

New book illustrates the case for rational optimism

What a Wonderful World

It might not feel like it, but things are getting better all the time. While pundits and politicians stress gloom and doom, the reality is that human flourishing has been radically improving. People have never been wealthier, healthier, and happier. These trends and their causes are the subject of a new book by Marian L. Tupy, editor of Cato's HumanProgress.org, and Ronald Bailey, science correspondent for *Reason*.

Ten Global Trends Every Smart Person Should Know: And Many Others You Will Find Interesting, released in August, compiles these facts and accompanying charts in a beautifully illustrated volume suitable for display on your coffee table or in your office. The first printing of the book has already sold out as a result of large orders for use as holiday gifts for friends and clients. A second printing is now in stock.

As Tupy explains, "Well-known negativity biases that are deeply entrenched in the human psyche, and which we discuss in the introduction, conspire to make us think of the world as being in much worse shape than it is. So, the primary goal of the book is educational. If readers walk away feeling a sense of pride over

the degree and scope of human accomplishment and imbued with a sense of rational optimism about our species' future, so much the better."

Trends discussed include a documented rise in happiness; a decline in global income inequality; radical reductions in both criminal violence and war; the expansion of equality and empowerment for women; decriminalization of same-

sex relationships; increasing access to electricity, clean drinking water, and the internet; and many more. In all, the book covers 78 different positive trends, with data to back them up.

This might seem like a difficult year to make the case that the world is getting better. But it is impossible to understand the world we live in today without knowing the reality of how much better things have gotten within our lifetimes. And in a time of widespread pessimism, that ray of sunshine might be especially needed. These radical improvements are the product of a global system of trade and capitalism that has produced wealth and wonders beyond the wildest dreams of our ancestors.

Ten Global Trends is intended to not just gather dust on a bookshelf, but rather to be prominently shown as a conversation piece, much as other coffee table books on art and architecture. Light on exposition and prose, the true centerpiece of the book is its charts. A picture is worth a thousand words, and the trends documented in this volume are translated into easily digestible visual illustrations. Cato Institute designers Guillermina Sutter Schneider and Luis Ahumada Abrigo have accomplished this task and produced a stunning piece of art that readers will be proud to display. ■

TEN GLOBAL TRENDS IS AVAILABLE AT ONLINE BOOKSELLERS AND CATO.ORG/BOOKS.

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News Notes

ARISE, SIR STEVE

Steve H. Hanke, senior fellow and director of Cato's Troubled Currencies Project, has been made a Knight of the Order of the Flag by decree of Ilir Meta, president of Albania. He is only the second American to receive this honor. In the commendation, Meta explained that Hanke "introduced and implemented the principles of market economy and sound money to the post-Communist Republic." From 1990 to 2018, Albania rose from 88th to 26th in the *Economic Freedom of the World* index.

CMFA WELCOMES NEW FINREG DIRECTOR

Cato welcomes Jennifer J. Schulp as the new director of financial regulation studies in the Center for Monetary and Financial Alternatives. Before joining Cato, Schulp was a director in the department of enforcement at the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. (FINRA). At Cato, she will focus on the regulation of securities and capital markets.

WORD OF THE DAY

Merriam-Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary* selected "cronyism" as its word of the day for September 16, 2020, defined as "partiality to cronies especially as evidenced in the appointment of political hangers-on to office without regard to their qualifications." To provide an example of the term's usage, the esteemed dictionary cited Lee Drutman's lead article in the July/August 2020 issue of *Cato Policy Report*.