

Social Justice and the Emergence of Covid Tyranny

by Michael Rectenwald

Signs of incipient totalitarianism impulses have been evident since the rise of political correctness.¹ Yet, warnings from those who saw the character of contemporary “social justice” went largely unheeded. Nevertheless, even before degenerating into “wokeness,” social justice bore the seeds of civilizational decline and the simultaneous rise of social and political tyranny. The weaponization of mostly feigned fragility by snowflake totalitarians has been marshaled to abrogate the rights of those deemed offensive, injurious, and even “[dangerous](#).” It also has evinced “paralogistic discourse,” or “[d]iscourse that is out of touch with reality, involving illogical, fallacious, unwarranted premises and conclusions.”² Such thinking is characteristic of societal hysteria.³ This weaponization escalated, germinating “cancel culture,” the buds from which neo-Stalinist purges have since blossomed.

As I was first to point out, social justice amounts to “practical postmodernism.”⁴ The relativism, subjectivism, and antiobjectivity of postmodern theory, as well as the priority it places on language, have been harnessed by social justice activists and their followers and put to political ends. Social justice ideology claims that “narratives,” “my truth,” and language trump or produce reality. In terms of transgender ideology, this means that [declaring](#) one’s gender, or mere (re)naming, supersedes and cancels biology. In terms of critical race theory and the Black Lives Matter movement, it means that personal stories of oppression overwrite evidence, statistics, and the arc of history. Given that appeals to objective criteria are banished, when backed by the requisite power, such claims are necessarily authoritarian. Without objective criteria, there is no court of appeal other than power, and thus such “truths” are deemed incontrovertible.⁵ The [legal ramifications](#) of practical postmodernism have been nothing less than astonishing.

The policies of so-called diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) accelerated the already prevalent upward movement of unqualified persons, those who have achieved important positions thanks to affirmative action and adherence to political ideology. DEI (or DIE) metastasized throughout the culture at large, with signs of the upward mobility of the unqualified seen in [government](#), [academia](#), and the corporate world. On Twitter, the accounts of unremarkable activists and otherwise unaccomplished leftists are granted the official blue checkmark of authority and significance.

Historically, the upward movement of the unqualified has been a harbinger of increasing authoritarianism; the unqualified favor authoritarianism, which protects their unearned status, and authoritarianism selects the unqualified, who become avid loyalists of the authoritarian regime.⁶ Thus, the upward movement of the unqualified should be taken as a telltale sign.

The covid regime has extended and deepened the epistemic crisis inaugurated by postmodernism and practical postmodernism. Paralogistic discourse has now penetrated “the science,” which has devolved into a series of non sequiturs backed by force. Science has become postmodern, proving the claim of the sociologist of science Bruno Latour—in the postmodern world, scientific facts are merely socially constructed statements that become “too costly” to overthrow.⁷ Science is now a power gambit that relies on enrolling “allies” in a process of “black boxing” claims. Facts are merely “black boxes” that become resistant to opening. Such resistance comes from the number and strength of other facts and allies—other scientists, businesspeople, the media, etc.—that the scientists can link to their own claims, making for black boxes that become too difficult to open. The strength of a fact is the result of the social network that is created in the process of staking a claim.⁸

The covid regime is postmodern “science in action,” to quote Latour. It has never been about legitimate science or public health. Otherwise, known remedies for covid-19 and the dangers of the vaccines would never have been suppressed.

Wokeness set the stage for full-blown covid tyranny—the lockdowns, the masking, and now the demonization of the unvaccinated and the institution of the vaccine passport. The weaponization of fragility by the snowflake totalitarians has been extended and amplified by the covid regime, which construes all who oppose it as “[domestic violent extremists](#).” The unvaccinated are the new “dangerous persons,” reprobates who should be locked down, quarantined, and, according to some, [shot](#).

The woke and covid have proven to be the same people, and the two concerns have converged at every turn. For example, the covid regime came to the defense of the Black Lives Matter movement when over [twelve hundred health officials signed an open letter](#) defending BLM protests, claiming that since, like

covid, white supremacy poses a great danger to public health, BLM protests should continue unmolested. As unwitting foot soldiers of Big Pharma and agents of the state, Antifa “members” have [harassed and shot antivaccine protesters](#). Meanwhile, the American Civil Liberties Union, now fully [woke](#), has been [silent](#) about cancel culture and the civil liberties of nonleftists. Recently, the organization [argued](#) that “far from compromising civil liberties, vaccine mandates actually *further* civil liberties” (emphasis in original). So much for the meaning of “civil liberties” and the ACLU’s defense of [bodily autonomy](#). Like many corporations and trade associations, the National Football League is also [woke](#). The organization requires its players to be vaccinated or otherwise isolated and penalized. It [recently canceled](#) the national anthem performance of Grammy Award winner Victory Boyd for her refusal, on religious grounds, of covid vaccines, despite the fact that the singer would have been hundreds of yards from anyone on the field. The list of woke-covid connections could go on and on.

Covid totalitarianism involves the postmodern inversion of reality and morality. The vaccinated now need to be [protected from the unvaccinated](#), even though vaccine was supposed to provide that protection. It is now “moral” to demand that others take injections against their will and “immoral” to resist such demands.

The covid regime involves practical postmodern science. “The science” is whatever the authorities claim is true, and all other scientific inquiry is banned in advance. Those engaged in open scientific inquiry and debate are ridiculed and dismissed a priori, and their reputations destroyed.

Like the assembly of postmodern theorists, the covid regime is a convention of charlatans. Lord Fauci makes declarations ex cathedra, despite their contradiction of accepted epidemiological standards and his own earlier statements, while the medical establishment and the media go along for the

ride.

The covid regime is a consensus of postmodern hysterics. The compliant observe superstitious rituals and direct their outrage at the unvaccinated rather than at the authorities responsible for their madness.

All of this adds up to the continual elimination of individual rights and the growing power of a delusional bureaucratic state.

Only a post-postmodern turn can bring about the overthrow of covid totalitarianism. The tide must turn against the practical postmodern consensus, leading to a reinstatement of the competent over the promotion of the unqualified, the reestablishment of legitimate science, a renewed regard for the value of truth, and the subsequent elimination of authoritarianism from the public sphere. In short, it will require the complete reconstruction of the social order.

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