



The Gathering Storm in the West

Description

CANADA: Canada is now governed by absurdism, and it is symptomatic of an ailing Western elite.

Liberal Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last week invoked martial law to arrest and financially destroy truckers on the charge that their largely peaceful protests are “dismantling the Canadian economy” that had already been dismantled for two years under some of the most draconian lockdowns in the world. The trucker “sect,” Trudeau added, is guilty of felonious “unacceptable views.” But his rhetoric still cannot square the circle of demonizing vital workers while conceding he cannot run his country without them.

He has invoked the Emergencies Act for the first time in the law’s 34-year history, even as the highly infectious Omicron variant wanes after spreading natural immunity and yet proving relatively mild in its effects. Trudeau has neither science nor good governance on his side, especially given how civil the protests have been. The truckers, who more or less work in solitary cabs, are better informed about the “science” and are themselves mostly vaccinated.

Whether by accident or intent, the truckers have now become iconic of far larger issues. Their resistance to government vaccination mandates transcends them. And so, they are playing the role of the proverbial straw that may break the back of a once compliant Canadian citizenry, burdened by over two years of masks, lockdowns, and vaccination mandates.

They are [Howard Beales](#) yelling, “I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore!” or the iconic Tunisian peddler Tarek el-Tayeb Mohamed Bouazizi whose self-immolation prompted the Arab Spring, or Tank Man who stood erect in Tiananmen as an oncoming tank finally swerved around him. The truckers are saying to the Canadian people, “Watch and we will kindly show you why you always privately suspected that this prime minister and his ilk were frauds.” As in the case of earlier exasperated rebels, we do not know the exact consequences that will follow, only that the leaders who targeted the dissidents will likely end up worse than their targets.

The North American public has endured almost daily nonsensical changes in “follow the science” state edicts, as well as vast asymmetries between those who profited and those who were hurt by the

government reactions to the pandemic. On the one hand, Trudeau threatens to use his state powers to ruin financially the protestors and their supporters. On the other hand, the prime minister brags that he participated in the Canadian versions of the BLM protests in summer 2020. Here in the United States, the combined BLM/antifa riots of summer 2020 caused the greatest property damage claims of any riot in U.S. history, around \$2 billion. The violence eventually led to over 35 deaths, the torching of a federal courthouse, police precinct, and historic Washington D.C. church, over 1,500 police injuries—and, mysteriously, very few indictments of the some 14,000 people arrested. Is Trudeau's point to stress that destroying things make protestors more authentically left-wing and thus exempt, while mostly peaceful protests lose deterrence and therefore can be crushed?

The North American Left justifies such asymmetry both in crude terms and in ideological gobbledygook. A Trudeau official called the truckers "Trump supporters," as if that label has any relevance other than to justify the government's violation of civil liberties. Does Trudeau think a "Trump supporter" necessarily polls worse than a "Trudeau supporter"? The foppish man who in his youth thought it cool to be photographed sporting blackface is quick to demonize a multiethnic and multiracial protest as "racist"?

Left-wing administrations in Toronto and Washington feel that the supposed higher social goals of the antifa and BLM violent protests (that purportedly advance their own political agendas) warrant exemptions of every sort. More than 1,000 U.S. healthcare workers went on record in 2020 justifying street protestors' flagrant violations of strict COVID-19 lockdowns, at the height of the pre-vaccination pandemic.

We were lectured that curbing any BLM protest might cause mental health problems. Should noncomplying truckers and their boosters try that ruse?

The asymmetric application of punishment depends solely on the degree to which any given violation aids or detracts from left-wing agendas. A postelection *Time* magazine [piece](#) by Molly Ball gave the game away. She bragged how CEOs and plutocrats conspired to modulate the pulse of the Antifa/BLM violence to ensure calm for Joe Biden's election—and more or less summed up the larger progressive elite impulse ("There was a conspiracy unfolding behind the scenes, one that both curtailed the protests and coordinated the resistance from CEOs. Both surprises were the result of an informal alliance between left-wing activists and business titans.")

COVID accentuated a larger and growing cultural, political, social, and economic split in the West. Partly, the fissures were brought on by the displacements of globalization. Partly they appeared with the final dominance of a huge class of credentialed government apparatchiks. And partly the split derives from the paradox of governments inviting millions of non-Western immigrants into Europe and North America from impoverished, and dystopian societies. Their inequality upon arrival, supposedly predicated on race rather than class, then becomes political nourishment for progressive redistributive agendas that otherwise had little political support among their citizen populations.

Again, the truckers symbolize this gap, in an age when elites do not care much for class divides, only racial distinctions as a way of demonizing the less well-off.

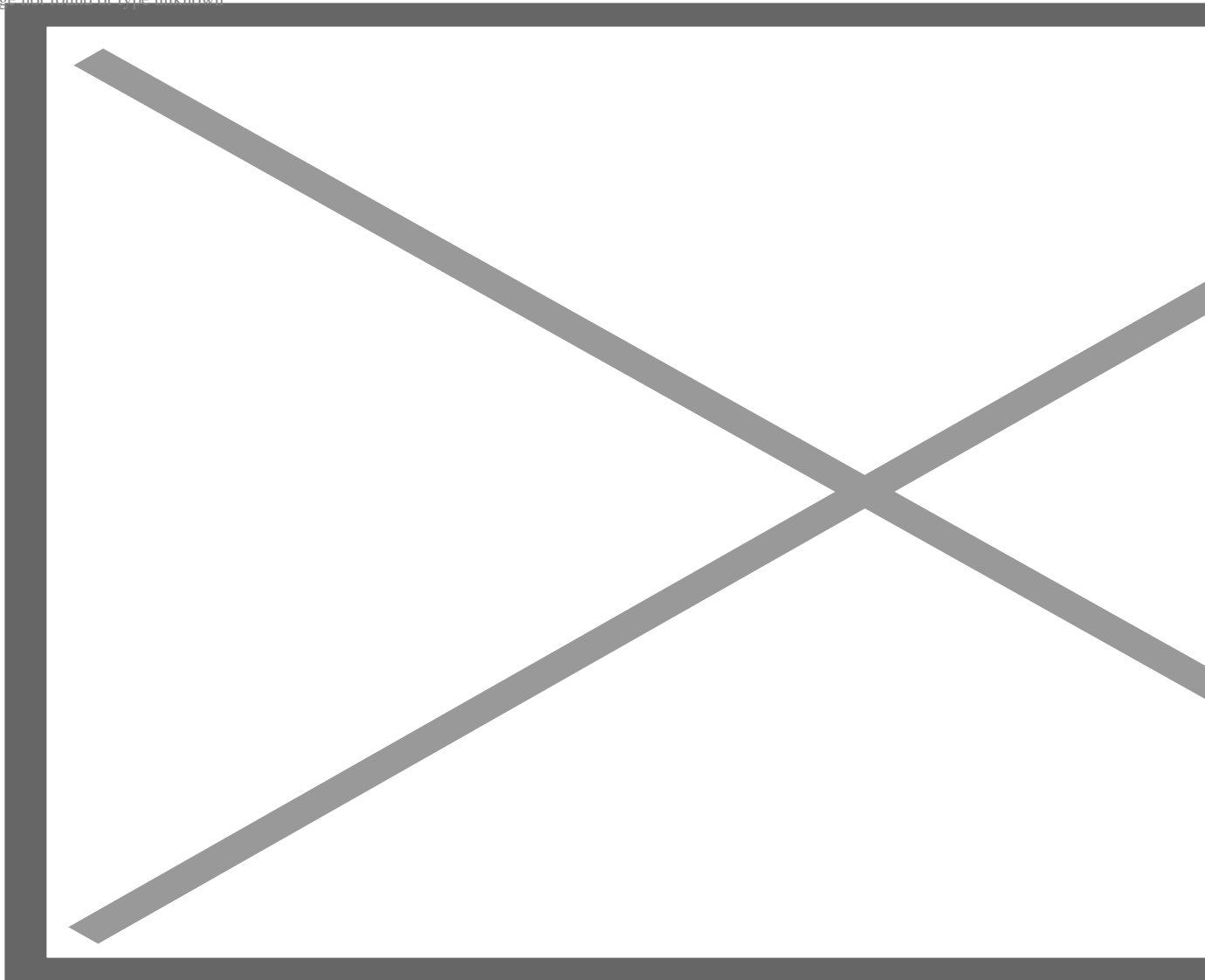
After all, those who smear the truckers are mostly of the zoom and laptop class. Their chief agendas during the last two years of crisis were sheltering in place to avoid contact with anyone, while zooming

and skyping to maintain and boost their already generous incomes. Few like Trudeau ever wondered how the elite remained fully employed, but rarely present at work—much less why millions of others were expected to scoff at the virus and come physically to work, while their incomes often dived or ended due to government lockdown policies.

The muscular classes enjoyed no such exemptions. Their kids went to public schools that were shut down or required masks. Parents lost incomes as they stayed home to watch children that tenured teachers would not teach. Truckers had no such margin of safety or security, but were out among the public delivering food, fuel, clothing, and the appurtenances of the Western comfortable lifestyle. In our current inflationary spiral, they earned a bit more, while inflation made them poorer, while those they served earned far more.

The truckers remind Western audiences that modern progressivism equates muscular labor and hourly wage compensation with a sort of Neanderthalism. That is, the unfortunate clingers supposedly never quite understood globalization, much less how an 8-billion-person market rewards those who type on keyboards and, in relative terms, punishes the supposedly less aware who physically deliver, fix, make, and repair things.

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DAVE CHAN via Getty Images

We can almost reduce the divide to the embarrassing optics of a pouty-face pajama-boy prime minister, with a pompadour coiffure, issuing threats to calm, but beefy and calloused workers. Each time Trudeau speaks to his nation, the visual message is that any of the truckers could do a better job than he in both setting and explaining policy, while he would become a helpless weeping child if placed behind the wheel of a big rig.

Somehow the elite class extrapolates moral worth from its rigged superiority in financial compensation. And given its economic and cultural leverage—social media, entertainment, academia, professional sports, the corporate boardroom, Wall Street—it has institutionalized the idea that, in circular fashion, the more the credentialed and better compensated, the more the elite *deserve* even more influence on how societies should run in a manner that mostly benefits themselves.

Paradoxes arise constantly. Government grandees are caught without masks at tony restaurants. Climate change demagogues fly private jets. Pro-teacher union, anti-charter and anti-home school

zealots ensure their children stay in private schools. The gated estate crowd ridicule the fossilized idea of a border wall. Professional bureaucrats routinely lie under oath to Congress and to federal investigators without any consequences whatsoever—as John Brennan, James Clapper, Anthony Fauci, and Andrew McCabe can attest.

To explain California Governor Gavin Newsom sporting about without a mask at elite gatherings, we are supposed to assume that his class deserves exemption from the ramifications of its ideology—in order to travel faster, sleep better, have a larger support network, and relax in deservedly larger homes and gardens—all so that they could better save us chumps and clueless dregs from ourselves.

Our elites like Trudeau and Newsom seem angry they are unfairly underappreciated by their clueless beneficiaries. The latter supposedly never appreciate the needed remedies for climate change, the thought cleansing required to eliminate systemic racism, and the mind reprogramming demanded for true diversity, equity, and inclusion thinking.

Instead, the losers cling to unwoke and incorrect notions that class, not race, remains the real postmodern divide, that printing money does not make us richer, that a nation without a border is an amorphous nothing, that affordable gasoline and diesel fuel (not wind and solar) for now keep the West alive, that a fetus is alive at conception, that biology largely determines gender, that assimilation and integration are the only cures for tribalism, and that the law reflects a natural innate morality, and should not be applied on the basis of perceived victims manipulated by it, or the supposed victimizers manipulating it.

That wound of an imperious but counterfeit elite has supplicated too long beneath a smooth scab. And abruptly, the truckers at least tore some of it off.

What is now following is amplification and clarification of the Western divide. We the public are at the global theater. And we are watching a tragicomedy. On stage, a petulant cast of clueless Justin Trudeaus and bumbling Joe Bidens simply cannot fathom why few anymore are listening to them. More and more North Americans are perplexed why anyone would wish to follow such unimpressive mental and physical figures along with all the toxic hypocrisies they embody and weaponize.

By Victor Davis Hanson

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