

## Chapter 16

# The fascist elements of the lockdown regime

Superficially, the appeals to “public health” and “saving lives” that were heard in Canada from 2020 onwards sounded much different from the nationalist appeals made by fascist movements in various European countries in the 1920s and 1930s. While external justifications for suppressing civil liberties differ greatly, the substance of Canada’s authoritarian, ideological and fanatical response to Covid features numerous characteristics of fascism.

Starting in March 2020, politicians, government officials, and media created a sense of overwhelming crisis. They presented Covid as beyond the reach of traditional solutions by falsely portraying Covid as a far graver danger than what it was. A permanent state of emergency that lasted for years prevented debate and shut down democratic deliberation. Every individual was expected – and legally required – to subordinate her or his own interests to the “public interest” as defined by government. In the name of the state-orchestrated public health crusade to “save lives,” our federal and provincial governments violated our individual freedoms of association, expression, conscience, religion, travel, mobility, bodily autonomy, and peaceful assembly. In the Justice

Centre's constitutional challenges to lockdowns, governments across Canada admitted in court that lockdowns and vaccine passports did violate *Charter* rights and freedoms. Governments argued that these violations were justified.

## **Demonizing the bad minority group**

The victim group consisted of the majority of Canadians who complied with health orders that did not stop (and could not have stopped) Covid from spreading everywhere, and to everyone.<sup>225</sup> Society's "internal enemies" consisted of a minority of Canadians who refused to submit to the violation of their *Charter* freedoms. The most despicable offenders, worthy of hatred and exclusion, were Canadians who exercised their *Charter* right to bodily autonomy by declining to get injected with a substance for which no long-term safety data existed. Members of the victim (majority) group felt entitled to heap verbal abuse on them, spy on them, report them to the police, and declare publicly that their neighbours were not worthy of receiving medical treatment.<sup>226</sup> Hatred or contempt for the minority resulted in students being kicked out of universities, and bread-winners being forced into unemployment, solely for exercising their *Charter* right to bodily autonomy. Embracing ideology with fervent enthusiasm, some Canadians excluded their own family members from Christmas dinners, birthdays, graduation ceremonies, weddings, funerals, and other family gatherings. Individual rights and freedoms were denounced as a corrosive threat to purity.

## Forced participation in a grand societal project

From March 2020 onwards, governments required Canadians to live their lives according to the following beliefs:

- Covid is an unprecedented, unusually deadly killer that threatens all Canadians;
- debate, dissent and democracy stand in the way of addressing this threat;
- our *Charter* rights and freedoms stand in the way of addressing this threat;
- lockdowns and vaccines are the only solution to deal with this threat;
- the most important thing in life (or the *only* important thing) is to fight against Covid;
- we know that lockdowns save lives, so we need no evidence to support this;
- we know that the vaccine is safe and effective, so we need no evidence to support this;
- human rights and constitutional freedoms must be repudiated for the sake of public health, the common good, and saving lives;
- we must submit to authoritarian leadership;
- everyone must join this global crusade; and
- we are all in this together.

## The ideology of Covidism

An ideology is a belief system that exalts—fervently—one single aim over everything else. An ideology sees only one evil, puts forward one explanation for injustice, and identifies one villain. The ideology calls

for the use of coercive state power to crush that singular evil, injustice or villain, and tolerates no dissent from people who think differently. Ideologues are simplistic, failing to consider the complexity of reality. Impervious to contradicting facts and arguments, ideologues are firmly convinced that they have attained a higher plain of knowledge.

For example, the ideology of communism explained reality as a class struggle between good, oppressed workers and evil, oppressive capitalists. Nothing was allowed to stand in the way of eliminating the capitalists and building a workers' paradise. In pursuit of this singular goal, communists across the globe destroyed religious freedom, private property, freedom of expression, the right to vote in free elections, the right of parents to raise and educate their own children, and other individual rights and freedoms. Communists like Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and Pol Pot murdered tens of millions of innocent people. Millions of Ukrainian kulaks (successful peasant farmers) were starved to death by Stalin in the early 1930s, in what became known as the Holodomor. In like manner, in Germany in the 1930s, National Socialism explained reality as a racial struggle between Aryans and non-Aryans (Jews especially) and promised a glorious future for Germany under a new thousand-year *Reich*.

Under the ideology of Covidism, everything had to give way to stopping the spread of a virus. Nothing else mattered any longer: not our mental and emotional health (which depends on connecting in person with friends, family members, colleagues, co-religionists, etc.); not the strength of our immune system (which depends on good mental and physical health, which in turn depends on going to the gym, watching and playing team sports, and living in a state of joy

and peace rather than a state of fear and anxiety); not our economic prosperity (which is necessary to providing for widows, orphans, and other vulnerable members of society); not our essential need for hugs and other wholesome human touch; not a functional medical system that responds equitably to the needs of all patients; not our *Charter* rights and freedoms, or the amazing benefits of living in a free society; and not the rule of law, which serves to protect citizens from government overreach.

### **Covidism's kernel of truth**

To capture people's minds and hearts, an ideology contains a kernel of truth. Covidism's kernel of truth is that people and governments should make reasonable efforts to protect seniors and other vulnerable individuals from a virus that will shorten their lives. Covidism corrupted this simple truth by insisting that it was the only truth that mattered, and that this truth alone needed to govern society, culture, politics, religion and law. The basic truth that we should love our neighbour by protecting our neighbour from harm was used as the pretext for creating irrational, ineffective and unscientific health orders that caused far more harm than good.

Like other ideologies, Covidism thrived on fear and depended on falsehoods. Covidism was based on Dr. Neil Ferguson's March 2020 prediction that Covid would be as deadly as the Spanish Flu of 1918, which killed *between 20 and 100 million people* (when world population was a quarter of what it was in 2020). The media and politicians never ceased to remind us, every hour of every day, that we should all live in fear. Yet the government's data, for anyone who

looked at it, showed that death rates in 2020 were in line with death rates in prior years. No persuasive evidence supported the idea that Covid was worse than the Asian Flu of 1957-58 or the Hong Kong Flu of 1968-69, and in fact Covid was less deadly than these two worldwide pandemics. For Canadians under 70, the tiny chance of being harmed or killed by Covid was on par with the chance of being harmed or killed when driving a car. For children, the chance of dying from Covid was next to zero, on par with the chance of dying from a lightning strike.

Ideologies eventually collapse under their contradictions, lies and lack of science. Unfortunately, radical ideologies can inflict incalculable damage on millions of people before they collapse and lose their grip. But there is hope: truth eventually prevails over falsehood.

One cannot fault judges for having formed their own media-based beliefs about Covid and lockdowns, before hearing the Justice Centre's constitutional challenges. Judges are human, and invariably have beliefs about many issues – including issues that are relevant in the cases they hear.

Rather, the problem lies in some judges clinging tenaciously to their pre-trial beliefs while refusing to take a hard look at the evidence before them. This failure to grapple with the evidence can be seen repeatedly in Canadian court rulings where judges do not provide clear or detailed reasons for finding the government's evidence to be more persuasive than evidence put forth by citizens asserting their *Charter* freedoms.

Court rulings need to be based on the evidence that was placed before the court, not on media reports. Yet some judgments contain assertions

that were not supported by evidence, and appear to be based on media reports and politicians' unproven but frequently repeated claims. Unfortunately, in so doing, some judges have lowered public respect for the administration of justice, reducing the trust and confidence Canadians have in their judicial system.

## **Repudiating parliamentary democracy**

The Covidians<sup>227</sup> used the state and its coercive powers to advance their ideology and promote fervent unity among Canadians. Under the ideology of Covidism, unaccountable decision-makers invoked “science” with divine reverence, unable to see that moral values cannot be derived from science. Parliamentary democracy was replaced by the authoritarian rule of “experts” who view human society as just another facet of the natural world that can be manipulated and controlled by the anointed ones who apply the scientific method.

Without input from elected federal and provincial representatives, authoritarian leaders made daily decisions for all Canadians. Parliamentary democracy was effectively suspended, as new laws that applied to the entire population were issued at news conferences, without legislative debate or even a vote. The superiority of the leaders' instincts and judgments was proclaimed by government-funded media and by the leaders themselves. Doctors, government health officials, politicians, lawyers, law societies, law professors, judges, and Crown prosecutors dismissed as irrelevant the *Charter* rights and freedoms of tens of millions of Canadians.

The chosen group (the victim majority) felt entitled to dominate other Canadians, with little or no restraint from law or morality.

From March 2020 onwards, the lockdown regime made great strides towards becoming what Mussolini described as fascism: “Everything in the State, nothing outside of the State, nothing against the State.”

## **Repudiating civil liberties to fight a war against the enemy**

Under the ideology of Covidism, every nook and cranny of society was forced to work together in spiritual union toward the same goal, overseen by the state. To wage war on Covid, the Covidians imposed war values on the economy and society. They forced everyone to participate in the futile quest to stop a virus from spreading, a quest which failed miserably as Covid went everywhere anyway. Backed by the medical, legal, academic, political and media establishments, the lockdown regime required all Canadians to “do their part” and give up their human rights and *Charter* freedoms to submit to the state's goals.

The Covidians were fixated on fighting an enemy: a virus that threatened a very small minority of the population.<sup>228</sup> The Covidians sought to eradicate classical liberalism and its respect for the rights and freedoms of each individual. Rather than allowing individuals to choose their own priorities and set their own goals for their lives, Covidians sought to mobilize everyone towards achieving a single objective: stopping Covid. In the minds of Covidians, their war against this virus justified removing citizens' rights and freedoms. From 2020 onward, the Covidians changed the practice of citizenship from enjoying constitutional rights and freedoms to participating in mass ceremonies of affirmation and conformity: masks, social distancing, compliance with absurd rules, and boasting publicly about being



injected. The Covidians reconfigured relations between the individual and the collectivity, so that an individual Canadian had no rights outside of what the state deemed to be the community interest.

The Covidians sought to mobilize society like an army, based on manufactured unifying myths like “we are all in this together.” The grossly exaggerated claims about the danger of Covid became the pretext for violating the freedoms and rights of Canadians. Torturing frail and lonely senior citizens in nursing homes by depriving them of the love, attention and care from family members is just one example of the cruelty Canadians condoned. Prior to 2020, Canadians would have objected to this kind of solitary confinement being imposed on rapists and child murderers.

## **A popular movement with popular support**

Covidism was a popular movement with popular support from every stratum of society. With public support, Covidism partially destroyed our parliamentary democracy. Covidism saw to it that legislative and executive power were combined together, such that unelected and unaccountable health officials could enact and proclaim laws that applied to the entire population.

Covidism was popular because it appealed to community, and promised to relieve the sense of doubt and alienation that many Canadians were experiencing, by providing people with a new sense of meaning and purpose. Covidism attempted to restore through the powerful state a sense of belonging to those lost in modern society. Covidism successfully appealed to Canadians’ emotions by use of ritual, carefully stage-managed ceremonies, and intensely charged

rhetoric. Millions of tax dollars were spent on advertising to proclaim “we’re all in this together” and “stop the spread.” Many Canadians enjoyed a warm feeling of belonging, the gratification of submerging oneself in the favoured and morally superior group, the sacrificing of one’s petty concerns for the group’s good, and the thrill of domination that comes from reporting on neighbours and denouncing them as morally inferior. The Covidians replaced reasoned debate with the immediate sensual experience of transformed politics. In the Covidian regime, truth consisted of whatever the state said might help to defeat the virus. The Covidians found meaning and authenticity in the collective enterprise of fighting Covid, and imposed a cult of unity that eroded boundaries between persons and state, and between public and private.

## **Beyond ideological rhetoric: Looking beneath the surface**

When defending the free society from totalitarianism (or its milder version, authoritarianism), the superficial beliefs of one particular ideology matter not. When ideologues turn the free citizens of a democracy into the slaves of a collectivist project directed by the state, it becomes irrelevant what the state’s particular goal or project might be. Tyranny is tyranny, whether inflicted on people in the name of advancing the master race, or in the name of building the workers’ paradise. There can be no doubt that Covidism is *radically different* from other ideologies, including communism, National Socialism, and various versions of fascism that were promoted and practiced in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. Forcing everyone to sacrifice their legitimate needs for some national crusade is the antithesis of

the free society, and a repudiation of the *Charter*, regardless of what ideology might be touted superficially as the justification. Hence the importance of understanding the common characteristics of fascism.

As the antithesis of fascism, the free and democratic society envisioned by the *Charter* is grounded in respect for every individual. Democracy readily accommodates the use of the democratic process to advance a good cause, which can include things like the rights and well-being of workers; the honour and prosperity of one's country; protecting the natural environment; etc. A free and democratic society moves towards fascism when a good cause becomes the pretext for expanding government power and using that power to force everyone to devote their lives to the grand project that is exalted by ideology. Fascism grows in strength and influence when a good cause is advanced fanatically by ideologues who seek to force all citizens to make that cause their highest (or their sole) priority.

## **The authoritarian personality**

In October 2022, the CBC posted a story<sup>229</sup> titled, *Who's drawn to fascism? Postwar study of authoritarianism makes a comeback*. The CBC referenced the popular 1950 book *The Authoritarian Personality*. The story lamented right-wing populism, neo-fascism and Donald Trump as examples of authoritarianism<sup>230</sup> around the world.

*The Authoritarian Personality* attempted to analyze the fascist's personality and determine what makes individuals susceptible to propaganda. The book relied on Freudian psychoanalysis and the belief that relationships between people and authority figures were key to the shaping of one's personality. The book's authors developed

scales to measure antisemitism, ethnocentrism, political-economic conservatism, and a 77-item “F-scale” to measure fascism. Participants in studies were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with statements like "obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn" and "the businessman and the manufacturer are much more important to society than the artist and the professor."

The CBC story also referenced the more nuanced book *Twilight of Democracy: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism* (2020) by Anne Applebaum.<sup>231</sup> Applebaum argues that some people on both the left and the right cannot tolerate complexity; they long for the one-party state, the single ruler, and the leadership cult. Applebaum argued that "... democracy requires a lot of its citizens. It requires that you be involved in politics, that you join parties, that you join civic organizations, that you vote. And for a lot of people, it's a difficult and exasperating, and even enervating form of politics." She argues that "democracies in history have almost all fallen and almost all been undermined, sooner or later, in predictable and repetitive ways."

According to Britannica,<sup>232</sup> authoritarianism in politics and government means “blind submission to authority and the repression of individual freedom of thought and action. Authoritarian regimes ... do not afford their citizens civil liberties or political rights. Power is concentrated in the hands of a single leader or a small elite, whose decisions are taken without regard for the will of the people.”

What is remarkable about this 2022 CBC story is its complete blindness to the uncompromising authoritarianism that had descended upon Canada in the form of Covidism. Governments openly admitted

that their lockdowns and mandatory vaccination<sup>233</sup> policies were intended to nudge, force or compel citizens to comply. The CBC saw authoritarianism amongst Trump supporters and amongst nationalist political parties in Europe, but not amongst Canadians who accepted without question the human rights violations which governments claimed were justified by “science.”

The CBC did not recognize authoritarianism in Canada, even when Canadians blindly and unquestioningly obeyed the edicts of unelected and unaccountable medical officers, to whom politicians happily abdicated responsibility.

Most Canadians embraced authoritarianism – many of them enthusiastically – by accepting as gospel truth whatever was peddled as “science” by government-appointed and government-funded “experts.” Most Canadians practiced meek and even cheerful compliance with ever-changing restrictions on our *Charter* freedoms. Many looked longingly to the coercive edicts of the God-state as to how they should live their daily lives.

Authoritarianism raised its ugly head in Canada when federal and provincial governments blatantly trampled on basic constitutional freedoms to associate, assemble, speak, worship, and decide for ourselves what medical treatments to accept or reject. If this is not authoritarianism, then what is? Trying to characterize this authoritarianism as “right-wing” or “left-wing” is a waste of time. Whatever its position on a political spectrum might be (if a political spectrum even exists, which is debatable), authoritarianism took over in Canada in 2020, and remains a powerful force today.

To the extent that “the authoritarian personality” is a legitimate psychological concept (and this is debatable), it appears that most Canadians have an authoritarian personality. Not that the CBC or other government-funded media would be capable of noticing this.

## **The worst discrimination in Canadian history?**

In the fall of 2021, Canada’s federal and provincial governments made it mandatory for Canadians to get injected, and imposed significant adverse consequences on citizens who refused.

At the time when these policies were imposed in the fall of 2021, there was zero evidence to support the claim that the Covid vaccine would stop Covid from spreading. Even the pharmaceutical companies had not stated that their product would stop transmission. If these corporations had said that their vaccine would stop the spread of Covid, their claim would have been discredited by Christmas of 2021 or earlier, because Covid spread quickly and easily in Israel and so many other countries with high vaccination rates. With the Covid vaccine failing to stop the Covid spread, there was no rational basis for forcing or pressuring any individual to get injected. Any benefit that might result from an injection would go only to the person receiving that injection, without any societal or community benefits. Mandatory vaccination policies were pure ideology and zero science, not just in hindsight but also based on what was known in 2021.

In 2021, Canadians who refused to get injected became second-class citizens, legally prohibited from participating in sports, watching their children play sports, seeing movies in theatres, eating in restaurants, visiting their elderly parents in nursing homes, holding the hand of

a dying parent, travelling abroad, travelling by plane or train within Canada, attending (or continuing to attend) university, going to the gym, and much more. Many Canadians were fired from their jobs (or suspended without pay, no real difference) and prevented from earning a living to support themselves and their families. The federal government, while incredibly “generous” in Covid-related spending programs that added tens of billions to the national debt, refused to pay EI benefits to Canadians pushed out of their jobs because they exercised their *Charter* right to bodily autonomy.

Since Canada’s founding, has any minority group (as per race, religion, language, or other personal characteristics) suffered this level of intense, vicious discrimination that governments inflicted on people who refused to get injected? Apart from the war-time internment of Japanese-Canadians<sup>234</sup> and other ethnic groups, no other minority in Canadian history has been subjected to the kind of government-sanctioned discrimination imposed on Canadians who refused the jab.

In contrast to older, long-established, national civil liberties organizations, the Justice Centre opposed mandatory vaccination policies as an unjustified violation of our *Charter* right to bodily autonomy. We opposed mandatory vaccination as an unfair, unjust, and utterly unscientific policy that harmed everyone.

Even those who did get injected (voluntarily or under duress) suffered the violation of their right to medical privacy, by being required to disclose personal and confidential medical information to total strangers on a daily basis.