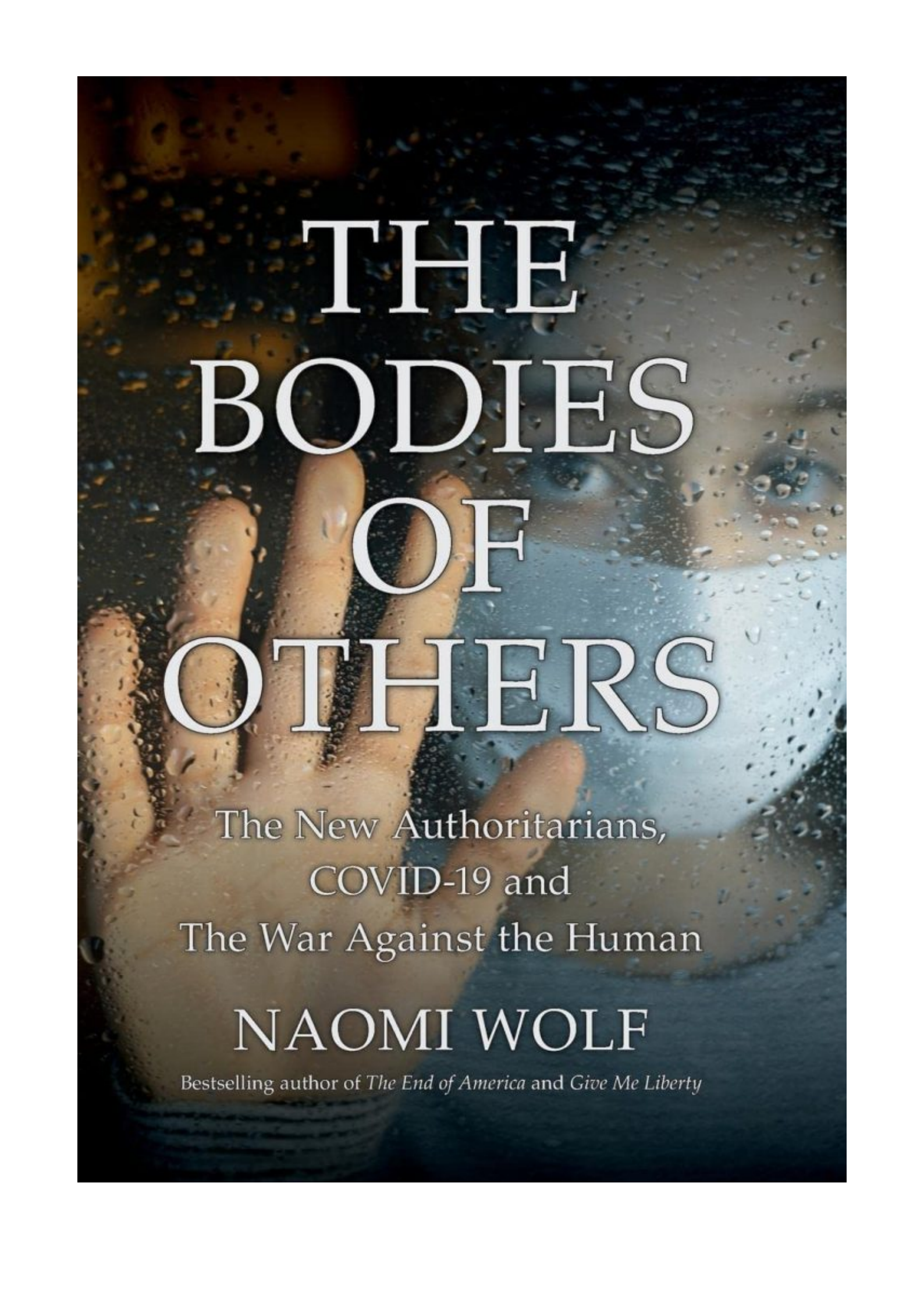


The Book of Our Time

Dr. Naomi Wolf delivers the definitive account of the world-scale deceptions, treacheries, follies, and falsehoods of the COVID era.

A close-up photograph of a hand wearing a white nitrile glove, touching a dark, condensation-covered surface. The background is blurred, showing a person's face in profile, also covered in condensation. The overall mood is somber and evocative.

THE BODIES OF OTHERS

The New Authoritarians,
COVID-19 and
The War Against the Human

NAOMI WOLF

Bestselling author of *The End of America* and *Give Me Liberty*

by Bruce Bawer

To most of us, it wasn't clear just how serious a threat to our freedoms was posed by our international political, media, corporate, and academic elites until the advent of Donald Trump, whom those elites all instantly recognized as a sincere champion of American freedom and dominance, and thus as a serious threat to *them*. Faced with the Trump challenge, the elites took off their gloves – and, to a degree, their masks, making it obvious that they hate the Constitution, that they view patriots as “deplorables,” that they're using issues like climate and gender as cynical mechanisms of social control, and that they plan a “great reset” that will drag us all (screaming and kicking, if necessary) into a feudal “liberal world order” in which we'll be the subjects of their “global technocracy.”

By the time COVID came along, then, we already had – well, a great many of us had – the measure of these elites. Yet when they told us we'd be in terrible peril if we didn't obey their draconian mandates – mandates formulated not by legislators on the basis of publicly available data but by unelected health bureaucrats who didn't deign to share their reasoning (if any) – all but a relative few of us were reflexively compliant. Why? We knew we could no longer trust the FBI or CIA or NSA; why did we think we could trust the FDA or WHO or CDC? (Or, above all, the WEF, whose chillingly Nazi-like leader, Klaus Schwab, many of us only became acquainted with during the COVID era?) Why did we agree so readily to stay home, shutter our businesses, wear masks, and take brand-new, DNA-altering injections? Why didn't we reflect more fully on the long-term impact of a large-scale economic standstill, of closed churches, restaurants, and theaters, of “distanced learning”? Why didn't we balk at the idea of welcoming newborn babies into a world of covered faces and of sending our loved ones off into eternity without proper funerals? Why didn't we pay more heed to the dissident voices – among them the scientists

who sounded alarms about the vaccines and the psychologists who warned repeatedly of the lasting emotional damage that we were courting?

Why, in short, didn't we react more like – well, more like Americans – to the unconstitutional restrictions on our freedoms, to the ever-changing rules about masking and vaccines and travel, and to the repeated demonstrations that there was one set of rules for them and another for us (thus intensifying the suspicion that the real motive for this liberty-crushing power grab was totally unrelated to the Chinese virus)? One reason is that, across the Western world, not just our elites but also many of our fellow citizens came down on dissenters like a ton of bricks. The Wuhan lab theory was racist, xenophobic; concerns about vaccine safety or mask efficacy were conspiracy theories, meriting expulsion from the online public square. So most of us kept quiet and obeyed.

And then there was Naomi Wolf.

Who is Naomi Wolf? A longtime leftist, she leapt into the front ranks of third-wave feminism with her 1991 book *The Beauty Myth*. She supported Occupy Wall Street, served as an adviser to Al Gore's presidential campaign, and contributed regularly to left-wing organs like *The Guardian* and *The Nation*. Yet through it all she was always a leftist with a difference: although dedicated to a set of principles, including individual liberty, that in her estimation put her on the left side of the political spectrum, she was never for a moment a mindless follower of any leader or a captive of anyone's ideology; indeed, on various occasions throughout her career, she managed to ruffle progressives' feathers because her research and her reflection led her to places that made them feel uneasy.

All this came to a head during lockdown. Many of the people who were in charge of imposing the new commandments on the formerly free world were old friends and allies of hers,

acting in the name of that globalist desideratum, the “liberal world order” – which, according to the more candid specimens of their PR, will make us all free by liberating us from our guns, cars, and other possessions. But Wolf knew totalitarianism when she saw it – and, to her immense and everlasting credit, she didn’t hesitate to call it as she saw it, forever alienating old chums by going on Steve Bannon’s podcast and Tucker Carlson’s TV show to denounce the whole miserable shebang.

But that’s not all. Like any good journalist – a breed increasingly rare these days, and all but invisible when it came to reporting responsibly on the COVID mandates – Wolf questioned everything, looked into everything, dug and dug and pestered and probed until she was satisfied she had the truth. The result of her bravura efforts is the magnificent, powerful, and immensely important new book *The Bodies of Others: The New Authoritarians, COVID-19 and the War against the Human*, in which she boldly pulls back the curtain on the arrogance, deceit, condescension, sloppiness, and (her own word) pure evil manifested by the malicious, mendacious masters of lockdown. For example, when Wolf took a deep dive into the data on COVID deaths that was invariably reported as gospel by the mainstream media, she discovered that despite the ubiquitous “follow the science” sloganeering, the data itself was unverifiable, unsourced, unsystematic. If there’d been any responsible-minded science writers left at places like the *New York Times* and CNN, they’d have made this discovery long before Wolf did and exposed the utter chaos behind the numbers. “But no one anywhere,” she writes, “was doing any such reporting.”

Instead, the “trusted” media served up an endless litany of COVID lies. While soft-pedaling the thousands of nursing-home deaths caused by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, an ideological ally whom they painted as a hero, they made up horror stories about deaths in South Dakota to discredit

Governor Kristi Noem's non-authoritarian approach to the pandemic. ("Journalism had changed," writes Wolf. "It was impossible to get corrections.") Similarly, following the lead of Anthony Fauci and company, they smeared the distinguished scientists whose Great Barrington Declaration had questioned the need for Fauci's severe dictats. Wolf found that even though most of those around her were robotically parroting the party line ("My friends and loved ones in the blue cities," she writes, "were falling into a group consciousness that I could not fathom"), and despite the worldwide vilification to which she was subjected for her heterodoxy, there were experts aplenty who disagreed with the official sages about almost every aspect of the lockdown and who tried, with little or no success, to get a fair hearing in the bought-and-paid-for media.

A key anecdote in Wolf's book takes us back to 2015 – specifically, to a dinner party at a New York mansion where she rubbed shoulders and sipped wine with international investors and hedge-fund managers. That evening, the dinner guests were all furious at the Greek citizens who'd just voted down austerity measures that would've wiped out their (the Greeks') life savings. But these Manhattanite masters of the universe were indifferent to the well-being of such peons, whom they described as "fools." A young woman at the dinner – a recent Ivy League graduate who'd grown up in the "global South" – assured Wolf in all seriousness that "the ordinary people of any given country don't have the skills to make the right economic decisions for themselves or their nations. We should be deciding for them."

That's just how smoothly and easily this new global ruling class dismisses the concept of government of the people, by the people, for the people. Every one of them, Wolf is quick to underscore, was friendly, charming, clubbable; none of them bore the remotest resemblance to, say, that ultimate evil cinematic banker, Mr. Potter in *It's a Wonderful Life*, or to

any mustache-twirling pop-culture villain; but they were villains nonetheless, viewing poor and middle-class strangers in faraway Athens and Piraeus and Thessaloniki (over whom they exercised a chilling impersonal power) with “extraordinary cruelty and contempt.” Wolf’s point here is that a few years later, when COVID hit, these people and many others like them in New York and London and Frankfurt still wielded extraordinary economic power – and, as in the case of the Greek economic crisis, they immediately worked out what approach to the pandemic would be most advantageous for them and for their preferred world order, without the slightest regard to the impact it might have on the freedom and welfare (and, for that matter, the chances of survival) of lesser beings. What made this new situation different from the one in Greece was that this time the public didn’t get to vote.

These elites, then, had been laying the groundwork for their lockdown tyranny for a long time. With the ultimate goal of weakening the self-governing power of ordinary citizens in representative democracies, they’d “shamed well-intentioned people, especially in the West, for being in the least bit proud of or loyal to their own nation-state or national culture.” It’s clear why the European Union is one of their proudest accomplishments: as many Brexiteers understood all too well, the EU poses an existential threat to the nation-state, and thus to post-Enlightenment representative government. (“I was shocked,” Wolf writes, recalling a period when she was practicing journalism in Europe, “to realize that very few continental Europeans, including journalists, actually understood how EU governance worked.”)

Other such achievements include Biden’s open-border policy and the increasing extension of voting rights to non-citizens, both of which, notes Wolf, are “a tyrant’s dream” because they “dilute the power of citizens.” So, in the same way, do the UN, WEF, WHO, and the many other international organizations that took center stage – and that accumulated an unprecedented

amount of power – during the lockdown, helping the elites to carry out their project of replacing “five hundred years of ever-developing capitalism...with a bleak, coercive, Marxist-style crony oligarchy” that stole “billions of dollars in value” from “the middle and working class people of the West.” And these thieves, these thugs, underscores Wolf, are people she knows. They’re immensely civilized, highly sociable, thoroughly charming. But in imposing their imperious decrees on us, they infantilized us. And they shoved a stick into the spokes of a wildly successful – but exceedingly delicate – economic system that had been in place, and developing organically, for centuries.

In reflecting on the consequences of the lockdown measures to which most of us so speedily acquiesced, Wolf tells us things of which you or I may have a vague apprehension but that we may not have thought about as deeply and extensively as she has. She writes at length and with great sensitivity and beauty, for instance, about the real meaning of going to school, about why “distanced learning” was therefore a farce and the masking of children in the presence of their friends an act of sheer cruelty, and why the lockdown represented a disruption in the transmission of precious childhood traditions that went back centuries. As for the question of why we, the citizens of liberal democracies, let the whole nightmare happen, Wolf answers that, too. Quite simply, we let it happen because we grew up in a time of relative freedom, peace, order, and prosperity. We certainly didn’t think that all of our political leaders were saints, but neither could we easily imagine that some of them – even those who seem “nice” (as opposed to that boisterous, vulgar Donald Trump) – might actually be on a par with some of the great despots of history. It didn’t occur to us that, in order to accomplish their own insatiable drive for power and wealth, they would carry out what Wolf quite properly calls a “war against Western humanism.”

In the same way, while paying half-attention to news commentators over the years, we might have heard whispers to the effect that leading Western politicians had been bought off by China and big business and tech CEOs – but we hadn't pondered seriously enough, perhaps, the implications of that fact. (How often, come to think of it, did we give any thought to George Washington's warning about foreign entanglements or Eisenhower's admonition about the military-industrial complex?) No surprise, therefore, that most of us were left speechless when peremptory government actions wiped out billions of dollars' worth of small businesses while giving major tech firms and other conglomerates record-breaking profits.

There is much more of value in Wolf's magnificent book. I won't share more. Buy it. Read it. It is a courageous piece of work by a renegade leftist who doesn't shrink from the difficult job of documenting the perfidy of the globalist elites during this most recent – and unutterably tragic – chapter in the history of the West. Wolf is the current incarnation of those leftists of another era who – while most of their comrades responded with meek acquiescence to Stalin's show trials, the Holodomor, the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, and other outrages – chose to stand up, walk away, and speak up.

In the years just before the lockdown, progressives around the world bowed down to globalist dogma and climate-change orthodoxy every bit as enthusiastically as their forebears had exalted Stalin. And when COVID came along, they remained docile, pliantly singing from the same hymn sheet about lockdown, masks, and vaccinations.

But not Wolf.

In the face of international obloquy, she stood up for the truth. For this, she merits our deepest respect, and her book – which cannot be seen as anything less than the definitive account of the world-scale deceptions, treacheries, follies,

and falsities of the COVID era – belongs on the bookshelf in the company of titles like *1984* and *Darkness at Noon* and *Witness*. It deserves to be read by everyone, everywhere, and will deserve to be read for a very long time – unless, of course, our globalist elites and their censors have their iniquitous way.

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