

COVID-19 ANTI-LOCKDOWN RALLIES

A View from America

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By William D. Slicker

Much of the world has been under lockdown orders in the past few months, due to fears about the possible impact of Covid-19. As this is a highly contagious virus, there were initial fears that the death rate from Covid-19 would be quite high. Death rate statistics for previous notable epidemics/pandemics are as follows: 100% for HIV (prior to treatment becoming

available), 50% for Ebola, 34.3% for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), 50% for the plague in the Middle Ages, 9.6% for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and 2.5% for the Spanish Flu. Fortunately, the death rate from Covid-19 has proved to be much lower. Dr. Anthony S. Fauci – a leading infectious diseases expert and advisor to the US President – estimates that the death

rate from Covid-19 will be about 1%. Other sources suggest that the death rate will be lower than this, given that many people are asymptomatic and are not counted in official Covid-19 statistics.

Due to this low death rate, many people are of the opinion that lockdowns are causing more harm than the threat of Covid-19. There have been anti-lockdown rallies around the world. The chart below shows the number of rallies held in European countries:

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Country	City	Date	Attendees	Source(s)
Austria	Vienna	April 17	200	Reuters
France	Paris, Toulouse, Leon, Strasbourg	April 18, 2020	?	Washington Post
Germany	Berlin Berlin Berlin Stuttgart	April 18 April 25 May 2 May 2	500 1000 300 5000	Vice The Telegraph SBS News SBS News
Poland	Zgorzelec	April 24	400	Reuters
Russia	Vladikavkaz	April 20	500-1500	Moscow Times
Ukraine	Kiev	April 29	Several hundred	Europost
United Kingdom	London	May 2	20	Evening Standard

Anti-lockdown rallies have also occurred in other countries around the world, as shown below:

Country	City	Date	Attendees	Source(s)
Brazil	Brasilia	April 20	Several hundred	BBC News
Canada	Toronto	April 25	?	BlogTo
Canada	Toronto	May 2	300	BlogTo
Canada	Ottawa	May 2	20	CBC News, CPV News
Canada	Vancouver	April 13	?	The Independent
Canada	Edmonton	April 29	100	CTV News
Chile	Santiago	April 20	?	BBC News
India	Mumbai	April 13	Thousands	Reuters, The Financial Times
India	Surat	April 11	Over 1000	Financial Times
Lebanon	Tripoli	April 17	Several hundred	DW News, Washington Post
Lebanon	Zouk	April 27	Dozens	Global News
Turkey	Istanbul	May 1	?	The Guardian

However, nowhere have anti-lockdown rallies been more prevalent than in the US. According to CNN, it has been estimated that 97% of Americans have been placed under stay-at-home orders. These orders were put in place by a government with good intentions, but – as is often the case when the government steps in to deal with a problem – other problems have been inadvertently created. After six weeks of stay-at-home orders, there have been anti-lockdown rallies in at least 42 states in the US, as shown below:

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State	City	Date	Attendees	Source(s)
Alabama	Montgomery	?	Dozens	Alabama News
Arizona	Phoenix	April 20	500	Arizona Family, BBC
California	Sacramento	April 20	100's	Sacramento Bee, San Francisco Chronicle, Newsweek
California	San Diego	April 18	250	Times of San Diego, LA Times
California	Huntington Beach	April 17	100	LA Times, Sacramento Bee
California	Huntington Beach	May 1	2,500 to 3,000	The Guardian, The Daily Mail
Colorado	Denver	April 19	550	Denverite
Connecticut	Hartford	April 20	?	NBC
Delaware	Dover	May 1	Hundreds	Delaware News Journal
Florida	Orlando	April 17	?	Times Union
Florida	Orlando	April 25	A few dozen	Fox News
Florida	Delray Beach	April 19	100	South Florida Sun Sentinel, Fox News
Florida	Miami	?	?	New York Times
Florida	Miami	April 25	A few dozen	Fox News
Georgia	Canton	April 19	Small group	AJC (Atlanta Journal Constitution)
Hawaii	Honolulu	April 19	Two dozen	Hawaii News Now
Idaho	Boise	April 17	?	The Idaho Statesman and BBC
Illinois	Chicago	April 18	?	Daily Mail
Illinois	Chicago	May 1	Hundreds	Forbes
Indiana	Indianapolis	April 18	250	Indianapolis Star, USA Today
Kansas	Kansas City	April 20	Handful	The Kansas City Star, KCTV
Kansas	Kansas City	?	80	The Kansas City Star
Kentucky	Frankfort	April 15	100	The New York Post
Kentucky	Louisville	April 17	30-40 cars	Fox News

State	City	Date	Attendees	Source(s)
Maine	Augusta	April 20	?	The Huffington Press
Maryland	Annapolis	April 18	200 cars	Capital Gazette, WUSA9
Massachusetts	Cape Cod	April 19	Dozens	Boston.com
Michigan	Lansing	April 15	3000-4000	USA Today, NBC News
Michigan	Lansing	May 1	Hundreds	The Guardian, Mercury News
Minnesota	Saint Paul	April 17	800	VOA News
Missouri	Jefferson City	April 21	Several hundred	Associated Press
Montana	Helena	April 19	Hundreds	Independent Record
Nevada	Carson City	April 18	Hundred	Reno Gazette Journal
New Hampshire	Concord	April 18	A few hundred	Associated Press
New Jersey	Trenton	April 17	Two dozen cars	The Blaze
New York	Albany	April 16	About a dozen	Times Union
North Carolina	Raleigh	April 14	100	NBC News
North Dakota	Bismarck	April 20	?	The Daily Mail, Internewscast
Ohio	Columbus	April 9	75	The Daily Mail
Ohio	Columbus	April 13	200-300	The Cleveland Scene, NBC News,
Ohio	Columbus	April 17	Dozens	
Ohio	Columbus	April 18	Hundreds	Columbus Dispatch, The Alliance Review
Ohio	Columbus	April 20	?	Huffington Press
Ohio	Hudson	April 18	?	
Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	April 15	Hundreds of cars	Politico, The Oklahoman
Oregon	Salem	April 17	Dozens	The Register-Guard
Oregon	Redmond	April 17	200	Associated Press
Pennsylvania	Harrisburg	April 20	2000	USA Today, The Daily Item, The Source, Internewscast
Rhode Island	Providence	April 25	100	Providence Journal
Tennessee	Memphis	April 19	?	The Tennessean, USA Today
Tennessee	Jackson	April 19	?	The Tennessean, USA Today
Tennessee	Chattanooga	April 19	?	The Tennessean, USA Today
Tennessee	Knoxville	April 19	?	The Tennessean, USA Today
Tennessee	Nashville	April 19	Hundreds	The Tennessean, USA Today
Texas	Austin	April 18	Hundreds	Business Insider
Utah	Salt Lake City	April 18	1000	The Daily Mail, BBC, NPR
Vermont	Montpelier	April 22	20	Burlington Free Press
Virginia	Richmond	April 19	Couple dozen	The Daily Mail

State	City	Date	Attendees	Source(s)
Washington	Olympia	April 19	2,500	The Seattle Times, Washington Post, The Stranger
Washington	Spokane	May 1	?	Reuters
West Virginia	Richmond	?	?	WHSV
Wisconsin	Madison	April 19	70	USA Today
Wisconsin	Brookfield	April 19	1,000	The Tennessean, YouTube
Wyoming	Cheyenne	?	?	The US Sun

Most media coverage of these anti-lockdown rallies has focused on the fringe elements of the crowds. For example, the media have picked out the few people who compare the strictness of stay-at-home orders with the Nazi Government, or the few members of the crowd who are carrying guns because they are mixing up their Second Amendment right to bear arms under the United States Constitution with their First Amendment right to assemble. In focusing on these fringe elements, the media is not paying sufficient attention to the core reason for these rallies.

The core reason for these rallies is economic: people are not earning money and are therefore not able to buy food, pay their mortgage, or pay for their utilities. There are now over 22 million people in the US who are unemployed, and this number is far greater around the world. Globally, lockdowns are worsening life for the poor, who fear hunger more than the threat of Covid-19. A woman protestor in Lebanon said: "Hunger does not have mercy on anyone." Another female protestor in Kansas City said: "I haven't been able to provide for my children and to me that is scarier than that virus." Or as a sign in North Carolina read: "The Government does not consider my business essential, but it is essential to feeding my

family." These people would rather face the threat of contracting Covid-19 and becoming sick than having their family starve for lack of food. After all, the Covid-19 mortality rate is somewhere around 1% or less (the true statistics are still unclear, as discussed above), but we know that prolonged starvation leads to death. Up until now in the US, most people were able to stand in a line at a food bank to get basic food. However, even food banks are now running out of food.

In addition, prominent news sources – such as The New York Times and CNN – have begun to beat the warning drums, telling us that the disruption of the world economy will lead to famine in many parts of the world. Who has the authority to decide that saving people in the industrialised world from sickness and a low possibility of death is worth more than the sure deaths of people in the third world from starvation? There are those who might say that making such a decision is elitist.

Perhaps it is time to start letting people earn a living again so that they can feed their families – both in the US and in other parts of the world that have been under lockdown. This would help to resurrect economies and save lives in the process. This can be done if people do not confuse a total lockdown with allowing movement outside of homes, while maintaining social distancing and wearing masks when in public. This is apparently the decision of the governors of over half of the states in the US who have begun phasing out lockdown orders this week by allowing businesses and public places to reopen, so long as people stay at least six feet apart. It is unknown how much the anti-lockdown rallies have affected these phasing out decisions, but they almost undoubtedly had an influence on policymakers. ■

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