Everyone wants to predict the future. This is why for thousands of years astrologers, sorcerers, and psychics have continued to rake in money, despite science debunking their supposed abilities. Every human being goes through life engaging in actions based on a calculation of what the consequences will be, and on at least a vague prediction of what will happen next.

Beyond personal life, the ability to calculate the trajectory of events is deeply important in geopolitics. Observing global trends and making accurate predictions is a highly desired ability. To be able to watch world events as they occur, take note of certain trends, and forecast correctly what will eventually unfold, gives the forecaster a strong advantage.

With this understanding, we shall look over the year of 1999, twenty years ago. This was a year in which a number of the biggest trends impacting the contemporary global situation first began to manifest themselves.

"Color Revolutions” Go High Tech

On July 20th, 1999, Jiang Zemin officially outlawed the Falun Gong religious cult, and thousands of its members were immediately arrested. Falun Gong is an organization that opposes inter-racial marriage and women’s participation in the political process, and favors the persecution of homosexuals. At the time, adherents of the Falun Gong were staging a series of anti-Communist protests and recruiting young people across China.

In 1997, China’s Ministry of Security had already published a document regarding its investigations of the religious group. Communist Party leaders then began openly and accurately describing Falun Gong as an anti-communist, feudal religious sect that sought to undermine the Communist Party and create unrest.

Young people who joined the sect were separated from their parents, indoctrinated, and pushed into dangerous situations risking arrest. The leader of the group, Li Hongzi, became a permanent resident settling in the United States in 1998, where he remains, living with his wife and daughter.

But how was it that a group that was so hostile to the Communist Party gained millions of adherents so rapidly, and was able to engage in a series of coordinated disruptive protests on the Chinese mainland? The group had no access to the TV, Radio or major newspapers.

It was by utilizing the internet to spread its views that Falun Gong was able to recruit so rapidly. Falun Gong most likely also received some covert support from US intelligence agencies. Since being banned in 1999, the Falun Gong has been honored by the Heritage Foundation, and many figures in the US state apparatus.

It was in response to Falun Gong’s use of the internet to spread unrest that China began restricting the internet, the same year. On January 20th, 1999, the Chinese News Service announced new restrictions aimed at internet cafes.

After President Bill Clinton’s 1999 NATO bombing campaign in Yugoslavia, US intel agencies would escalate their covert funding and managing of an anti-government movement. The organization known as “Otpor!” (Resistance!) utilized the internet in its efforts to destabilize and eventually topple the socialist government in Serbia. Milosevic stepped down in October of 2000.

In 1999, the method of staging “Color Revolutions” to topple anti-imperialist and socialist governments was being
combined with “the information superhighway” and having much quicker results. With new technology, the techniques that Zbigniew Brzezinski and George Soros had utilized in Eastern Europe, became highly amplified in their impact.

In the following two decades the eventual emergence of social media would take this to an even higher level. During the Arab Spring explosion of 2011, Jared Cohen of Google would be directly employed by the Hillary Clinton US State Department, for the purpose of “fostering opposition in repressive countries” and focusing on the Middle East region.

First Major School Shooting

On April 20th, 1999, the United States experienced its first major school shooting. Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, walked into Columbine High School and slaughtered 15 of their classmates and teachers. The incident shocked the country, and the response was a much swifter implementation of security measures in America’s schools.

The event created a media firestorm, but in the months and years following the incident, the story began to unravel. Almost the entire narrative that Americans had been given by CNN about the incident and it perpetrators was proven to be false.

The shooters were reported to have been members of a gang at their school called the “Trench Coat Mafia.” This was proven to be false, and in fact, the only time the shooters had ever been seen wearing black trench coats was the day of the massacre, when they used the coats to conceal their weapons.

The shooters were reported to have listened to the rock music of Marilyn Manson, a performer who utilized gothic, sexually deviant, and fascistic aesthetics. Though the career of Manson suffered significantly as a result of these rumors, it was later proved that Harris and Klebold were not fans of his work.

The shooters were also reported to have been taking revenge for acts of bullying. TV specials, teacher training programs and even new laws regarding school bullying were passed across the country. However, it was later revealed that the shooters had not been known to be victims of bullying, and had not taken revenge against alleged bullies.

A book entitled “She Said Yes” was written by Misty Bernall, the mother of Cassie Bernall, one of the victims of the shooting. The best-selling book told an emotional story of a devout Bible believing Christian girl, who was murdered for saying “Yes” when asked by the shooters if she believed in Jesus Christ. The book reads like a manifesto for the American evangelical movement, portraying Cassie Bernall as a martyr in a kind of “Christian revolution” against homosexuality, abortion and atheism. People Magazine called the book "a stirring, important look into the tribulations of one all-too-human teen."

However, this story of how Cassie Bernall died was later disproved. Eye-witnesses and even an audio recording have confirmed that the widely publicized account of Cassie Bernall’s martyrdom was fictitious propaganda. Cassie Bernall was gunned down ruthlessly by a murderous school shooter, but the narrative in which she was killed for saying “yes” to questions about her Christian faith was simply contrary to reality.

Despite it being fake news, Bernall’s church pastor announced that he would continue telling the false account of Cassie’s death, saying “The church is going to stick to the martyr story. It's the story they heard first, and circulated for six months uncontested. You can say it didn’t happen that way, but the church won't accept it. To the church, Cassie will always say yes, period.” There's no doubt that this fictional and highly politicized retelling of a teenage girl's murder was useful and profitable for certain people. Neoconservative politician Rick Santorum continued to retell the debunked story in his speeches, getting applause and tears from his audiences in 2015, despite the massive evidence disproving it.

Since 1999, school shootings and other mass shootings have become a much more regular occurrence. Furthermore, the US public has become more and more skeptical about mainstream media.

The Failure of Neoliberal Economics

In 1999, I was 12 years old and I visited Ecuador with my father. When I arrived in Quito, I was not prepared for what I saw. The level of extreme poverty was shocking to me. Outside the airport, at every tourist spot in Quito, I observed crowds of desperate people.

The reason poverty was at such a high level in Ecuador in 1999 was because the country had come under the grip of
international bankers. Due to a weather phenomenon called “El Nino” crops failed, and farms were foreclosed. Deregulated banks were handing out risky loans to “well connected” clients, the oil price went down, and foreign investment dropped due to the crisis in the Asian markets. The government’s hands were tied as the banks began to fail, because it was already in huge amounts of debt to international creditors.

A crisis of malnutrition hit the country, schools closed their doors, rural people poured into the cities, and hundreds of thousands of people fled the country.

This was a humanitarian crisis created by Neoliberalism, and similar occurrences happened all over the world. Globalist institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank forced countries to reduce government spending and de-regulate lending and speculation in order to receive “development assistance” loans. This then set the stage for the countries to be completely demolished. After the crisis of 1998-1999 Ecuador was forced to give up its own currency, adopting the US dollar in 2000.

In Venezuela, the electricity frequently went off for weeks and garbage wasn’t collected, as the state constantly worked to reduce spending to appease the IMF. When I visited Venezuela in 2015, a government official in central Caracas described the 1990s to me saying: “We had to burn tires and go on strike just to get electricity, have the streets fixed, or get any investment.”

These policies were carried out across Eastern Europe after the fall of Marxist-Leninist governments. Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and many other countries signed on with international bankers, and faced looting and economic ruin as a result of neoliberal policies, imposed by international lenders.

The economist Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University was bankrolled by Hungarian billionaire and liberal activist George Soros to travel across Eastern Europe and South America as a financial advisor. He pushed the economic theories of Milton Friedman and Friedrich Von Hayek, arguing that the state should either completely step aside or only work in order to facilitate profits for business owners. On paper, this was supposed to lead to a glorious, free market utopia in which everyone was “free to choose” amid unlimited prosperity. It sounded good on paper, but Libertarianism failed in practice.

Post-Soviet Russia was particularly hard it by neoliberal economic reforms. Naomi Klein’s 2007 book “The Shock Doctrine” says that “more than 80 percent of Russian farms had gone bankrupt and roughly seventy thousand state factories had closed creating an epidemic of unemployment” between 1991 and 1998. By the late 90s, the number of Russians living below the poverty line reached 74 million. According to Klein, “25 percent of Russians – almost 37 million people – lived in poverty described as ‘desperate.’” The suicide rate doubled, and the rate of drug addiction increased by 900%.

**Millions Die From Capitalism’s “Victory”**

The swift imposition of free market economics around the world had a massive cost in terms of human life. Malnutrition, lack of access to healthcare, human trafficking, the creation of economic refugees, a rise in the drug trade and organized crime, and the demolition of the industrial sector of various countries unquestionably caused millions of deaths. While anti-communist historians have worked very hard to develop figures regarding the Great Leap Forward in China or Holodomor in the Soviet Union in order to feed their narratives, the millions of people who died as a result of capitalism’s “victory” in the cold war has never been properly calculated by academics.

Why? Because people dying of starvation, or lack of healthcare, or other clearly man-made causes is considered to be normal under capitalism, not an anomaly. Capitalism began with the clearing of the commons in Europe, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and colonialism. Under the reign of globalist international capitalism from the 1800s onward, episodes of mass malnutrition and starvation have taken place in Ireland, Iran, India, China, various African countries, and many other places. The atrocities committed in order to secure capitalist profits, such as Belgium’s genocide in the Congo, or US crimes in the Philippines, or the establishment of apartheid settler regimes on the African continent, was equally horrendous.

The British empire of Cecil Rhodes and Adam Smith’s economic theories often invoked terms like “survival of the fittest” in order to justify these forgotten holocausts. The term “overpopulation” was coined by British economist Robert Thomas Malthus.

Winston Churchill famously refused food relief to India during the 1943 Bengal famine in which 3 million Indians starved to death. According to Arthur Herman’s 2008 book “Churchill & Gandhi”, the British head of state was
known to oppose aid saying that “Churchill felt it would do no good. Famine or no famine, Indians will ‘breed like rabbits.’

1999 - A Turning Point Against Western Capitalism

A decade of mass deaths, de-industrialization and economic catastrophe seems to have spawned a strong resistance. In 1999, Hugo Chavez took office in Venezuela after winning an election the previous year. Chavez was a former paratrooper and populist who called himself a “Bolivarian” after the anti-colonial fighter who freed South America from Spain. In 1999, Hugo Chavez and his political party said they did not believe in either capitalism or socialism, but “The Third Way.” Chavez invoked Juan Peron, and insisted he was not a Marxist, however, the election in which he won essentially became a referendum on neoliberal economic reforms.

Chavez victory opened the door for Bolivarianism to spread across South and Central America. Chavez openly proclaimed himself to be a Marxist, seeking to build 21st Century Socialism in 2003. Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua soon followed Venezuela in adopting a Bolivarian Socialist economic model. In the decades following Chavez 1999 ascendency, Bolivarian Socialist governments presided over state control over natural resources, the eradication of illiteracy, the construction of low cost housing across South and Central America.

The Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America (ALBA) was established, and labor unions and community organizations were strengthened in many different countries. The current President of Mexico, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador became prominent during these years, nearly being elected in 2006 in election results that were widely contested.

On Dec. 31st, 1999, the last day of this rather pivotal year, Boris Yeltsin unexpectedly resigned as Russia’s President. The acting President became Vladimir Putin, who had become Prime Minister in August.

Putin had written an academic dissertation entitled “Strategic Planning of the Reproduction of the Resource Base.” Putin had written about how energy corporations could become “National Champions” or state-controlled entities used to subsidize and rationally control the rest of the economy. Under Putin’s leadership, Gazprom and Rosneft did just that.

In addition to creating two state-run mega-energy corporations, Putin cracked down on corrupt speculators and put an end to the free market insanity of the Yeltsin years.

By 2007 poverty had decreased by 14%. Wages more than doubled for the average Russian and unemployment dropped. During the same period, Russia’s industrial output increased by 125%, with overall industrial expansion higher than 70%. The GDP increased dramatically from $764 billion to $2096.8 billion. John Browne, CEO of BP described the results of Putin’s economic policies saying “No country has come so far, in such a short space of time.”

The Beginning of Big Things

Toward the end of 1999, I recall seeing images on TV and in print media of protesters in Black masks. As a 12 year old, I heard that “Anarchists” were protesting the “World Trade Organization” in Seattle. The images I saw of windows being broken and brick walls being spray painted, as well as police firing rubber bullets and tear gas stuck with me.

The episode of street fighting and unrest that took place on November 30th, 1999 has been dubbed “The Battle of Seattle.” Thousands of people were involved and many were injured in the fighting. Key Martin, a Marxist activist and filmmaker who co-founded the People’s Video Network, was hit with a rubber bullet. The injury contributed to the longstanding and ongoing health problems that resulted in his death the following year.

In 1999, Scotland’s parliament was created. Since the Second World War, Scotland has been a strong hold of unions and the Labour Party. Scotland stood as a region of strong opposition to Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party during the 1980s. When Tony Blair took control of the Labour Party in 1994, he repudiated the social-democratic ideas that had long defined it. Under Blair’s “New Labor” government many of the same kinds of cuts in social spending, and measures intended to reduce the power of labor unions continued to be carried out.

As a result of continued frustration with the economic policies of London, Scotland voted in a referendum in 1997 to establish its own parliament. Tommy Sheridan, an independence activist and socialist, was elected to serve in the first Scottish parliament which was convened in 1999. The Scottish National Party, which increasingly emphasized opposition to Neoliberalism and austerity, won a solid 35 seats as well.

Both the socialist groups and the Scottish National Party continued to expand in the following decades. A
referendum for Scottish independence nearly passed in 2014, and talk of a new referendum has begun in light of the Brexit crisis. Opposition to de-regulation and cuts in social spending continues to be the focus of the Scottish Independence movement.

Two Decades of Struggle

In 1991, the voices of western capitalism echoed pronouncements about “The End of History.” In 1999, it became very clear that history was not over. The voices who promised a free market paradise were discredited by the pile of dead bodies their supposedly utopian policies created. The ideologues that said western individualism and commercial culture was the road to happiness were discredited when their civilization was revealed to be full of social dysfunction and confusion. It was capitalism with its doctrine of ideological liberalism, not socialism and Marxism, that was revealed to be “The God That Failed.”

The people of Russia, the people of South America, and many other parts of the world continued to reject “greed is good” as being the basis for organizing the distribution of goods and services. Even within the western world itself, on the streets of Seattle and in the ballot boxes of Scotland, opposition to this “New World Order” asserted itself.

New forms of socialism and rational economics began to assert themselves. New technology was utilized by most the powerful forces of western-based global capitalism in order to assert their dominance, but such technology also allowed for contrary narratives and other information to flow more freely.

Though the American people’s eyes were pointed toward the Monica Lewinsky scandal and the fictitious threat of Y2K, many events that would affect them and the rest of the world were already swinging into motion.

It has been two decades since 1999, and an observer of international events in our present time is forced to ask, what similar trends are in their blossoming stages in 2019.

What will the world look like 20 years from today?

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