performance of poor, largely minority, students. [San Francisco](#), the epicenter of California’s woke culture, has the worst scores for black students of any county statewide. Yet educators, particularly in minority districts, often seem more interested in [political indoctrination](#) than in improving scholastic results. [Half of California’s high school students](#) can barely read, but the educational establishment has implemented ethnic-studies courses designed to promote a progressive, even anticapitalist, and race-centered agenda. Unless the education system changes, California’s black and Hispanic students face an uncertain future. A woke consciousness or deeper ethnic identification won’t lead to successful careers. One can’t operate a high-tech lathe, manage logistics, or engineer space programs with ideology.

California's failure to improve conditions for Latinos and blacks was evident even before the lockdowns and recent unrest. What the state's minorities need is not less policing, or [systematic looting of upscale neighborhoods](#), or steps to reimpose affirmative action, or kneeling politicians; they require policies that empower working-class citizens of all races to ascend into the middle class.

The state's leaders should prioritize improving middle-class jobs and opportunities, replacing indoctrination with skills acquisition, and encouraging local businesses. Considering the nature of California politics, this can happen only if minority Californians demand something different. That could happen if enough of these residents realize that the state's ruling progressive class is interested in their votes—but apparently not in improving their lives.

Joel Kotkin is the presidential fellow in urban futures at Chapman University, executive director of the Center for Opportunity Urbanism. His new book is [The Coming of Neo-Feudalism: A Warning to the Global Middle Class](#). This article first appeared in the July 29, 2020 edition of [City Journal](#)

THE YEAR THAT BOILED THE FROG

A catalog of things we've lost this year (so far).

BY MALCOLM POLLACK

Here we are, a little over halfway through 2020. Events have moved so quickly that most people are having a hard time keeping up and are simply coping as best they can. More has changed in these past few months than at any other moment in our lifetimes, and many things that would have seemed unimaginable just a year ago have come to pass. 2020 has ratcheted us into an entirely new world—and it is in the nature of ratchets that they don't move in reverse. Let's survey the damage.

China, rocked back on its heels by America's newfound resistance to its cheating and bullying, released a plague upon the world. (Whether the outbreak was planned or not, it is clear that the Chinese Communist Party intentionally suppressed information and warnings about the novel coronavirus, and allowed it to spread around the globe. What better way to smash its enemies, America in particular, than to destroy their economies?)

America responded with a robust immune response that nearly killed the patient. (It may kill it yet.) A drastic quarantine was imposed upon the nation, and a roaring economy bludgeoned to its knees. Unemployment, which had been at the lowest levels in half a century (and for blacks and Hispanics, the lowest *ever recorded*) soared to Depression-era levels. Hundreds of thousands of small businesses have failed.

Governors and mayors imposed quarantines, severely restricting commerce and assembly, entirely at their whim. The determination of “essential” businesses and activities—which, for many smaller enterprises, meant the difference between life and death—was glaringly, often contemptuously, capricious.

Nietzsche famously defined happiness as “the feeling that power increases—that resistance is being overcome.” In politics, war, and international affairs, the temptation to see what you can get away with is always there, and times of crisis provide the ideal opportunity. (So well does this work that the cleverest and most ambitious will find a way to create a crisis if events fail to provide one.)

For many governors and legislators—in particular those Democratic politicians and political strategists who, in this critical election year, felt themselves losing ground as the Trump-era economic boom continued—the “Wuhan Red Death” was like manna from heaven. Everyone knows that a good economy favors incumbents and that hard times favor an expanding state—and so the sudden appearance of this pestilence was an astonishing stroke of luck, a kind of *deus ex machina*. Opportunities to seize emergency powers are as rare as Willie Wonka’s golden ticket; usually one has to start a war, or burn down a parliamentary headquarters, to create them. Yet here was just such an opportunity, tied up with a bow and stamped “Made In China”. Our overlords lost no time.

Think of what we’ve lost:

- Professional, amateur, college, and high-school sports, as well as youth athletic leagues: gone. (Yes, there is some baseball now, but in *empty stadiums*—and the prospects for football, basketball, etc. are dim.)
- The schools are all closed. Parents who depend on the schools to look after their children during working hours cannot return to the workforce
- The entire movie industry: gone.
- Theater: gone
- Concerts: gone
- Summer camps: gone
- Bars: gone. (Here in Massachusetts, they will be closed until there is a vaccine, which for many businesses, if not most, is a death sentence.
- Restaurants: either closed, or operating under draconian restrictions. Many places still do not allow indoor dining, and those that do permit it only at reduced capacity. The restaurant business has thin margins under the best of circumstances, and you can be quite sure that nearly all restaurants are currently losing money
- Travel: decimated. (This includes hotels, car rentals, etc.
- Public gatherings: churches, parties, funerals, weddings, reunions, school commencements, club meetings, cookouts, marathons, and so on: gone.
- Gyms and fitness studios, closed—many permanently.

That’s only a partial reckoning—but what a list it is! If one were asked, a year ago, to name the things that make up ordinary civic life in America, it would have been, more or less, the same list. All of it is

gone. (A year ago, could we have imagined New York or Boston *without an open bar*? But here we are.) Meanwhile, our governors, giddy with power, decide for us daily what we can or cannot do, our basic right “peaceably to assemble” notwithstanding. Jog by yourself on a beach? Attend an outdoor funeral? You’ll very likely be arrested. Form a mob of thousands and crowd the streets to bray about an officially sanctioned political grievance? By all means, please proceed.

Flourishing societies strike a healthy balance between rights and privileges. When one grows too much at the expense of the other, a nation declines: on the one hand toward impotent mediocrity, on the other into tyranny.

What once we cherished, we now are taught to despise. How long can a nation that disgusts itself continue to exist?

The rights in question here are not negative rights of the sort found in the Constitution, which boil down to particular variants of a more general right not to be interfered with by the government, but rather *positive* rights—rights to goods that require expense and effort to provide—which necessarily involve a positive compulsion on someone’s part to provide them. These rights effectively indenture one segment of society to another.

As more and more of these goods become mere entitlements, rather than rewards to be earned through productive labor, the burden upon the productive segment of society increases, even as that segment dwindles—and the nation sags toward impotent mediocrity.

Privileges, on the other hand, are by definition blessings bestowed by those in power. It is always and everywhere a hallmark of tyranny that all rights, even negative rights, are redefined as privileges granted or withheld according to the interests of the powerful. That’s exactly what’s happening now: our supposedly inalienable rights to assemble, to do business, to worship in church, etc., have abruptly, and with no discernable process of public consent, become privileges. That is no longer the rule of law; it is the rule of men.

But this is not the only erosion of the rule of law we have seen in 2020.

While millions of working Americans have been forced by decree to abandon their jobs and businesses, the streets of major cities have been taken over by state-approved, angry, anarchist mobs. These mobs have destroyed and defaced both public and private property, terrorized citizens, assaulted the police, and committed crimes ranging from vandalism and looting to arson and murder. The police have tried bravely to maintain order, but have so far been overwhelmed—and in many cases even told to stand down—as the rioters went about their business. Meanwhile, the police have been vilified and slandered as racist brutes, as politicians have pledged to reduce funding for their police departments, or eliminate them altogether.

Thus as formerly rights-bearing citizens are commanded by fiat to stay home and shutter their businesses, violent mobs run wild in the cities, and the police buckle under withering assault—not only from the mobs they face, but also from a hostile press and their own mayors and city councils—we can add “rule of law” to the list of things we have lost in 2020.

Here's another thing we've surrendered: our *faces*. The face we present to the world is our "sigil," our flag of individual distinctness. Our faces, and the richness of expression they make possible, are the primary medium of interpersonal communication. They are the book from which others instinctively read our characters, our thoughts, and our moods. To "show one's face" is the most basic act of participation in civil society; to "lose face" is always and everywhere painful and humiliating. When we face one another we connect as social beings; there is a reason why popular social media and communications platforms have names like *Facebook* and *Facetime*. Moreover, why do fundamentalist Muslims insist upon covering the faces of their women? It is precisely to prevent this connection, this humanizing and socializing interaction. It is a means of possession, of control.

Now, like the burqa-clad women of the *Dar al-Islam*, we all must cover our faces, except in the isolation of our homes. The effect of this is powerfully leveling and atomizing; it works in an insidious way to break down the horizontal ligatures that bind us together as a society. And as we sit unemployed at home, awaiting our relief checks, the result is an increasing deflection of all social connections from the horizontal to the vertical: away from the people around us, and toward the sovereign power above us, from which all blessings increasingly flow.

In this way, with every faceless and "socially distant" passerby now a potential carrier of pestilence, attraction gives way to repulsion. We see fewer and fewer people in person, and keep more and more to ourselves, until it all begins to feel normal. We have lost another essential feature of American life: the richly rewarding human experience of being a distinctive and self-reliant member of an organic and multidimensional civil society.

Finally, the shared belief that America is, at its roots and in its heart, something worthy and good crumbles further. The bedrock of the American mythos—the founders, the Constitution, the ennobling natural law principles enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, the confidence in the approval of Providence expressed in our national motto, and the sense that we are links in a great chain that connects the sacrifices of our ancestors with the duty of living Americans to preserve the blessings of law and liberty for our children's children—these have all fallen away, precipitously, in this *annus horribilis*. What once we cherished, we now are taught to despise. How long can a nation that disgusts itself continue to exist?

All of this, and more, have we lost in the space of less than a year—yet most of us have simply . . . adjusted. For those of us old enough to have the perspective of historical parallax, it is a disturbing reminder of some of humanity's darkest lessons: lessons that far too many of us seem to have forgotten, if we ever learned them at all.

Malcolm Pollack is a recording engineer and writer living in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. This article first appeared in the July 29, issue of Great America.



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