

# Propaganda Trudeau Style

The WEF's "Young Leaders Program". The Truckers Freedom Convoy

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*"What do you do with someone with an allergy? What do you do with someone who's immunocompromised, or someone who for religious reasons...or deep convictions, decided that no, they're not going to get a vaccine? We're not a country that makes vaccination mandatory."~ Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Brandon Gonez Show, May 9, 2021*

In 1928, Sigmund Freud's nephew Edward Bernays published a book titled [Propaganda](#). Bernays emphasized in *Propaganda* that "The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in a democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country" [1].

Bernays laid out a number of strategies when employing propaganda to achieve desired political objectives. We can look at these strategies as a way to reflect on the recent media propaganda about the truckers' freedom convoy in Canada. The convoy became a thorn in the side of powerful establishment, elite interests, expressed especially in statements and actions of the Trudeau Liberals. The prime minister, numbers of cabinet ministers, and the legacy media got the convoy in their crosshairs. In 2022, politicians and the media gave Canadians a lesson on the real limits of democracy in Canada.

## 1) If you manipulate the leader of a group, the people will follow

Bernays states "If you can influence leaders...you automatically influence the group which they sway." [2] At the time the freedom convoy protests were unfolding in Ottawa, there were news reports about powerful people influencing Justin Trudeau and other members of the Liberal caucus. A *National Post* headline on February 2, 2022, declared "[Chrystia Freeland's side-gig with WEF is endangering Canadian democracy](#)." [3] Current Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland became a Rhodes Scholar in 1993. In the mid-90s, she began her career as freelance journalist in the [Ukraine](#) [4] working for the *Financial Times*. For more than a decade, Freeland has been part of the elite who gather

for meetings of the World Economic Forum.

Reporter Rupa Subramanya described how “The World Economic Forum (WEF), which has met at the Swiss ski resort of Davos every year since its creation in 1971 by German academic and entrepreneur Klaus Schwab, was forced to convert its annual schmoozefest into a virtual event this year due to COVID-19. Of note on the main agenda was a “stakeholder capitalism” panel, which included Canada’s Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, Chrystia Freeland.

The former-journalist-turned-politician has been a fixture at the WEF for years. Rubbing shoulders at Davos with the world’s rich, famous and powerful was one of the inspirations for her 2012 book, *Plutocrats: The Rise of the New Global Super-Rich and the Fall of Everyone Else.* Is the WEF part of an *invisible government*, among other key influencers, shaping Canadian federal policies?

The *National Post* article noted since 2019 Freeland has sat on the WEF Board of Trustees. Another Canadian, former governor of the Bank of Canada Mark Carney, also sits on the WEF Board of Trustees. As well, former United States vice-president Al Gore, co-founder of the Carlyle Group (USA) David Rubenstein, Chief Executive Officer of Nestlé, Mark Schneider and cellist Yo-Yo Ma, among the group of [31 trustees](#) chaired by Klaus Schwab. [5]

Being on the WEF Board of Trustees is not a token gesture meant simply to embroider someone’s resume. According to the WEF, the board of trustees “act as guardians of its mission and values” and are its “highest-level governance body.”

Could being a “guardian” of the WEF’s mission and values put Canada’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in a conflict of interest? Are there Canadian traditions and values, such as the right to own private property, that are in conflict with the mission of the WEF? The WEF has posted at least one ad depicting “The World in 2030: [You’ll own nothing and you’ll be happy.](#)” [6] 2030 is just seven and a half years away. What does owning nothing and being happy mean for individuals who own homes, vacation homes, commercial property vehicles, boats and more?

[Justin Trudeau](#) is a graduate of the WEF Young Global Leaders program. [7] As the WEF holds strong positions on global policy, its underreported influence on the Trudeau Liberal caucus should be of concern to Canadians. In 2017, Klaus Schwab boasted at the Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard-John F. Kennedy School of Government about WEF influence on nation states. [Said Schwab](#),

“We penetrate the cabinets. I was at a reception for Prime Minister Trudeau and I know that half this (Canadian) cabinet, or even more than half of his cabinet, are actually Young Global Leaders of the World Economic Forum. It’s true in Argentina, it’s true in France—now with the President, who is a young global leader.” [8]

In addition to Justin Trudeau and Chrystia Freeland, there are others in the [Trudeau cabinet](#) who are either graduates of the Young Global Leader WEF program, and/or have attended Davos meetings. [9] These include:

- Marie-Claude Bibeau (2015-present, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food)
- Randy Boissonnault, (2015-present, Minister of Tourism, Associate Minister of Finance)
- Jim “James” Carr (2015-present, former Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of

International Trade Diversification, and current Chair of Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security)

- François-Philippe Champagne (2015-present, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry)
- Sean Fraser (2015-present, Minister of Immigration)
- Karina Gould (2015-present, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development)
- Patty Hajdu (2015-present - former Minister of Health, Minister of Indigenous Services)
- Ahmed Hussen (2015-present, Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion)
- Helena Jaczek (2019-present, Minister of Community and Social Services)
- Mélanie Joly (2015-present, Minister of Foreign Affairs)
- Mary Ng (2017-present, Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development)
- Ginette Petitpas Taylor (2015-present, Minister of Official Languages).

In a 39-member cabinet, at least 14 ministers around the table have WEF connections. A block of the cabinet, headed by Trudeau, embracing the mission and values of the WEF, can plausibly try to achieve the WEF mission in federal decisions. In addition, there are former cabinet ministers and deputy ministers who have WEF connections.

- Michael Sabia was appointed Deputy Finance Minister in 2020.
- Navdeep Bains (2004-2021, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Registrar General of Canada)
- Scott Brison (1997-2019, former Treasury Board President)
- Ralph Goodale, (1974-79, 1993-2019, current Canadian High Commissioner to the UK, former Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness)
- John Manley (1988-2004, former Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Foreign Affairs)
- Maryam Monsef (2015-2021, former Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Minister of Rural Economic Development)
- Bill Morneau (2015-2020, former Minister of Finance).

As Klaus Schwab pointed out, 19 members of the Trudeau cabinet in 2017 had WEF connections. Other persons of influence in Canadian politics with WEF connections include:

- Ailish Campbell (Ambassador of Canada to the European Union)
- Jean Charest, (former Premier of Quebec from 2003-2012, and current leadership candidate for the Conservative Party of Canada)
- Elissa Golberg, (Assistant Deputy Minister for Strategic Policy, Global Affairs Canada - 2017-2021, and current Ambassador of Canada to Italy)
- Renée Maria Tremblay (Senior Counsel, Supreme Court of Canada).

Schwab and the WEF have broadcast the pandemic as a window of opportunity for a “Great Reset” under which the global economy would be *built back better*. Justin Trudeau participated in a virtual press conference with the [UN on September 29, 2020](#) telling how Canadian pandemic policy was part of an economic “reset.” [10]

*The Great Reset* is part of what the WEF envisions as catalyst for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The Trudeau Liberals have an agreement with the NDP to keep the government in power until 2025. NDP leader, [Jagmeet Singh](#), is also a WEF Young Global Leader graduate. [11]

## 2) Words are powerful, and the key to influencing group emotions is through the clever use of language

Edward Bernays advises that effective propaganda employs key words and phrases as emotional drivers to shift opinions of the masses to adhere to the agenda of those in charge.

On March 31, 2021, Justin Trudeau lauded Canadian truckers as heroes of the pandemic. He [tweeted](#): “While many of us are working from home, there are others who aren’t able to do that - like truck drivers who are working day and night to make sure our shelves are stocked. So when you can, please #ThankATrucker for everything they’re doing and help them however you can.” [12]

In the past, Justin Trudeau has drawn on classic liberal values of tolerance and inclusion to frame discussion of an event that resulted in deaths in America. The CBC’s Peter Mansbridge asked Trudeau for his response to the April 15th Boston Marathon attacks that killed three people and left 265 injured. Trudeau said he would offer the Americans material support

“and...we have to look at the root causes....there is no question that this happened because there is someone who feels completely excluded....At war with a society. And our approach has to be, where do those tensions come from? ....But we also need to make sure that as we go forward, that [we don’t emphasize a culture of fear and mistrust. Because that ends up marginalizing](#) even further those who already are feeling like they are enemies of society.”

In response to Trudeau’s statement, Prime Minister Stephen Harper slammed Trudeau saying “Don’t sit around trying to rationalize it.” [13]

Earlier during the pandemic, it was the tolerant, understanding, Trudeau on display. On May 9, 2021, on the [Brandon Genez Show](#), the prime minister addressed the matter of mRNA vaccine hesitancy saying,

“What do you do with someone with an allergy? What do you do with someone who’s immunocompromised, or someone who for religious reasons...or deep convictions, decided that no, they’re not going to get a vaccine? We’re not a country that makes vaccination mandatory.” [14]

Canadians needed to be compassionate, to empathize with those who were hesitant in stepping forward and put an experimental vaccine in their body that hadn’t gone through standard trials. There was no plan to require mandatory vaccination.

There was a solid basis for questioning the rationale behind any plans for mass vaccination of the mRNA vaccines. On August 6, 2021, CDC Director [Rochelle Walensky](#) told Wolf Blitzer on CNN that the Covid-19 vaccines did not stop or reduce transmission, or prevent infection. [15] Why vaccinate a whole population with a non-sterilizing vaccine that didn’t prevent transmission or prevent infection against a disease? (As I write this the triple-vaxxed prime

minister has gone into isolation after [testing positive for Covid-19 a second time](#)). [16] Especially, when the infection fatality rate was in the zone of the seasonal flu - where at least [99.75% survived infection](#). And those most at risk were obese or had multiple comorbidities. [17]

But during the federal election campaign in late summer 2021, the prime minister did a 180-degree reversal. Trudeau's Liberals had been polling behind the Conservatives. Between August 24 and September 9th, the [Conservatives were ahead of the Liberals in 54 polls](#) - with as much as a 7.9% lead on August 30 - and Trudeau's party ahead in just 10 polls. [18] So, on August 30, 2021, at a campaign stop in Sudbury, Ontario, Justin Trudeau told a crowd "The folks out there, [the anti-vaxxers, they're wrong](#).... They are putting at risk their own kids, and they're putting at risk our kids." He spoke about the need for only "the vaccinated" to be able to travel by plane or train, "so they don't have to worry that somebody (unvaccinated) is going to put them in danger seated next to them, or across the aisle." [19] The underlying assumption was that when vaccinated passengers on a plane were together, they would pose less of a risk to each other compared to an unvaccinated passenger. Yet, CDC Director Rachel Walensky conceded getting vaccinated didn't prevent transmission or infection.

Ten months later, on June 15, 2022, the head epidemiologist for the Public Health Agency of Canada would admit, under cross-examination by freedom convoy lawyer Keith Wilson Q.C., that they ["never recommended vaccination of air travelers"](#) to the Trudeau government. This was supported by a sworn affidavit.

Wilson comments that

"the written advice...provided did not identify vaccination as a mitigation strategy. They identified masking. They identified spacing at arrivals, departures and on the planes.... The top epidemiologist for the government of Canada volunteered that the reason they didn't recommend vaccination for travelers was that the scientific evidence doesn't support that it would be effective." [20]

But in the final week of the election campaign, on September 16, 2021, in a TV interview with Julie Synder on *La semaine des 4 Julie*, Justin Trudeau referred to those who weren't getting the mRNA vaccine as ["racists, misogynists, white supremacists"](#). He mused "Do we tolerate these people?" [21] The prime minister used vaccine status as a wedge issue to build support for his re-election campaign before the September 21 election. Most Canadians would agree that hatred of other people based on their skin colour, or gender, crossed a line. But what evidence did Trudeau have to suggest the unvaccinated were racists and misogynists? He asserted this was true. A majority of citizens accepted the claim without any scrutiny. Those who didn't get the mRNA vaccine were labelled as "anti-vaxxers." The Liberals closed the gap. On election day, they were just 1% behind the Conservatives. Though Trudeau got 191,000 votes less than the Conservatives, he got another minority government.

In a press conference for the UN on September 29, 2021, Trudeau expressed the view that the world needed to achieve ["zero COVID"](#). [22] Nothing less than eradicating COVID-19 would be acceptable for the nations of the world. And the only solution, given Trudeau's insistence that "we've got the science," was 100 percent vaccination of every Canadian. For those who didn't buckle, the consequences were severe. [Employment Minister Carla Qualtrough](#) announced on October 21, 2021 that those who failed to get vaccinated with

two doses of mRNA vaccine would in many workplaces lose their jobs. “It’s a condition of employment that hasn’t been met,” Qualtrough said in an interview with CBC’s *Power & Politics*. “And the employer choosing to terminate someone for that reason would make that person ineligible for EI.” [23]

Over the fall, the unvaccinated were warned they would no longer be able to board a train or a plane within Canada, or leave the country. A November 30 headline in Toronto’s *City News* announced “[Unvaccinated travelers barred from trains and planes as of today.](#)”[24] In step with these developments, New Brunswick’s Minister of Health, Dorothy Shephard, announced a “[winter action plan](#)” that tasked all businesses that provide essentials such as food to require proof of vaccination from clients. Critics objected that the “winter action plan” was a violation of human rights, since accessing food is a basic need. [25]

In Quebec, Premier François Legault announced on January 12, 2022, that his province would start routinely [taxing the unvaccinated](#). CTV cited the example in Austria as instructive. “In Austria, for example, people 14 and older will face fines of about \$5,150 CAD (3,600 Euros) every three months, starting in February, if they’re not vaccinated, according to Reuters.” [26] There was no suggestion in the article that CTV thought the anticipated tax on the unvaccinated in Austria was problematic. CTV reported that comments from politicians and provincial health officers over the fall and winter had agitated the vaccinated toward the unvaccinated. CTV cited an EKOS poll showing 66% of Canadians were losing patience with the unvaccinated. And 60% wanted more penalties and restrictions for those who didn’t comply with vaccine mandates.

Justin Trudeau announced that unvaccinated truckers would no longer be allowed to cross the Canada-U.S. border, effective January 15, 2022. The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA), the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters had all asked the federal government to either [eliminate or postpone the mandate](#). [27]

It was estimated that as many as 32,000, or 20%, of the 160,000 Canadian and American cross-border truck drivers would have their livelihood impacted by being taken off the highways by the government’s new measure. The new mandate crossed a line for many Canadians. Based on transmission of the virus by the vaccinated, and truckers never being super-spreaders, there was no defensible medical reason to require them to be vaccinated. By January 22 a Trucker Freedom Convoy formed in Prince George and Vancouver, British Columbia. Their destination was Ottawa.

On January 26, Prime Minister Trudeau boasted once again that he was “following the science,” ridiculing convoy supporters as a “fringe minority” with “[unacceptable views.](#)” [28] In contrast with his eagerness to understand the Boston Marathon bombers, Justin Trudeau wasn’t interested in trying to understand convoy protesters. Trudeau didn’t want to learn where tensions around the vaccine mandates for cross-border trucking came from. He refused to meet with convoy leaders. Instead of being cautious not to emphasize a culture of fear and mistrust, Trudeau made it clear those supporting the freedom convoy were a danger to society.

### 3) Any medium of communication is also a medium for propaganda

Another tool of propaganda Edward Bernays highlighted in his classic manual, as essential for those seeking to manipulate an unsuspecting citizenry, is communication. Today, this includes radio, print, TV, social media, podcasts, audio book services, sports and foreign

news channel streaming, and employing Facebook fact-checkers, Big Tech censorship and YouTube banner.

When it came to vaccine hesitant Canadians and the trucker freedom convoy, the Trudeau Liberals already had a cozy relationship with the media. In 2018, the Trudeau Liberals gave [\\$595 million](#) in a “bailout” to over 1,500 Canadian media outlets. [29] Next, they paid the legacy media over \$61 million before the September 2021 election to keep them in their corner with coverage friendly to the government. Reporting in the *Lake Superior News*, [Spencer Fernando](#) warned that these payments to the media had potential to subvert democracy. A media happy to receive these hundreds of millions of dollars could be disinclined to report stories troubling to the Liberals. [30]

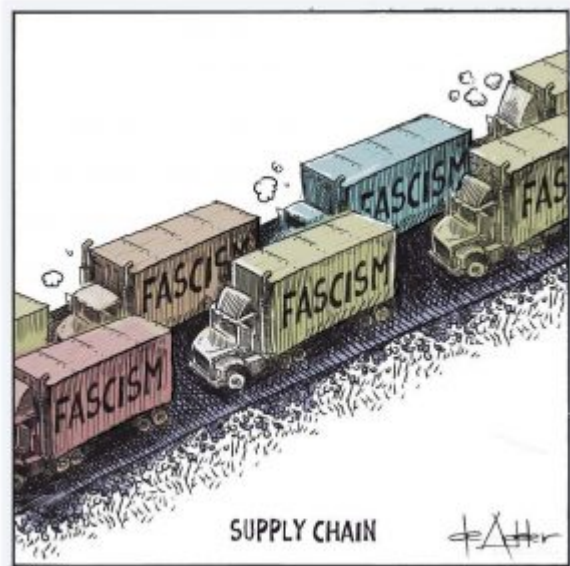
Media coverage of the freedom convoy framed Trudeau as a noble leader beset by a throng of hoodlums, criminals, “terrorists, mercenaries...” In an effort to variously demean, defame and demonize the truckers, Canadian legacy media employed an everything-but-the-kitchen-sink strategy to agitate their audiences to feel repugnance toward convoy protesters.

At first, the media just ignored news about formation of the convoy. Next on January 22, there were reports of tie-ups on BC-Highway 99, from the US border to Vancouver. These were allegedly due to truckers protesting the conditions of highways in British Columbia. This despite truck drivers in the province who knew damage from November rainstorms had washed out parts of highways, bridges in seven major provincial routes. The Department of Highways had opened highways before the year was through. Purportedly, a truck convoy from Surrey to Vancouver was protesting “ineffective” use of “[de-icing equipment](#).” [31] Suddenly, the convoy protest about provincial highways morphed into one heading to Ottawa.

In the following weeks the bribed, bailed out, media described convoy protesters as angry, “Russian actors,” “fascists,” [unimportant](#), [32] pyromaniacs, Confederates, white supremacists, Nazis, an embarrassment to the trucking industry, and more.

As the convoy headed east, on Jan 25, CTV ran this headline: “[‘So many angry people’: Experts say online conversation around trucker convoy veering into dangerous territory.](#)” The network interviewed Kurt Phillips, founder of Anti-Racist Canada, who warned that he’d “seen people online calling the trucker convoy Canada’s version of the U.S. Capitol insurrection on Jan 6, 2021, for the truckers to ram their trucks into Parliament, and people encouraging the hanging of politicians.” Peter Smith with the Canadian Anti-Hate Network warned that “the largest groups...have been organized and managed by people who have connections to...the Yellow Vests, the separatist Western movements. So right from the start, this began as part of fringe politics.” [32]

Turning from alleged racist motives, the Convoy was next framed as inspired by Russian President Vladimir Putin. “Russian actors” had instigated the convoy. CBC reporter Nil Koksai mused, “Given Canada’s support of Ukraine in this current crisis with Russia...there is a concern that Russian actors could be continuing to fuel things as this protest grows, perhaps even instigating it from the outside.” [The CBC retracted the statement on February 4th](#). [33]



*Washington Post* cartoonist Michael de Adder published a cartoon illustrating a convoy of trucks, each with the word “FASCISM” written on its side. The phrase “Supply Chain” was written on the bottom of the frame. The truckers weren’t to be understood as asking the government to back up their claims that cross-border trucking would not have any impact on spread of COVID-19. After two years of shouting “we’ve got the science” in order to close down debate, the convoy protest was to be understood as a sudden eruption of fascism.

On January 29, CTV journalist Mackenzie Gray posted a photo of an individual carrying a confederate flag. Gray tweeted above the photo, “We’ve got our first confederate flag of the day here on Parliament Hill.” Florida governor Ron Desantis’ press secretary [Christina Pushaw](#) responded on Twitter to Gray’s tweet observing “You claim to be a journalist, so why don’t you interview him? You can ask him who he is – and why he is flying a Confederate flag. If you just post a picture like this with no context, it looks like you’re implying the entire convoy are racists. How do you know he isn’t a plant?” [35]

Why would Canadian truckers, pissed off at having their ability to make a living due to imposition of cross-border vaccine mandates, want to bring a Confederate flag, a symbol of pre-American Civil War defense of slavery? It was convenient for media to use the photo of a Confederate flag to switch discussion from the merits of cross-border vaccination mandates. Instead, reporters could conjure the ghost of Robert E. Lee, inferring convoy protesters wanted to establish slavery in Canada.

On January 29, the *Globe & Mail* ran this headline:

[“Almost one in five Canadian truckers is South Asian, but many don’t see themselves represented in the trucker convoy.”](#)

Reporter Uday Rana claimed Sikh truck drivers hadn’t been invited to take part in the convoy. [36] Yet, it was clear from video taken by those attending the convoy protests that there were many South Asian and [Sikh truck drivers present](#). [37] Numerous tweets and posts online underscored the ethnic diversity of the convoy protesters. [Indigenous drummers](#) were leading the crowd by Parliament Hill in singing O Canada. [38]

On January 28, CTV ran a story with the headline ‘Embarrassment for the industry’: Not all truckers support the ‘freedom convoy’” The [story](#) began, “A so-called ‘freedom convoy’ of



truckers and supporters is on its way to Ottawa..." A trucker from London, Ontario was interviewed who thought the convoy was "an embarrassment for the industry." Mike Millian, president of the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada told CTV

"Our organization's become very concerned about...racist remarks comparing (the mandate) to Nazis and communism - things that are not compatible to what's going on right now."

Video playing in the background on CTV showed truck after truck with Canadian flags, and a sea of supporters with Canadian flags everywhere. [39] The previous week Millian had decried the "state of chaos" and "[mass confusion](#)" the Trudeau Liberals had thrown the trucking industry into by enforcing a vaccine mandate on drivers to cross the US-Canada border. [40]

#### 4) Reiterating the same idea over and over creates habits and convictions

Edward Bernays details in *Propaganda* how repeating ideas over and over again helps ordinary citizens to adopt new convictions and habits that aid agendas of the those in charge. Repeating the same idea again and again is a form of neuro-linguistic programming. Repetition can plant certain concepts or emotions in the subconscious mind. There are many examples of repetition being used effectively during the pandemic. One is the WEF phrase "build back better," used as a campaign slogan by U.S. President Joe Biden. Justin Trudeau has repeatedly shut down scrutiny about the basis for his pandemic measures by telling people to "trust the science." We are to assume this is medical science and not political science. Throughout the freedom convoy protest, the 24/7-in-your-face death statistics and case numbers, continued apace, promoting the pervasiveness of a pandemic.

Nobody ever asked what happened to seasonal flu and pneumonia. Or mentioned that the hospitals are always full with these afflictions in the winter months, in any case. Building on the legacy media's everything-but-the-kitchen-sink approach to discrediting, demeaning and demonizing the truckers, politicians continued to step forward with new allegations which they repeated over and over and over.

##### a) Vandals

Trucker Freedom Convoy lawyer, [Keith Wilson Q.C.](#), reports that during the first week after the trucks arrived they were vandalized. "Groups of Antifa were coming through at night in their black hoodies and backpacks and black jeans. And they would come when the truckers were sleeping and knife their tires and cut their air lines and spray paint the trucks. They would vandalize the trucks. So, each block had a block captain for that area of trucks. And they had a watch system so that when an Antifa person would show up, the trucker would grab them, call 9-1-1 and the police would come, arrest that guy and take him away. That would happen three instances in the night. Guess what the police chief would do the next day? He'd say 'we had three arrests for property damage in the downtown core last night' The arrests were Antifa, the 9-1-1 calls were from truckers." But Ottawa police left it to the media to infer the vandals, those responsible for "property damage," were convoy protesters. [41]

##### b) Arsonists

On the morning of February 6, Matias Munoz alleged two arsonists came to an apartment building at Metcalfe and Lisgar at 5 AM. They had on them fire starter bricks in the lobby.

Munoz tweeted: “One of them taped the door handles so no one could get in or out” (including the arsonists). According to the story, a tenant saw the arsonists lighting a fire in the lobby, asked if they were truckers. And then decided to go to bed without calling 911. Which is what you’d do if you knew you were in a building that was on fire. Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson held an emergency meeting of city council condemning the “[malicious intent](#)” of the convoy protesters. ““Yesterday we learned of a horrific story that clearly demonstrates the malicious intent of the protesters occupying our city.” [42]

But the [Ottawa Deputy Chief](#) told the press on February 8, “We don’t have any direct linkage between the occupation — the demonstrators — and that act.” [43] On March 21, [Ottawa police](#) confirmed the person charged with the February 6th arson had nothing to do with the convoy protest. [44]

On April 8th, Rex Murphy [reported](#) in the *National Post*:

“This week, we found out that the attempt to burn down an apartment building in Ottawa, which was so widely and wildly heralded during the Freedom Convoy protest, had nothing to do with the truckers. Please let this sink in. At the time, such was the volume of assumption, innuendo and outright allegation that everyone from Nanaimo, B.C., to Nain, N.L., formed the impression that this despicable action, an outrage by any standard, was the work of the truckers. Not true. False. Nothing to do at all with the protesters. It was allegedly the work of two Ottawa miscreants who were working alone.” [45]

### c) Criminals with weapons

In addition to the specter of lawlessness and arson, politicians began to paint the truckers as violent in other ways. During a press conference on February 17, a Francophone reporter pointed out that Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino had been “insinuating for days” that weapons were being brought to Ottawa, or were in Ottawa with the convoy. Mendicino [replied](#), ““I am not saying that there is an intelligence saying there are weapons in Ottawa.” [46]

At a March 24 House of Commons Standing [Committee on Public Safety](#), Conservative MP Dane Lloyd pressed Ottawa Police Service (OPS) Interim Chief Steve Bell to confirm ““Were loaded firearms (at the Freedom Convoy) found? Yes or no?” Bell replied, “In relation to—no, not relating to any charges to this point...at no point did we lay any firearms-related charges. ” [47]

Yet, as Rex Murphy [observed](#) “The protest has been actually not mainly but *overwhelmingly* peaceful, and the political and major press response, wildly alarmist and ominous. Ottawa shops remain with their windows intact, no assaults on police stations or police being bombarded with sticks and stones, no *armed patrols* by the truckers telling people where they could go or not go, and a splendid number of rather endearing incidents that have failed to make it to national or local press.” [48]

Even Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino’s own staff were telling him the protests were peaceful. Director General of the Government Operations Centre, Deryck Trehearne, confirmed that “[the majority of the event was peaceful](#)...disruption of government activities is minor.” Ottawa senior Public Safety officials advised Mendicino that convoy organizers were encouraging participants to keep lanes of obstruction-free, clear vehicles out of

residential areas, and be respectful of the police. [49]

Speaking on the Emergencies Act vote before the Canadian Senate on February 22nd, [Senator Denise Batters](#) cited her firsthand experience of the protest. “My office faces right onto Wellington Street, and I had a front row seat to this convoy for the past weeks. What I witnessed of protesters was peaceful, organized and non-threatening. I do not tolerate harassment, intimidation or destruction, ever. But I did not see any of that behaviour exhibited by the protesters. I have been here in Ottawa during all three weeks of the protest. I can say, that in the last two years, I never felt safer walking home from my office at night. The protesters I met...reminded me of the people I know in Saskatchewan: friendly, hard-working, patriotic Canadians.... These truckers are our constituents and it is our job as parliamentarians to hear them out.... They drove all the way to Ottawa from those Saskatchewan towns. Birch Hills is almost 3,000 kilometers, a 32-hour drive away. To simply have a conversation....What is the national emergency this time? Dance parties and loud horns? Horns that, by the way, had long stopped honking by the time this act was invoked, due to a court injunction that the truckers complied with.” [50]

An Ottawa resident named David, who saw the convoy below his bedroom window, echoed Batters assessment after [speaking with the protesters](#).

“As I finally made my way back home, after talking to dozens of truckers into the night, I realized I met someone from every province except PEI. They all have a deep love for this country. They believe in it. They believe in Canadians. These are the people that Canada relies on to build its infrastructure, deliver its goods, and fill the ranks of its military in times of war. The overwhelming concern they have is that the vaccine mandates are creating an untouchable class of Canadians. They...see their government willing to push a class of people outside the boundaries of society, deny them a livelihood, and deny them full membership in the most welcoming country in the world; And they said enough.” [51]

Batters observed that “Prime Minister Trudeau brought in the Emergencies Act as a first, and not a last, resort.” As well she noted, “Both houses of Parliament were able to meet for weeks, mere steps away from the protesters. Prime Minister Trudeau and his senior cabinet ministers attended several question periods in House of Commons sittings in person. If there were a true public order emergency, surely none of that would have been allowed to have occurred.” She reminded the Senate that the Emergency Act wasn’t invoked even “during the October 2014 Parliament Hill shooting. And I remember that well, because I was locked in a caucus room for ten hours with my colleagues throughout.” [52]

#### d) Unfit parents

In addition to allegations of threatening use of weapons, the truckers were viewed as reckless parents who rightfully should have their children apprehended. “I can only say that there have been ongoing reports regarding child welfare concerns, and that we consider all information received to determine the best response,” said a spokesperson for the [Ottawa Children's Aid Society](#). Under the Emergencies Act invoked by Prime Minister Trudeau on Valentine’s Day, February 14, bringing children to the demonstrations was now prohibited. If a child was in the cab of a truck, it would result in a potential fine of \$5,000 or up to five years in prison. Ottawa police said roughly 25 per cent of the vehicles in the blockades had children in them. Convoy protesters’ children had been playing in bouncy castles, dancing to music and playing outdoor hockey over the previous weeks. [53]

## e) Insurrectionists, terrorists

Convoy protestors were also accused of being terrorists. Ottawa City Councillor Diane Deans referred to the protest as part of a “[nationwide insurrection](#),” and the protestors themselves were “terrorists” and “mercenaries.” [54] When crowdfunding efforts raised over \$14 million combined in regular and cryptocurrency donations, media commentators alleged it was the work of domestic and foreign terrorism, and supporters of Donald Trump. However, Barry MacKillop, deputy-director of FINTRAC, the federal organization that goes after terrorism funds and criminal money-laundering, told the Commons finance committee that there was [not a shred of illegal activity associated with the trucker convoy](#). [55] The protests had [nothing to do with domestic terrorism or money-laundering](#). [56]

## f) Illegal protest

Justin Trudeau, Chrystia Freeland and other Liberal cabinet ministers, repeatedly referred to the convoy protest as “illegal.” But on February 7, Ontario [Chief Justice McLean](#) ruled the protest was *legal*. He wrote, “the defendants and other persons remain at liberty to engage in a peaceful, lawful and safe protest.” However, the repeated mantra of the protest being labelled *illegal*, gave many Canadians the impression the protests were against the law. [57] Freeland made the claim again on [June 15, 2022](#), before the Parliamentary Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of the Emergency. [58]

## 5) One can manipulate individual actions by creating circumstances that modify group customs

In his book *Propaganda*, Edward Bernays discusses how clever propaganda will seek to shift citizen behaviour to change customs.

### a) right to peaceful assembly

A long established custom enshrined in the democratic traditions in Canada has been the right of peaceful assembly, of the right to protest. This is enshrined in the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#). [59] Many protestors were familiar with key sections of the Charter, including

- 2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: (including) c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and d) freedom of association.
- 6. (1) Every citizen of Canada has the right to enter, remain in and leave Canada.
- Every citizen of Canada and every person who has the status of a permanent resident of Canada has the right a) to move to and take up residence in any province; and b) to pursue the gaining of a livelihood in any province.
- 7. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived...

Former Newfoundland premier Brian Peckford was among the First Ministers who drafted and signed the Charter in 1982. On February 12, [Peckford](#) told Freedom Convoy protestors in Ottawa that the vaccine mandates for truckers and travel mandates were in violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Without informed consent, and not allow the mRNA vaccine to be optional, the government was in violation rights protecting “security of the person.” [60]

Justin Trudeau's many verbal attacks on convoy protesters sent a message that where citizens formerly had the right to peaceful assembly, this was now the case only as long as it didn't upset the government.

Convoy leaders, including Brian Peckford, were asking to meet with Trudeau and key public health officials to hold them accountable.

They wanted to discuss Trudeau's claims that the vaccine mandates were in fact based on science.

They wanted to discuss the vaccine mandates in the context of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Trudeau, [Dr. Theresa Tam and Dr. Howard Njoo \(Public Health Agency of Canada\)](#), and [Dr. Shelley Deeks](#) (chair of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization) refused to meet with convoy leaders. [61] Instead, [Trudeau invoked the Emergencies Act](#) for the first time since its creation in 1988. [62] (His father had invoked its predecessor, the War Measures Act, in 1970 to deal with the FLQ Crisis).

A [Wall Street Journal](#) headline asked "[Will Canadian Democracy Survive Justin Trudeau?](#): His father invoked emergency powers in 1970—but that was against terrorists, not peaceful protesters." *WSJ* wondered "will Canada return to its peaceful, democratic roots? Or will this episode transform into something more sinister and undemocratic. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has certainly acted like a tinpot dictator. Mr. Trudeau refused to meet with Freedom Convoy organizers or protesters in Ottawa...the PM was nowhere to be seen. Instead of finding ways to diffuse this tense situation, Mr. Trudeau's approach was to throw more gasoline on the fire. The absentee Prime Minister would infrequently grace the nation with his presence to mock and smear his opponents." In another editorial, the paper concluded "Government's job is to maintain public order while respecting civil liberties. Canada has failed on both scores." [63]

On February 17 Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Chrystia Freeland, decreed bank accounts and assets of all convoy protesters, and those who donated to their cause, [would be frozen](#). [64] The message was clear: if Canadians wanted to protest government policies, they might not be able to have access to their bank accounts, to pay mortgages, the rent. This caused a [run on the banks](#), according to Martha Durdin, CEO of the Canadian Credit Unions Association, who testified before a Parliamentary committee in early March. [65] There was also a run on precious metals, which largely were unavailable as an alternative place to store wealth.

Convoy lawyer, [Keith Wilson, told Viva Frei](#), "I have it from a very high source, that a) the banks realized what had happened when they saw how their customers reacted. Having people who don't trust your institution...is bad for your business model. There were some people withdrawing millions of dollars from their accounts. As well, big financial players in the investment community in the USA weighed in. They were asking if investing in Canada was now like investing in Venezuela or Cuba. *"What just happened to Canada? I thought it had the rule of law. I thought it had checks and balances."* There was a phone call to the PMO from Wall Street which cautioned, 'We are going to publicly distance ourselves from your actions. We are going to criticize your actions. You have 24 hours to reverse them.' So, Justin Trudeau held a press conference and said 'circumstances have changed and now it's time for Canada...'" [66]

The freezing of bank accounts sent a chill across the nation. Citizens were second guessing

whether making a donation to this or that organization would be frowned upon by the government. Freezing bank accounts and sending police to violently break up a peaceful protest on Parliament Hill eroded trust in democracy. This created charitable donation hesitancy. Going forward, would more people worry more about 'not saying the wrong thing' and 'not getting into trouble,' rather than challenging the status quo?

Christine Van Geyn of the Canadian Constitution Foundation observed that even when the Emergencies Act was withdrawn on February 23, the chill remained. On the plain text of the regulations to freeze bank accounts, "even a \$20 donation could result in accounts being frozen. At the House finance committee, Isabelle Jacques, an assistant deputy minister in the Department of Finance, was asked why the federal government felt the need to declare an emergency when [existing laws could also be used to freeze illegal donations](#), as they were in Ontario under Sec. 490.8 of the Criminal Code. Her answer: to 'make an impression upon those considering offering financial support.'" [67] All because Trudeau lacked the courage to talk to the truckers.

#### b) Freedom's just another word

Before the trucker freedom convoy, freedom was a common Canadian value. It is foundational to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Truckers protested vaccine mandates as part of the Trudeau government's attack on Charter rights and freedoms. This included restrictions on citizen rights of mobility: "to enter, remain in and leave Canada." As well, truckers were protesting infringements on their right "to pursue the gaining of a livelihood." Many trucks in the convoy had Canadian flags and the word "freedom." Many placards on Wellington Street in Ottawa read "freedom."

Tens of thousands of truck drivers were sidelined by the government's measure. They drove from the west and east coast to Ottawa in minus thirty degree temperatures. They wanted to talk to their politicians. They wanted the validity of these pandemic measures put under scrutiny.

But, many in establishment circles didn't want pandemic measures debated. There could be no scrutinizing the basis for the oft repeated "trust the science" mantra. Instead, the protesters claims their Charter rights had been violated was characterized as exaggerated.

In an opinion piece to the *Globe and Mail*, former chief justice of the Supreme Court of Canada Beverley McLachlin wrote "[The Ottawa truck convoy has revealed the ugly side of freedom](#)." McLachlin wondered "what does this vaunted 'freedom' mean? The answer is, everything and nothing. Everything: the right not to wear masks in public places; the right not to be vaccinated; the right to hold Ottawa's downtown residents and businesses hostage; the right to malign public officials and call for the Prime Minister's death; the right to shout epithets at people of colour. And nothing. Because freedom is an empty word unless you ask further questions: Freedom from what? Freedom to do what? And beyond that, 'Where do my freedoms end and the freedoms of others begin?'....The bottom line is that you can't use your freedoms in a way that unreasonably conflicts with or affects the freedoms of other people. The freedoms guaranteed by the Charter stop where they harm others. With freedom comes responsibility." [68]



McLachlin continued, “The heady notion of freedom, defined as the unconstrained right to do what you want free of government limits, serves as a cloak for actions that harm women, men and children.... people who don’t look like you or talk like you. [Sadly, the Ottawa truckers’ convoy has revealed this ugly side of freedom.](#)” [69]

McLachlin is no doubt a victim of slanted government propaganda. She’d been treated to a mono-message repeated by media that has piled claim after claim, and allegation upon allegation, with reckless abandon. McLachlin, and most members of the Canadian establishment trust the news they follow to provide fairness and accuracy in reporting.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms signatory Brian Peckford commented on his own inclination to initially trust what those in charge were saying. On June 8, 2022, in an interview [Peckford said](#) “The first inclination as a former first minister, first inclination – especially as a Canadian – is to trust what people are saying to you. The Public Health Agency of Canada, the various departments of health in all the provinces, and the Provincial Health Officers – and so your first inclination as Canadians – how nice we all are – you say to the government ‘they’re doing the right thing.’” [70] But, in time, Peckford began to question the vaccine mandates. Especially once it was clear the vaccines didn’t prevent infection or transmission.

Like Brian Peckford, one can safely assume that Beverly McLachlin is inclined to trust what people in charge are saying, and trust mainstream media reports. She likely hadn’t read reports by Indo-Canadian reporter [Rupa Subramanya](#). Nearly two weeks into the protest, Subramanya had interviewed over 100 protesters. From Day 1 she went into the convoy crowd multiple times daily to ask people why they’d come to Ottawa. She noted “not one of them sounded like an insurrectionist, white supremacist, racist or misogynist.” Subramanya spoke to “Kamal Pannu, 33, is a Sikh immigrant and trucker from Montreal” who believed natural immunity is better than the vaccines as a strategy to move the nation forward. She spoke to “Matt Sim, 43, who immigrated to Canada from South Korea...and came to Ottawa with his wife to join the protests. He’d had Covid, and then he’d recovered, and he was skeptical of all the hysteria surrounding the vaccines.” [71]

The multi-ethnic convoy protesters were respectful of the evident diversity on Wellington Street – of people who didn’t look like or talk like them. The crowd was receptive when Asian-Canadian Doctor Daniel Nagase spoke from the stage and received nothing but applause. The same was the case for longtime Global TV news writer Indo-Canadian journalist [Anita Krishna](#). [72] [Dr. Julie Ponesse](#) was another woman providing leadership, and speaking to a receptive crowd. [73]

On the weekend of February 18-20, when police aggressively moved in on peaceful convoy protesters, numbers of incidents were reported online. [A muslim protester](#) complained that police took his prayer mat, stomped on it and laughed at him. [74] On February 18, an elderly Mohawk woman, Candy Sero, [was trampled by mounted police](#) as she stood with her wheeled walker. She fell to the ground. A horse stepped on her shoulder. A man in the crowd started yelling with growing desperation, “Oh my gosh. Oh my goodness. Oh my goodness. Look what you did. Look what you did to her. Look what you did to her. Look what you did to her. You trampled on the lady... Shame on you. Shame on everyone of you. Shame on you...” [75] Sero lived, but suffered a broken clavicle.

Other scenes from February 18 included [police beating a protester with the butt of a rifle](#). [76] Trucker Csaba Vizi was violently beaten and repeatedly kned in the belly by at least [three police on top of him](#). [77] These were not scenes of an ugly side of freedom. These were scenes of an ugly side of government overreach and police violence.

In an interview, the former host for 21 years of CBC’s *Cross Country Check-up*, Rex Murphy, spoke after police mobilized against convoy protesters. He wondered where were others in the Liberal cabinet who would say to the Prime Minister “You have overreached vastly. You have insulted the nature of this country, which is always the middle course, always the willingness to at least try to compromise and talk. And you’ve introduced false drama...the melodramatic idea of a great national emergency...” [78]

Former chief justice McLachlin contended persons involved with the convoy were calling “for the Prime Minister’s death.” Yet, late June 2022, searches on both Google and [Qwant.com](#) found no news stories of anyone charged or arrested for issuing death threats against Justin Trudeau related to the convoy. Instead, searches produced news stories of people charged with issuing death threats against Trudeau in [August 2021](#) [79], [2018](#), [80] [2017](#), [81] and by actor [Alum Ryan Grantham](#). [82] Both Brian Peckford, and a convoy leader named Daniel Bulford, have confirmed in separate emails to me that they haven’t heard of any convoy protester who’s been charged or arrested for uttering death threats against Trudeau. [83]

An inquiry is now investigating the convoy protests in Ottawa and at several crossings along the Canada-U.S. border. [The mandate](#) is to focus not on government actions or whether there was just cause to invoke the Emergencies Act. [84] The inquiry is to look into disinformation, misinformation, crowdsourcing, foreign funding, and goals of the convoy. A fully accountable and transparent inquiry into the [justification](#) for invoking the Emergencies Act is required and nothing less. [85] Yet, it has so far devolved into a [circus](#). [86] The Prime Minister’s Office will wait until [February 13, 2023](#), to decide whether to release records related to the convoy. This is a week prior to the date the inquiry is set to release its report to Parliament. [87]

[Canadians lined the Trans-Canada Highway](#) and its overpasses all across Canada, in the frigid January weather, to cheer the truckers on. [88] This was not reported by the media Trudeau bought. At this moment, they are still [infuriated](#) [89] every day on [Twitter](#). [90] Canadian Liberalism has [collapsed](#). [91] Meanwhile, the legacy media will continue to spin and spin, so that those who trust their reports view 2022 as the Year of the Insurrection.

The travel mandates have been suspended for the moment, with one exception. Convoy lawyer [Keith Wilson](#) revealed the one exception to lifting vaccine mandates. [Truckers](#) are still not allowed to cross the Canada-U.S. border without being vaccinated. [92]



Two years of pandemic restrictions, social isolation from lockdowns, and suppression of dissenting viewpoints have deformed freedom of speech and its potential to flourish. In this context, propaganda is ever more dangerous. Politicians and the media had a bullhorn to use that went unchallenged until the freedom convoy went to Ottawa. For the first time in Canadian history, a protest in front of the Parliament Buildings was met with a Prime Minister refusing to meet with protesters. Even in the 1935 On-to-Ottawa Trek by farmers, Prime Minister R.B. Bennett listened to their grievances. Instead, convoy protesters were called Nazis, a smear Jewish protesters – like [Benjamin Dichter](#) who has family members buried in mass graves in Europe during WWII – rejected. [93]

Time-tested propaganda strategies for framing a discussion, and weaponizing it against a group, are alive and well in Canada in 2022. Democratic responsibility to uphold freedom of speech comes with inconveniences at times. There needs to be a sober reassessment of the Trudeau government’s conduct, and recognition of the battery of false allegations against convoy protesters for what they were: propaganda. The government needs to be held accountable. Its failure to safeguard democratic cornerstones in the face of the overwhelmingly peaceful convoy protest must be referred to the [National Apology Advisory Committee](#). [94]

\*

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