



Pandemic Reflection

The Destructive CCP Model(III)

(Commentaries & Viewpoints)

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The Next Ten Battles



(Vladitto/Shutterstock)

Jeffrey A. Tucker

April 29, 2022

Commentary

It is apparently much easier to tell the truth about state action the farther away it is from home. And hence even The New York Times seems alarmed at the covid lockdowns in Shanghai, and pretending as if nothing like that could happen here even though the whole practice of lockdown the world over was directly copied from the Wuhan model.

“China is meddling with free enterprise as it hadn’t in decades,” says the paper. “The results are familiar to those old enough to remember: scarcity, and the rise of black markets.”

The disruptions are especially difficult for smaller businesses.

A truck driver who asked me to use only his surname, Zhao, has been stuck in his vehicle, unable to work, in a Shanghai suburb since March 28 when the district was locked down. He, along with nearly 60 other truckers, have been drinking from fire hoses, struggling to secure food and without a bathroom to wash up in.

He's losing sleep, wondering how he will cover his loans: about \$2,000 monthly for his truck and about \$500 for mortgages, while continuing to support his wife and their two children.

What the chilling article (which likely understates the calamity) does not say: these Shanghai lockdowns are precisely what many of the architects of lockdown theory imagined as the right policy for the United States and the entire world in the Spring of 2020. They were brazen about it. Close your business, schools, churches, stay home, stand six feet apart, test constantly but don't go out, don't travel, don't shop unless necessary, no gatherings, live online, and so on it went.

What we see in Shanghai is the fulfillment of the lockdown vision for society, not just for China but for every country, all in the name of virus eradication through social destruction. Now that the chilling reality is presented to us, we see The New York Times—which, please recall, was first out with the demand that we “go medieval” on the virus—distancing itself as much as possible from the idea.

At last, elite opinion sees the downside. I interpret that as victory. We've won the lockdown fight... maybe. The more among its advocates who now say “I never favored lockdowns” the more we can be sure that this battle is won, at least rhetorically.

We've also won the fight over vaccine mandates, which have been repealed by force of public pressure. It was never supposed to be this way; they were conceived of as a permanent feature of public life. They are mostly gone for now. So too for the preposterous apps that are supposed to carry our vaccine status as a ticket to admission to public life.

These are encouraging victories but just the beginning. The covid response exposed the vulnerabilities of many institutions. It revealed many problems that cry out for solutions, most related to what happened to the United States and the world over two years. This is not anywhere near an exhaustive list.

1. Pandemic Response

We apparently agree that lockdowns are not the key to solving a pandemic, though many are still defending the idea. Just today, a new model gained tremendous attention with a claim that many more would have died without lockdowns. A model. They will forever claim this. Some people just cannot let go.

But that still begs the question: what precisely is the role of individuals and public authority in the face of a new pathogen? We need some new consensus on this problem, else lockdowns are going to be deployed by default. They will do it again so long as it remains the only tool in the box, and right now it more or less is.

If we learn from history, the answer is not complicated. In general, it is the same one used in 2014, 2009, 2003, 1984, 1969, 1958, 1942, and 1929, and even 1918 in most places, among other periods. Don't panic. Public health should investigate and communicate the properties of the pathogen, its spread, prevalence, and severity. Experiment to find the best therapeutics. Go to the doctor if you get too sick. Let our immune systems work and allow herd immunity to develop through normal social functioning, while urging the most vulnerable to stay safe and wait it out.

This is what we always did in the United States. Two years ago was different. We tried a new theory and practice and it flopped, catastrophically. Worse, dissenting scientists were aggressively censored, attacked, and smeared, and this happened (we now know) on order from above. It was a time when the only approved science was government science, an experience on par with that which dominated totalitarian countries in the 20th century.

For eons, the presence of disease has been deployed as a cover for despotism, segregation, stigmatization, and even war. It happened in the ancient world and all through the modern era too. Somehow, some way, some countries cobbled together a social contract concerning what we would and would not do during a crisis. That contract was just shredded. We need to put it together again. We are nowhere near coming to terms with the relationship between freedom as we understand it and the presence of pathogens in society.

2. History

There are many mysteries concerning what happened to us over two years. What precisely happened in February 2020, when Anthony Fauci, Peter Dazsik, Francis Collins, and others, went to burner phones and encrypted calls, warning friends and family members of impending disaster, even as they neglected public-health basics like therapeutics and truthful messaging? Why did they do this?

There are so many surrounding gain-of-function research, the use of imprecise PCR technology, the privileging of mRNA shots, the role of Deborah Birx, the CDC's recommendations concerning plexiglass, distancing, closures, the school closures, the NIH junket to China in mid-February 2020, the push to mandate vaccines, the relationship between Big Tech and Big Government, death misclassifications, exaggerations over hospital capacity, and so much more.

We have a very rough sketch but when all the presumptions of civilized life are suddenly thrown overboard, the public deserves to know the fullness of the question: why?

The history is nowhere near being told in its fullness.

3. Administrative State

The federal district judge in Florida's decision on the federal mask mandate unleashed far more than was in the lawsuit. It was decided against the government, which is to say that for more than a year, the people who were telling us that we were wrong were themselves in violation of the law. That is an awesome realization.

And yet, there has been widespread media panic about the very idea that a court could overrule a government bureaucracy, as if nothing like this had ever happened before, and as if bureaucracies need not be burdened by any legal authority. Many of us have intuited that the "deep state" believes this to be true, but it was absolutely startling to see the DOJ, CDC, and administration spokespeople say as much. Apparently, they want absolute power, clearly, even dictatorial power.

Is this really the way we want to live, with government bureaucracies making fully autonomous decisions about what we can do in our homes, churches, businesses, and how we engage with neighbors, friends, and family? There is good reason to believe that most people reject this idea. And yet there is an entire layer of government out there, perhaps the most powerful one, that disagrees. This problem needs to be solved.

4. Education

The school closures never made sense: the kids were not vulnerable and the teachers in countries where schools remained open did not die. It would be nice to know how all this happened, who gave the orders, on what basis, how the message spread, how it was enforced, and whether any of the people who did this had thought even for a moment about the consequences of doing this.

The results were cruel but also bizarre. Homeschooling had existed under a cloud for many decades, and suddenly it became mandatory for most people. How did it happen that public schools, the crown jewel of progressive reform dating back to the late 19th century, were so blithely padlocked, in some places for two full years? It's simply incredible. And the results are everywhere and shocking.

Nonetheless, we surely discovered in the course of this disaster that there are other models of schooling that can readily compete with legacy public schooling that were not up to the task of withstanding the crisis. It's time for reform, or at least dramatic liberalization to permit more choice: homeschool, private school, hybrid community schools, charter schools, and more flexibility in compulsory schooling laws. We simply cannot just restore the failed status quo ante.

5. Health Care

For many months and up to a year, health care was inaccessible for many people. It became a covid-only service. Health care spending dramatically declined, in a pandemic! How did this happen? Who gave the orders? For months in most places in the United States, hospital parking lots were empty. Nurses were furloughed in hundreds of hospitals. Cancer screenings, treatments, checkups, and even childhood vaccinations were not taking place. This happened not only at hospitals but regular health clinics too.

Then there's dentistry, which for months almost did not exist in this country. Astonishing.

It was a sign of a deeply broken system. Even now, we have a major problem that people are spending vastly more on health services than they ever could consume, mostly through employer-provided plans that keep people deeply fearful of losing their

job. Insurance as provided through the “market” is not really competitive since choices are so limited, premiums and deductibles so high, and their acceptance is so spotty.

One bright spot of the pandemic was the liberalization of telemedicine. It’s a good start but mostly it is an illustration of the creativity and good service and price that comes from liberalization of this sector. The entire industry is overly regulated and controlled. It could benefit from real market forces.

And let’s add to this the shocking attack on the freedom of doctors to prescribe treatments to their patients without getting warnings from medical boards acting as proxies for government bureaucrats. How precisely did this come about and what is going to happen in the future to stop this from happening?

The entire pandemic response amounts to a clarion cry: reform and disrupt this entire sector.

6. Politics

In the early 1940s, the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt offered to what later became the March of Dimes assistance in its fundraising for polio. The foundation refused because they worried about tainted public health concerns with politics. Very wise. There should be a strict separation but that did not happen in 2020 and following. Those who suspect that the entire pandemic response was part of a campaign to drive the president from office are not crazy; there is plenty of evidence to that effect.

And in 2021, we witness overt attempts on the part of the Biden administration to blame the disease on red states where Republicans enjoy majority support. It was an amazing thing to watch unfold, and of course the claims were only temporarily true as the virus migrated to blue states after which the White House shut up.

The entire response was tainted by political motivations from the start. Even from the early lockdowns, Trump trusted advisers who probably had ulterior motives, as they later hinted. Once he came around to the position that society should normalize, it appeared that he was no longer in charge of the response at all and the CDC/NIH was dictating policy with some purpose in mind.

Later, the Biden administration's push for vaccine mandates and mandatory masks was driven by some political position too: to be seen as anti-Trump regime as an appeal to the base.

There are no easy answers to how to fix this. It is apparent that politics and pathogens do not mix well. Can there be a wall of separation between public health and politics? Maybe that's a dream but it would seem to be ideal. How to bring it about?

7. Psychology

Brownstone has several top psychologists writing for us and they have all sought to explain the group psychology behind the mass panic. Rightly so. It cries out for explanation. How did we go from a country of seemingly normal-acting people to a wild pack of flagellant germaphobes in a matter of weeks? How can this be prevented in the future?

It was March 12, 2020, just as the panic was rising, when I met in a television studio a therapist who was being interviewed that day. His specialty was in personality disorders extending from trauma. He was utterly distraught because what he saw unfolding that day amounted to an extension of what his patients experience to the whole of society. He was nearly weeping simply because he saw what was coming.

A major problem right now pertains to the mental health of young people.

8. Economics

The disregard of basic economics during the pandemic was shocking. People routinely denounced those who worried about the economic fallout for putting money ahead of health, as if economics and health have nothing to do with each other, as if the delivery of food, the quality of the money itself, and the functioning of markets have nothing at all to do with taking on a health crisis. It was strange: it was as if an entire discipline didn't matter. And it did not help that the economists themselves fell largely silent.

Here we should include the astonishing thing: Big Tech willingly signed up to be mouthpieces for government priorities for two years, and this continues now. The censorship about which everyone is rightly screaming is directly related. This is not free enterprise. It is something else with an ugly name. It needs to stop. The wall of

separation needs to apply here too and it should also address the massive problem of regulatory capture.

The principles of public health and economics share much in common. They are both focused on the general good not a single problem, and not for a short-term win but over the long term. There must be more cooperation here with each side learning from the most competent experts from the other side.

Also a plea: everyone in the social sciences needs to spend more time coming to understand basic cell biology. We should know by now that real life experiences cause many fields to overlap. There need to be intellectual and honesty checks running in both directions.

9. Class Differences

At some point in the middle of March 2020, nearly every top manager of every company in the United States received a memo that explained which businesses are essential and which have to close. Many in the professional class took their jobs home and did fine. Others in the working classes were shoved in front of the pathogen to bear the burden of herd immunity and only later told they had to get a vaccine that they didn't want or need.

Then—and this is truly hard to believe—public venues in major cities begin to close to the unvaccinated. No one seemed to care about the disparate impact of these policies by race, income, and class. Our cities literally became segregated as vast numbers were shut out of restaurants, bars, libraries, museums, and movie theaters. It's almost too shocking to contemplate.

Would any of this have happened if the Zoom class had an ounce of empathy for the working classes? Doubtful. As it was, major media venues kept urging their readers to stay home and get their groceries delivered, and by whom they never said. They just didn't care.

Do we still aspire to be a society with mobility in which strict demarcations between people are not enforced by law? We should hope so. But the pandemic response showed otherwise. Something needs to change.

10. Social Philosophy

Finally we come to the biggest problem of all. What kind of society do we want to live in and build? Is it based on the presumption that freedom belongs to all and is the best path for progress and good lives? Or do we want the rights of the people always to defer to the mandarins in the walled-off bureaucracies who give orders and expect only compliance and no challenge to their rule?

This is a huge question, and it is tragic that we are being called upon to ask it at all. It seems as if an entire generation needs to revisit the history of liberty and the Founding documents of the United States. More than that, an entire generation needs to become convinced that freedom actually matters, even and especially in a crisis of any sort, whether the arrival of a new pathogen or something else.

Clearly, something had gone wrong long before the pandemic response, some kind of social/cultural loss of confidence that freedom is the best path. We woke one day living in the midst of Schumpeter's prediction: the blessings of freedom had become so abundant and ubiquitous that they were widely taken for granted and thus did the ruling class become overly tempted to overthrow the source just to see what would happen. The preexisting philosophical nihilism of the before times easily bled into despotism of the last two years. Chesterton said that those who believe in nothing will believe in anything. His point has been proven, and with disastrous results.

So, yes, there are victories all around us: lockdowns for now do not vex us and most mandates are gradually evaporating. But the intellectual, social, cultural, and political reckoning has just begun. It is going to touch every institution and every area of life, and consume the efforts of all of us for at least another generation.

From the Brownstone Institute

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https://www.theepochtimes.com/the-next-ten-battles_4436569.html

Pandemic Lessons Learned: Deadly Lockdowns



A resident looks out behind a gate blocking an entrance to a residential area under COVID lockdown in Shanghai on April 13, 2022. (Aly Song/Reuters)

BY Joe Wang

May 6, 2022

For over a month now, since April 5, 2022, Shanghai—a city of 26 million people best known as a financial and trade hub of East Asia for more than a century—has been in total lockdown.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has told its citizens that the mass COVID testing and near-total lockdown are necessary to control COVID cases.

But this “zero-COVID” policy in a city that is a center of finance, trade, manufacturing, and global transportation is having devastating consequences.

While the CCP engages in active censorship of the misery Shanghai’s residents are currently experiencing, there are both immediate and long-term economic, psychological, and health consequences from this zero-COVID policy that may reverberate around the world.

Desperation in Shanghai

Residents have been confined to their homes, unable even to buy food or medication.

One Shanghai mom living with her children and elderly parents told reporters for ABC News that she is skipping meals so her family can eat, because the government is not providing them with enough food. ⁽¹⁾

“I cannot cook because we have nothing to cook,” this mom confessed.

As people take to their balconies to chant that they are hungry, to sing in solidarity with each other, or simply to talk to their fellow residents, government drones warn them via pre-recorded messages to stay inside. “Control your soul’s desire for freedom,” a drone boomed. “Do not open the window or sing.” ⁽²⁾

As an April 26 CNN video that has been censored in China reveals, the city is in chaos, struggling to cope with both a surge in cases of the virus and the extreme government mismanagement. ⁽³⁾

Feeling trapped and desperate, people are venting their frustration by shouting, howling, and even sobbing from their balconies. And they’re sharing their despair on WeChat and other Chinese social media sites, even as the government swiftly censors them.

One video, that shows government employees in hazmat suits erecting fences to keep people caged in their residences, has been shared so extensively in Chinese cyberspace that the censors have not been able to erase it fast enough.

People are dying because of the lockdown itself. For example, as Radio France Internationale reported, one 44-year-old Korean man living in Shanghai was found dead in his apartment. He had a heart condition and no access to his medication. ⁽⁴⁾

There have also been reports of people hurling themselves to their deaths, choosing to die by suicide instead of remain in such extreme isolation.

At least 152 people have already died because of lockdowns, not COVID-19, according to a Radio Free Asia report. While, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to get accurate statistics from China on how many people have died as a result of the lockdown. One can simply imagine what would happen to patients need dialysis, for example, then denied access to hospital. According to a CCTV report, there are about 20,000 such patients in Shanghai. Then, what about patients with other life-threatening conditions, such as cancer, heart disease, etc. ⁽⁵⁾

The medical system has become so overwhelmed in Shanghai, according to another report, that an elderly man was mistakenly thought to be dead and taken alive to the morgue. If these stories weren't verifiable, I would think they were taken directly from a horror movie. ⁽⁶⁾

'Zero-COVID' Is Impossible

SARS-CoV-2 was deadly to many at first. But the new Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 appears to be much less deadly. At the same time, COVID tracking data has shown that Omicron is unstoppable.

According to a peer-reviewed study published in March of 2022 in the Journal of Internal Medicine, the molecular profile of the Omicron variants, which have more than 50 mutations, manifests as a much milder disease. As the team of Italian scientists explain, "The disease [caused by Omicron] so far has been mild compared to the Delta." ⁽⁷⁾

The reason for Omicron's ability to spread so fast is still a topic of scientific debate, but what is clear is that Omicron is fast spreading, overtaking all the other variants very quickly. Once it spreads in any given community, it won't leave until almost everyone is infected.

We know now that 99 percent of adults in the United Kingdom have COVID antibodies and that 94.7 percent of all current infections in the U.K. are caused by Omicron.⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾

When China hosted the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics in February, I feared that since Omicron was everywhere outside of China, it would be inevitable that some of the thousands of visitors would bring this strain into China. Once it is in China, and it starts to spread, it is not stoppable.

And yet, Xi Jinping thought he could use his mighty state power to get rid of the virus. His zero-COVID policy is non-scientific and also against common sense.

Consequences of Draconian Lockdowns

Yet, despite the fact that this is likely a much milder form of the disease and that there are dire negative health consequences caused by terrorizing people, forcing them to self-isolate, and withholding medical care and medications from them (to say nothing of starving them), CCP continues to forcefully carry out its zero-COVID policy directed by Xi.

No scientific debate is allowed. In fact, scientists in Shanghai, including Dr. Wenhong Zhang, M.D./Ph.D., head of the center of infectious diseases at the Huashan Hospital of Fudan University in China, who had advocated for living with COVID, now has to tow the party-line.

The U.S. has had its shares on lockdowns.

Though this remains controversial, we know now that lockdown policies did more harm than good, both in the United States and around the world. Children have suffered serious developmental delays, according to research done by Brown University researchers, especially those from socially disadvantaged families. ⁽¹⁰⁾

States where lockdowns were most stringent, including California, Illinois, New Jersey, and New York, had extremely high numbers of death from COVID, huge numbers of jobs lost, and high unemployment rates and other economic declines, according to April 2022 research conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research. ⁽¹¹⁾

In contrast, states where business and schools reopened more quickly, including Florida, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Utah, had lower death rates, fewer economic hardships, and fewer declines among children, according to the same report.

This report dovetails with earlier work done by the Johns Hopkins Institute for Applied Economics, Global Health, and the Study of Business Enterprise from January 2022, “A Literature Review and Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Lockdowns on COVID-19 Mortality.” ⁽¹²⁾

According to this team of economists: “While this meta-analysis concludes that lockdowns have had little to no public health effects, they have imposed enormous economic and social costs where they have been adopted. In consequence, lockdown policies are ill-founded and should be rejected as a pandemic policy institute.”

It has now been over two years since alarms were first sounded around the world about a novel virus. Even Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, who has virtually been the American face of COVID policy, has recently admitted that we cannot destroy the virus.

“It’s not going to be eradicated and it’s not going to be eliminated,” Fauci told ABC’s This Week. “[E]ach individual is going to have to make their calculation of the amount of risk that they want to take...”

Dictatorship leads to stupid decisions like the current misguided, anti-science, inhumane lockdown in China. Humans must be allowed to have free will and decide for ourselves.

The West must not—ever—go back to lockdown policies that have harmed more people than they have benefitted.

It’s time for governments around the world to start paying attention to the data and allowing people to live their lives again. For the sake of the lives of the Chinese people, I, a former resident of the great city Shanghai, call on CCP and Xi Jinping to stop the draconian lockdowns in Shanghai and elsewhere in China.

Jennifer Margulis contributed to this report.

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The CDC Surveilled for Lockdown Compliance



(Trismegist san/Shutterstock)

Jeffrey A. Tucker

May 6, 2022

Commentary

A missing piece of the great lockdown plot was enforcement. How precisely were authorities going to know the whereabouts of hundreds of millions of people without a veritable army of snoops?

Yes, there were some arrests and media reports and some private drones flying here and there to snap pictures of house parties to send to local

papers for publication. Public health authorities were flooded with calls from rats coast to coast.

But in general, the plan to muscle the entire population in the name of virus mitigation had vast holes.

For example, for many months, there were regulations in place that forced people to quarantine (yes, even if you were perfectly well) when crossing state lines. Compliance was impossible for anyone who lived in one state and worked in another. But how was this to be enforced? And how precisely were authorities to know for certain whether you found a side entrance to a church and dared to show up with a few others to pray?

A clue came pretty early on in [lockdowns](#). When you would drive from one border to another, your phone would light up with a warning that you had to quarantine for two weeks before you went back, and then one would receive another note coming back. Of course this was impossible but it became darn scary there for a while. Who precisely was monitoring this?

Our phones also installed for us, even if we didn't want it, track-and-trace software that claimed to alert you if you came near a covid-positive person as if this virus was Ebola and infected people were milling around everywhere. I have heard no reports on how this software worked or if it did at all.

Still it's on my phone now—labeled “exposure notifications”—but obviously shut off. There is no way to remove that application so far as I can tell.

Wikipedia [explains](#):

Devices record received messages, retaining them locally for 14 days. If a user tests positive for infection, the last 14 days of their daily encryption keys can be uploaded to a central server, where it is then broadcast to all devices on the network. The method through which daily encryption keys are transmitted to the central server and broadcast is defined by individual app developers. The Google-developed reference implementation calls for a health

official to request a one-time verification code (VC) from a verification server, which the user enters into the encounter logging app. This causes the app to obtain a cryptographically signed certificate, which is used to authorize the submission of keys to the central reporting server

So, basically a digital leper bell. Just what everyone wants.

I had friends who flew into airports and were greeted by National Guard troops demanding information on where people were staying plus a cell phone number so that authorities could check to make sure that you were staying put and not going places. Government set up robocalls with scary voices—“This is the sheriff’s office”—that would ring up visitors and scare the heck out of them.

Yes, you could lie, but what if you were caught? Were there criminal penalties? And what was the likelihood that you would get caught? No one knew for sure. Even the legal basis for all of this was extremely sketchy: it was all based on administrative dictate imposed under the cover of emergency.

As it turns out, the [CDC](#) later used your tax dollars to scarf up location data from shady sources during the depth of lockdowns to find out whether and to what extent people were complying with unconstitutional lockdowns, curfews, and capacity restrictions. We only know this thanks to a FOIA request from Motherboard, which revealed everyone’s worst-possible fear. According to [Vice](#),

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) bought access to location data harvested from tens of millions of phones in the United States to perform analysis of compliance with curfews, track patterns of people visiting K-12 schools, and specifically monitor the effectiveness of policy in the Navajo Nation, according to CDC documents obtained by Motherboard. The documents also show that although the CDC used COVID-19

as a reason to buy access to the data more quickly, it intended to use it for more general CDC purposes.

In documents, the CDC claimed that it needed the data to give the agency “deeper insights into the pandemic as it pertains to human behavior.”

The data itself was scrapped by [Safegraph](#) from cell phone location trackers. Not everyone has that feature turned on but tens of millions do. The CDC shelled out half a million dollars to get what they had, all of it gathered without any concern for ethics or privacy.

Location data is information on a device’s location sourced from the phone, which can then show where a person lives, works, and where they went. The sort of data the CDC bought was aggregated—meaning it was designed to follow trends that emerge from the movements of groups of people—but researchers have repeatedly raised concerns with how location data can be deanonymized and used to track specific people. The documents reveal the expansive plan the CDC had last year to use location data from a highly controversial data broker.

What this means is that the CDC was essentially monitoring if people went to get an illegal haircut, attended an illicit house party, or left the house after a 10 pm curfew. Or went to church. Or shopped at a nonessential store. It seems strange that we would have any such laws in the United States regardless, and it is nothing short of an outrage that a government bureaucracy would pay a private-sector company for access to that in order to monitor your compliance.

And we can see here how this works. You get a phone and it includes apps that want to know your location, often for good reasons. You need a GPS. You want to see restaurants around you. You want to know the weather. People who push ads want them to be specific to where you are. So you leave location services on even when you could otherwise turn them off. This allows app companies to scrape vast information from your phone, mostly anonymous but not quite entirely.

This data then becomes available on the open market. The CDC becomes a customer, and why should any company hungry for cash refuse such an offer? Of course they should but too often revenue needs trump ethics in this world. The check arrives and out goes the data. In this way, the government has the means to spy on you nearly directly. And it does this without any legislative or judicial authorization.

This raises profound questions about deploying [track-and-trace methods](#) for a virus that is as prevalent as covid. It never held out any chance of controlling the spread, no matter what they say. It does introduce profound dangers of government [surveillance](#) of the citizenry to police people for compliance, which can very quickly become a means of political enforcement.

The damage is done already but it is wise to be aware now of what is possible. Much of the infrastructure was set up over these two years and it all still survives. There is every intention in place to deploy it all again if covid mutates again or if some other pathogen comes along. Lockdowns seem to be in disrepute among the public but the ruling class is still in love with them.

What can we learn from this fiasco?

1. Congress and the judiciary are not in control of government. Especially once there is an “emergency,” the administrative state believes itself to be an autonomous force, doing what it wants regardless of the constitution. There is almost no oversight.
2. Many private companies are no longer private at all. A main customer is the government and they adjust their operations to make their products marketable to them. They collect your data and sell it to the state. There is rarely anything in the terms of use of most apps that prevent that.
3. No matter how paranoid you are now, it is probably not enough. Pandemic control was a pretext for doing to the citizens what never would have been tolerated in normal times. The lockdowns are over but the aspiration to track and control us completely has just begun.

The years 2020 and 2021 were just trial runs for what they want to be permanent.

4. There are things you can do to protect yourself but it requires volition and focus. Indiscriminate use of mainstream applications is dangerous to both privacy and liberty.
5. What I've reported above already happened a year ago, so it is right to ask the question: what are they doing now? They got away with it then, a fact which only encourages more egregious behavior.

From the [Brownstone Institute](#)

Jeffrey Tucker is founder and president of the Brownstone Institute. He is the author of five books, including "Right-Wing Collectivism: The Other Threat to Liberty."

[*https://www.theepochtimes.com/the-cdc-surveilled-for-lockdown-compliance_4448743.html*](https://www.theepochtimes.com/the-cdc-surveilled-for-lockdown-compliance_4448743.html)

Four Chinese Megacities Start Regular, Mandatory Testing, Zero-COVID Policy May Come to an End: Analysis



A health worker has a swab sample taken, that will be tested for COVID-19 coronavirus, at a sample collection site in Beijing, China, on April 27, 2022. (Noel Celis/AFP via Getty Images)

Shawn Lin

May 7, 2022 Updated: May 8, 2022

News analysis

Four cities in China have reportedly proposed to regularly conduct compulsory massive nucleic acid testing after Shanghai announced that it

achieved “basic zero-clearance at the social level.” The move is regarded by some analysts as a way of “coexisting with the virus,” and indicates that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) might be ending its [zero-COVID](#) policy amid economic impacts.

The four cities each have populations of over 10 million people such as Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province, and Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province, as well as megacities of over 20 million people such as Beijing and Shanghai (the largest city in China).

“It is actually a disguised ‘coexistence with the virus’ or a middle way of it,” said Da Kang, China current affairs commentator, referring to the megacities’ normalization of nucleic acid testing.

The deteriorating economy during the anti-pandemic containments may be the main incentive for the Chinese authorities to change their lockdown policy, said Da Kang, adding, “It is a hefty setback for the CCP’s ‘dynamic zero-COVID’ approach, that Shanghai paid heavily for.”

China’s economic center Shanghai, hit by the country’s worst epidemic outbreak, suffers a weeks-long stringent lockdown and is seeing [rare declines](#) in industrial output and retail sales.

On April 29, CCP leader Xi Jinping held a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee to discuss the current economic situation in China. The meeting concluded that the economy should be stabilized while fighting against the epidemic, the cities’ core functions should be safeguarded while maintaining social stability, and transportation and logistics must be ensured, according to official media reports.

Da Kang commented during his self-media program that epidemic prevention and control used to be an “overwhelming” political task, but the CCP has found it can’t have a narrow focus.

“Basically, it can be said that the “zero-clearance game” is over, and the era of severe zero-COVID is over,” Da Kang said.



A health worker takes a swab sample from a woman, to be tested for the COVID-19 coronavirus, at a swab collection site in Beijing, China, on May 3, 2022. (Noel Celis/AFP via Getty Images)

Four Cities Turn to Regular Mass Testing

Shanghai [announced](#) on April 30 that it had achieved “zero-clearance at the social level” although more than 10,000 new infections were reported the day before. Officials claimed that all of these infections were found within the isolation zone, that is to say, “zero-clearance at the social level” refers to no cases found outside the quarantine area.

The veracity of this official data is questionable due to the CCP’s practice of fabricating figures when the real figures don’t make them look good.

According to the official media CCTV on May 2, there are still more than 14,000 contained areas in Shanghai, of which 2.76 million people are required to stay at home, 5.51 million people in the control areas are not

allowed to leave residential compounds, and more than 15 million people are located in the prevention areas with limited activities.

After claiming it reached zero cases, Shanghai authorities first proposed the normalization of nucleic acid testing on April 27, when city authorities announced over 500 sampling sites were set up citywide. Li Qiang, the CCP secretary of the municipality stressing that normalizing sampling sites would be treated as “a critical infrastructure” to be constructed at an accelerated pace.

In a bid to further promote such infrastructure, authorities of Hangzhou, Wuhan, and Beijing grant free nucleic acid testing to local residents. Officials in Shanghai [said](#) testing will be free from May 1 to June 30.

Starting April 28, Hangzhou city requires citizens to complete a sampling for nucleic acid testing every 48 hours, otherwise, they won't be permitted to “travel normally,” China's official media Xinhua reported.

The city has set up more than 10,000 sampling sites for this purpose.

[Wuhan municipal](#) authorities stipulate a round of screening every three days. Starting May 3, residents must provide proof of negative testing or sample certificates every 72 hours. If not, their health code will be turned to the “gray code,” which incurs travel limitations.

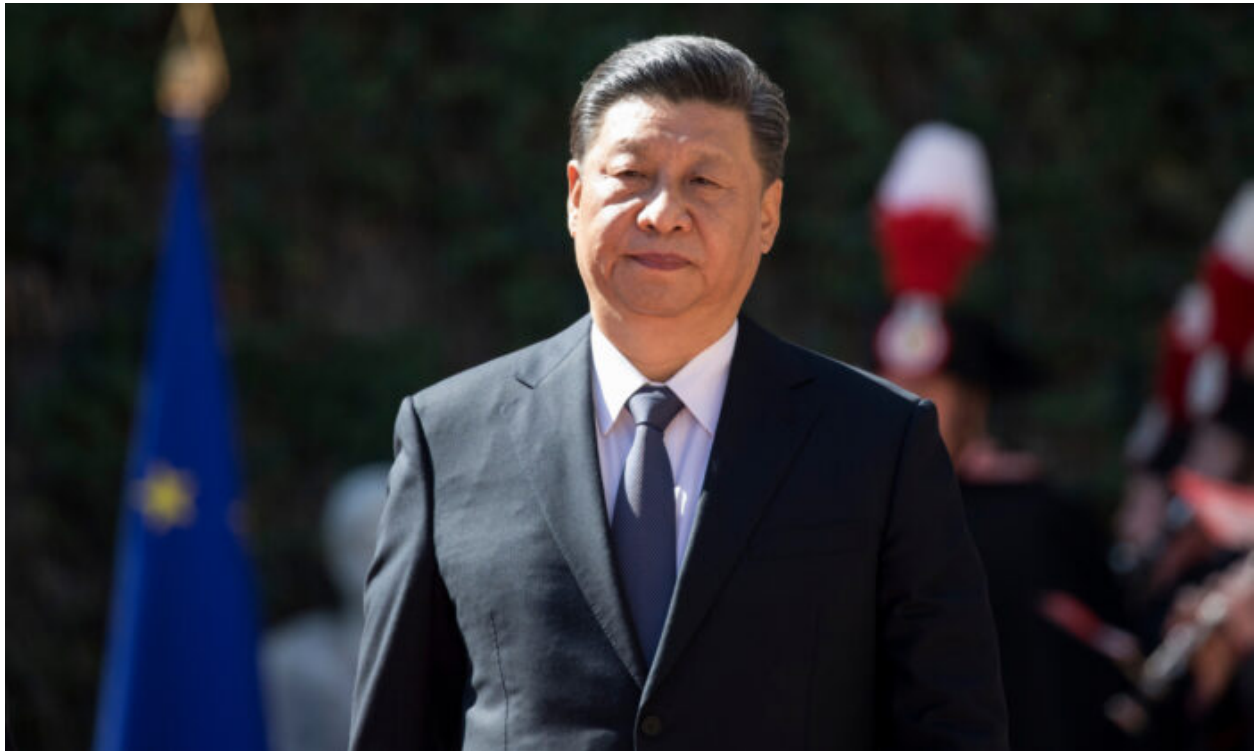
Beijing embarks on stabilizing nucleic acid test starting May 5, but with add-ons to over 20 categories of workers, key groups of people designated as applying “different normalized requirements,” [according](#) to Beijing's leading group for epidemic prevention.

For example, staff who work for the capital city's Communist Party and government agencies, enterprises, and institutions, and other social units are required to undergo testing once a week, but transient workers have additional curbs according their category.

Shawn Lin is a Chinese expatriate living in New Zealand. He has contributed to The Epoch Times since 2009, with a focus on China-related topics.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/four-megacities-start-regular-mandatory-testing-zero-covid-policy-may-come-to-an-end-analysis_4445593.html

The New Rift Between WHO and China



China's leader Xi Jinping and Italy's Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte arrive for the signing of a memorandum of understanding at Villa Madama in Rome on March 23, 2019. (Alessia Pierdomenico/Shutterstock)

Jeffrey A. Tucker

May 15, 2022

Commentary

From the beginning of the pandemic, the World Health Organization and [China's CCP](#) have worked and spoken hand-in-glove, culminating in the [Potemkin Village junket](#) of mid-February 2020. The [WHO](#)-sponsored travel

report—how wonderfully China had performed!—was written and signed by American public health officials who recommended Wuhan-style lockdowns, a disastrous policy that further inspired most governments in the world to do the same.

Twenty-six months later, it turns out that China in fact had not “eliminated the virus fully within its borders,” contrary to the over-the-top claims of TV pundit Devi Sridhar in her new book “[Preventable](#).” They only pushed cases into the future, as the CCP discovered when positive tests appeared all over Shanghai, leading to 7 weeks of brutal lockdowns.

This move on China’s part has been a disaster for the country and the world economy, and presently endangers the financial and technological future of the entire country.

For Xi Jinping, lockdowns and zero-[covid](#) were his greatest achievement, one which was celebrated the world over, causing his political pride to swell beyond all bounds. Now, he cannot back off lest he face possible losses in upcoming party elections.

Just this past weekend, he made it clear to the entire government that there would be [no backing off](#) the zero-covid policy: the CCP will “unswervingly adhere to the general policy of ‘dynamic zero-Covid,’ and resolutely fight against any words and deeds that distort, doubt or deny our country’s epidemic prevention policies.”

The problem is acute: vast numbers in China likely need to acquire natural immunity via exposure. The lockdown policy likely puts a damper on the achievement of endemicity. That means long-term damage to China’s future.

Sensing this problem, the head of the WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, offered a mild criticism: “Considering the behavior of the virus, I think a shift will be very important,” adding that he had discussed this point with Chinese scientists.

What happened next is truly fascinating: Tedros's comments were censored all over China and searches for the name Tedros were immediately blocked within the country. Implausibly, merely by stating the incredibly obvious point, Tedros has made himself an enemy of the state. Meanwhile, another WHO/China partisan, Bill Gates, has been sheepishly saying something very similar in interviews, namely that the virus cannot be eradicated.

It's not just Tedros and Gates who are trying to flee their advocacy of lockdowns. Anthony Fauci himself denied that the United States ever had "complete lockdowns"—which is technically correct but not because he didn't demand them.

On March 16, 2020, Fauci faced the national press and [read from](#) a [CDC](#) directive: "In states with evidence of community transmission, bars, restaurants, food courts, gyms and other indoor and outdoor venues where groups of people congregate should be closed."

In fact, one gets the strong sense that governments around the world are pretending as if the whole pathetic and terrible affair never happened, even as they are attempting to reserve the power to do it all over again should the need arise.

On May 12, 2022, many governments around the world gathered for a video call and agreed to pour many billions more into covid work, and reaffirm their dedication to an "all-of-society" and "whole-of-government" approach to infectious disease. The U.S. government under the administration [readily agreed](#) to this idea.

Leaders reinforced the value of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to bring the acute phase of COVID-19 to an end, and the importance of being prepared for future pandemic threats. The Summit was focused on preventing complacency, recognizing the pandemic is not over; protecting the most vulnerable, including the elderly, immunocompromised people, and frontline and health workers; and preventing future

health crises, recognizing now is the time to secure political and financial commitment for pandemic preparedness.

The Summit catalyzed bold commitments. Financially, leaders committed to provide nearly \$2 billion in new funding—additional to pledges made earlier in 2022. These funds will accelerate access to vaccinations, testing, and treatments, and they will contribute to a new pandemic preparedness and global health security fund housed at the World Bank.

Is it progress to see these people throwing around language from the much-criticized but now wholly vindicated Great Barrington Declaration? Doubtful. You can't make a bad policy better by tossing around words. There is every indication from this statement that there will be no apologies, no regrets, and no changes in the default position that governments must always and everywhere have maximum power to control any pathogen of their choosing.

Despite Tedros's censored words, it's no wonder that Xi Jinping continues to feel vindicated and affirmed, and sees no real political danger in choosing his own power over the health and well-being of his people. Governments around the world still cannot muster the courage to make a full-throated and solid attack on zero-covid, for fear of the implications of such a concession. Nudges and hints, even from the WHO, will not do it.

From the [Brownstone Institute](#)

Jeffrey Tucker is founder and president of the Brownstone Institute. He is the author of five books, including "Right-Wing Collectivism: The Other Threat to Liberty."

https://www.theepochtimes.com/the-new-rift-between-who-and-china_4467663.html

Public Discontent Grows Over Shanghai's Lockdown—Is It a Spark That Starts a Revolution?



The closed entrance of a residential area is pictured during the lockdown in Shanghai, China, on May 5, 2022. (Aly Song/Reuters)

Morgan Deane

May 18, 2022

Commentary

There is some hope that protests over heavy-handed lockdowns might spark a [revolution](#), but there is mixed evidence that Shanghai [lockdown](#) protests will be that spark.

In Xi Jinping and his regime's quest to show the world they can control COVID-19, they have locked down dozens of cities and almost [400 million](#) people. But none has been more contentious than the one in Shanghai. It has always been a cosmopolitan city with a large foreign contingent. That large number of foreigners often meant that as far back as the 1920s and especially during the early days of World War II in the [Battle of Shanghai](#), the city has attracted Western attention.

In this case, it means foreign correspondents report about the [heavy-handed lockdowns](#). Entire populations of high-rise apartments have been [forcefully relocated](#) to COVID camps if a single case is found in their building. Residents have been stuck with inconsistent supplies of poor quality and no access to [medical care](#). They are so disappointed that residents post their complaints on social media quicker than the [censors](#) can remove them. And videos have emerged of residents [arguing](#) and [struggling](#) against officials and police officers.

This has led to a central question, and even hope among Chinese dissidents and [analysts](#) in the West: is this some sort of catalyst for the beginning of the end for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)?



A nearly-empty road during a lockdown due to COVID-19 in Shanghai, [China](#), on May 5, 2022. (Source: Bloomberg)

As Mao Zedong famously said, “A [single spark](#) can start a prairie fire.” And the classical Chinese works [beyond Sunzi](#) (Sun-Tzu) are replete with references to a regime that loses favor with the people being undermined. As I’ve [explained](#), legalist scholars, like Han Feizi and Lord Shang, believed in a strong government that could compel people. But they failed to account for the idea that they could only compel bodies, and the minds would resist such a naked use of power.

Or as the great Confucian thinker [Mencius](#) said, “When force is used to make men submit, they do not submit in their hearts ... but when virtue is used to make men submit, they are happy in their hearts and sincerely submit themselves.”

The phrase “hearts and minds” is often mocked in today’s circles, but it was a powerful component of Confucian ideology, and formed part of the ruling ideology called Imperial Confucianism.

The Han Dynasty text, “The [Huainanzi](#),” discussed the fall of China’s first dynasty, the Qin. It was so powerful that there wasn’t a place where people walked that wasn’t a part of its empire. Yet the revolt of a single soldier caused the dynasty to collapse because of the accumulated grievances, as outlined below from the ancient text:

“Chen Sheng, a conscript soldier, arose. ... He bared his right arm and raised it, proclaiming himself Great chuh, and the empire responded like an echo. At that time, he did not have strong armor or sharp weapons, powerful bows or hard spears. They cut date trees to make spears; they ground awls and chisels to make swords, they sharpened bamboo and shouldered hoes to meet keen halberds and strong crossbows, yet not city they attacked or land they invaded did not surrender to them. They roiled and shook, overran and rolled up an area of several thousand square li. ... Chen’s force and station were supremely lowly, and his weapons and equipment were of no advantage, yet one man sang out and the empire harmonized with him. This was because resentment had accumulated among the people.”

In short, the CCP appears powerful, and the people don’t have weapons or even access to an uncensored internet. But it is likely the people seethe with resentment. Classical writers and even Mao himself agreed that it only takes a small spark for that resentment to turn into a revolution.

Yet that doesn’t mean the regime will fall as a result of the lockdowns. The CCP has experienced a fair number of protests that have [fizzled out](#). Unfortunately, these failed protests and continuing [oppression of the Uyghurs](#) often gives CCP officials a chance to [hone their skills](#) in quelling the disturbance and shifting blame. In this case, the central government can simply blame local authorities for improperly applying Xi’s directives.

No one knows the future but there is evidence of [a recession in China](#), and plenty of evidence from history that suggests rough times ahead for the country and the brutal communist regime. Regimes seemingly more powerful than Xi's throughout history have suddenly fallen. The fall of the Berlin Wall to the mighty Qin Dynasty attest to this.

But there is also some recent history that suggests that the public discontent over COVID lockdowns may not be the spark that starts a prairie fire. Sadly, the CCP is very skilled at snuffing out discontent and shifting the blame. Only time will tell, but Americans must continue to stand for freedom and human rights, including the human rights of the citizens under a horrible dictatorship.

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[Website](#)

https://www.theepochtimes.com/public-discontent-grows-over-shanghais-lockdown-is-it-a-spark-that-starts-a-revolution_4472691.html

Lockdowns, Closures, and the Loss of Moral Clarity



(fran_kie/Shutterstock)

Jeffrey A. Tucker

May 20, 2022

Commentary

Last weekend, an 18-year-old kid slogged a powerful weapon into a Buffalo, New York, grocery store and started shooting people based on race. Thirteen people were slaughtered. His goal was to start a race war, along the lines of the fiction books that inspired his online gurus. He live-streamed the carnage and left a manifesto explaining his motives. His

ideology—which has deep roots and has spawned genocides—is the kind of demonic gibberish that unstable kids find on the internet when they are looking for some mission and meaning in life.

Why might this kid have allowed his brain to become poisoned in this way? He was a high school junior when the schools in his town were closed by government, from March 2020 through September at the earliest. That cut him off from peers and normal social life and the civilizing effect that they have. He lived online in isolated loneliness.

He admits this in his revolting “manifesto.”

*“Before I begin I will say that I was not born racist nor grew up to be racist. I simply became racist after I learned the truth. I started browsing 4chan in May 2020 after **extreme boredom, remember this was during the outbreak of covid** I never even saw this information until I found these sites, since mostly I would get my news from the front page of Reddit. I didn’t care at the time, but as I learned more and more I realized how serious the situation was. Eventually I couldn’t take it anymore, I told myself that eventually I was going to kill myself to escape this fate. My race was doomed and there was nothing I could do about it.”*

These words reflect grave pathology. Recent [surveys](#) of people in forced covid [isolation](#) have found that some 30 percent develop strong symptoms of PTSD over the course of weeks. In this case, an already imbalanced kid found personal meaning through his own perceived “race” identity. He invented a sense of belongingness through an imagined artificial solidarity with others of his tribe. The next steps are obvious: the demonization of others who are blamed for his plight, the manufacturing of a mission, and the valorization of his own violent longings. The grotesque ideology he adopted was the replacement for what he lost or never had.

The disruption of closures and quarantines affected millions of others without the same results but the tendency is there: people are robbed of a moral center and a clarity about life’s meaning. In Freudian terms, the last

two years provided every pathway for the id (the primitive instinct) to displace the ego, which consists of social norms, social realities, etiquette, and rules when deciding how to behave.

This displacement can leave nothing but instinct fueled by [resentment](#) and [hate](#). Along with this comes the search for the “other” on which to blame all problems. Whether that is the racial identity, political deviants, the covid non-compliant, the unvaccinated, or make up any other category, we see the same dynamic at work: the attempt to stigmatize, exclude, dehumanize, and eventually eliminate.

This kid’s behavior is but a sign, a marker, an extreme example of the loss of moral center. It is also a warning. Millions more have been so affected, as we lost two years, not only of education, but also of socialization opportunities. Networks have been shattered. Expectations that life can be stable and good, and always will be, are gone for many among a whole generation. Even the Surgeon General has [commented](#) on the crisis for a generation, without of course identifying the most obvious causes.

What kinds of things unleash this Freudian id that is always just beneath the surface? What breaks the barrier created by sublimation? Isolation. Despair. Deprivation. This is linked to a shattering of social bonds (via “social distancing”) and also material loss. These cause hope to evaporate. A happy future starts to seem unattainable, and so there is a loss of desire to work toward that end. Instead, the psychology of reversion takes place: to behave in a primitive, anomic, and violent way.

Freud is a good guide to this tragic process, but to see the other end of the moral spectrum, we can turn to Adam Smith’s masterwork “[The Theory of Moral Sentiments](#).” It is heavy on the analysis of what it means to feel empathy, and not only to feel it, but to rely on it to the point that our own well-being is connected to the belief that others too are experiencing something like a good life.

What instills this higher sense in our minds? It is the practical experience of depending on others and finding value in their labor, productivity,

contribution to community life, and coming to see our own well-being as bound up with the fate of others. This is what the market and socializing encourages: the gradual recognition that others, and indeed all people, are worthy of being treated with dignity and respect.

The universalization of this sense is never complete, but as civilization and prosperity grow, we make progress toward that end. This is what grants us ever better lives. Without it, we can very quickly descend into barbarism in the way "[The Lord of the Flies](#)" describes. This is particularly true in the volatile years of youth, when the search for meaning is active and the mind is malleable in both good and dangerous ways.

Take away community and you take away the thing that instills that Smithian sense of empathy that extends from a conscience trained by socialization. All of this is contingent on a functioning market and social order. Without that, a decline in mental health can lead to violent outbursts and even genocide.

The World Can Be Broken

Like you, I never wanted to live in a society that is devolving ever deeper into moral decay. Along with that is, inevitably, a fall in overall prosperity.

Years ago, I was having lunch with one of the great economists who had dedicated his life to studying economic freedom the world over. He developed the metrics to quantify this progress and ranked countries. I asked him the big question, whether there was ever a chance that in the West we could lose what we take for granted, and find ourselves falling back to ever more primitive ways, eventually losing both freedom and prosperity.

His answer came quickly: there is almost zero chance of that. Markets are too complex, law is mostly good, and humanity has learned the right path. The foundations of civilization are so strong that it would require a mighty effort to break them. People would never stand for it. I was relieved to hear this and went on with my naïve ways.

Two years ago, in spring, this confidence in the future was shattered. A friend just now described it to me as a nightmare unfolding in real time, as ruling class elites play willy nilly with sacred rights and liberties, while smashing so much of what it has taken hundreds of years to create.

The results of compulsory closures and shutdowns are all around us. It's not only about educational losses, [falling optimism](#), declining health, inflation, weakened financials, empty shelves, and shortened lives. Above all else, it is about the decline of society's moral sense.

We saw public officials engaged in the unthinkable—locking people in their homes, closing schools and churches, shutting down venues for fun and therapy, excluding people from public accommodations based on vaccine status—and that sent a message to everyone else.

We've been through more than two years of isolating, segregating, dividing, excluding, and dehumanizing. The message: there are no more rules based on equality and rights. Nothing that we thought matters really does matter. The replacement is not rationality but primitivism and the [destructive mindset](#).

How Bad Can This Get?

Many are now asking the unthinkable: just how bad can this get?

Polls say that the number one concern of Americans today is inflation, a direct outgrowth of terrible pandemic policy. We have examples from history of how forces like inflation can prompt rapid devolution. Venezuela is a good example: a prosperous and civilized country falling into the abyss when the money fails, after which civil society collapses too. Germany and Russia too come to mind. One or two things going wrong can cause a crack in civilized life that exposes whole social orders to the unthinkable.

What's awesome and terrifying to contemplate is just how many things have gone wrong all at once. The quality of money has taken a huge hit and will likely endure many more years. But we also have a health crisis, a psychological decline, massive learning loss, dependency on government

largess, a loss of work ethic, an ideological putsch against basic tenets of traditional liberalism, a revolt against religion, a denial of basic biology and science, a wholesale loss of trust in elites, the valorization of war, even as the administrative state alongside intellectual elites remain firmly in control of the apparatus of power at all levels.

This is an extremely dangerous mix, so much so that it is hard to find historical examples. Our moral sense is getting dulled by the day. We are getting used to rising crime, falling purchasing power, the loss of opportunity, diminished hopes for the future, rising social chaos, and the normalization of hate. It can happen gradually and then all at once.

Over two years, our friend networks have been shattered, our communities broken, small businesses beaten, and many of our leaders have been co-opted into a machinery of corruption, while the censorship of open dialogue about the causes and consequences is intensifying. The tools we thought would save us and lead us into the light—our laws and technologies—have betrayed our rights, privacy, and liberties.

Perpetual decline and fall is not inevitable. It is fixable but every powerful force out there, especially mainstream media, seems to stand against that. It is all designed to demoralize us and cause us to give up. We cannot accept this fate. There is still time, providing that we understand what is happening and the grave consequences of letting it all take place without a fight.

From the [Brownstone Institute](#)

Jeffrey Tucker is founder and president of the Brownstone Institute. He is the author of five books, including “Right-Wing Collectivism: The Other Threat to Liberty.”

https://www.theepochtimes.com/lockdowns-closures-and-the-loss-of-moral-clarity_4480095.html

Pandemic Lessons Learned: Deer Are Not Military Horses



A policeman wearing protective clothing reacts in an area where barriers are being placed to close off streets around a locked down neighborhood in Shanghai on March 15, 2022. (Hector Retamal/AFP via Getty Images)

Joe Wang

May 23, 2022

Commentary

Earlier this month, The Lancet [published an article](#) titled “[Shanghai’s](#) life-saving efforts against the current omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic” by three renowned scientists at Shanghai’s top universities: Wenhong Zhang, Xinxin Zhang, and Saijuan Chen. The article praised the

Chinese Communist Party's draconian lockdown policy in Shanghai as "life-saving."

Not long before that, however, Wenhong Zhang, then head of Shanghai's COVID Control Experts Committee, spoke out in favour of coexisting with the virus.

"We cannot have the mindset of killing the virus at all costs. We must secure a normal life of our citizens, while at the same time controlling the spread of the virus," he [said publicly](#) on March 24.

But what we have witnessed in Shanghai since April 5 is anything but "normal life" for its citizens. What changed? What made Dr. Zhang change his mind, from supporting living with the virus to killing the virus at all costs?

In a word, the CCP. The same regime that [killed millions of its own citizens during peacetime](#) and allowed [SARS-CoV-2 to spread around the world in early 2020](#), is also capable of making people doubt what they see with their own eyes, deliberately peddling a falsehood, an evil practice that dates back to ancient [China](#).

Deer Are Not Military Horses

About 2,200 years ago during China's Qin Dynasty, after the first emperor died, the second emperor just [wanted to enjoy life](#), so he left all the power to eunuch Premier Zhao Gao. Zhao wanted all the high-ranking officials to be loyal to him. In order to test their loyalty, he brought along a deer and insisted on calling it a horse suitable for the military. The officials who agreed that the deer was a horse all got promoted, while those who said the deer was in fact a deer were executed.

Zhao then had total control, but not for long. His government was brought down by Liu Bang's powerful army (with real horses). Zhao and all the officials who backed him in his lie died, as did the Qin Dynasty.

Zhao's tactic was similar to the modern-day expression "the emperor has no clothes." In Hans Christian Andersen's book "The Emperor's New

Clothes,” the emperor was fooled by swindlers who claimed his suit of clothes could only be seen by men of legitimate birth, until an innocent child pointed out the obvious—that the emperor wasn’t wearing any clothes.

Despite that these were obvious lies—the deer wasn’t a horse and the emperor wasn’t wearing any clothes—they were successful in forcing people to go against their own better judgement and possibly even their own conscience.

Zero-COVID Is Impossible

Under [Xi Jinping](#), China has been implementing a [zero-COVID](#) policy to varying degrees since the beginning of the pandemic, using it to boost the regime’s “success” in controlling the spread of the virus as being superior to Western democracies.



worker in a protective suit walks on a closed bridge during lockdown in Shanghai, China, May 18, 2022. (Reuters/Aly Song/File Photo)

A

The CCP not only has control of the movement of citizens and control of the media, it also attempts to control people's thoughts.

However, it cannot control Omicron, despite its cruel [lockdowns](#). In fact, Omicron is, like air, beyond the control of any government. Even World Health Organization director-general Tedros—an admirer of China's handling of the virus outbreak at the beginning of the pandemic—[said at a media briefing](#) on May 10 that the WHO does not think China's COVID policy is “sustainable considering the behaviour of the virus.”

“We have discussed about this issue with Chinese experts and we indicated that the approach will not be sustainable,” he said. “I think a shift would be very important.”

It seems Tedros is not trying to hide his opinion anymore. And at the same press briefing, WHO emergencies director Mike Ryan said: “We need to balance the control measures against the impact on society, the impact they have on the economy.” Sounds like Wenhong Zhang's position in March.

Anyone with any microbiology or epidemiology training would look at the science of Omicron and conclude that zero-COVID in the era of this variant is impossible.

Why did Dr. Zhang change his mind, from a forward-thinking “live with the virus” position to the “zero-COVID” nonsense, and why did his two colleagues take the same stance?

Some choose to enforce the narrative of the CCP in the hope of being rewarded. I just hope that the authors of the Lancet propaganda piece did not write the article to get promoted.

I did my undergraduate at Fudan University, where Zhang Wenhong got his PhD and is now the director of a hospital affiliated with Fudan, and my master's at Jiaotong University, where Saijuan Chen is director of the State Key Laboratory of Medical Genomics and where Xinxin Zhang is a doctor in the chemistry department. As an alumnus of these universities, I must say

that I am deeply disappointed that for all the education and experience these doctors have, they chose to praise and validate the CCP's incredibly misguided zero-COVID approach, calling it life-saving while it has actually cost many lives.

The three did so in the most damaging way, i.e., using their influence to have their CCP propaganda piece published in *The Lancet* as science—a masterstroke in this new era of scientific misinformation.

Turning a Blind Eye

If someone who doesn't recognize propaganda for what it is and doesn't know the lying nature of the CCP were to read the *Lancet* article, they might well believe that the COVID-zero lockdown approach is saving lives in Shanghai.

But nothing could be further from the truth. It's now well known that the fallout from the lockdown has been significant. On April 23, Miao Xiaohui, a prominent infectious disease expert in Shanghai, said [the lack of medical resources](#) during the lockdown may lead to a large number of additional deaths of non-COVID patients. He estimated that the number of deaths of diabetic patients caused by the one-month lockdown of Shanghai may be nearly 1,000, and that the suicide rate had risen by 66 percent caused by psychological problems during the lockdown period.

It has also taken the megacity to a complete standstill. The social and economic impacts are enormous.

And yet, none of this was of any concern to the three authors. Rather than questioning the zero-COVID policy, they instead emphasized the fact that in Shanghai, “vaccination coverage has remained low in older adults—62 percent of 5.8 million people older than 60 years have been vaccinated, and only 38 percent have received a booster dose,” hence the necessity of the lockdown.

So to protect 38 percent of the 5.8 million people (2.2 million of whom are presumably at high risk for COVID), the CCP had to lock down a city of 26

million? They could simply have increased vaccination, which would have cost a fraction of what the lockdown cost and with far less hardship on Shanghai's residents.

If a city can do multiple nucleic acid tests per week on its 26 million residents, it can certainly vaccinate 2.2 million seniors in a timely manner.

But is there something about the vaccines that the three doctors do not want to talk about? It could well be, in which case they should just stay silent. But if the CCP has other ideas, that may not be possible.

In Wenhong Zhang's case in particular, besides being the director of infectious diseases at Fudan University's Huashan Hospital, he is also the CCP party secretary in his hospital unit. When there is a conflict between his profession as a medical doctor and his political affiliation as a CCP boss, guess which side wins? The CCP's every time.

Propaganda Coup

It must also be asked why The Lancet, a world-renowned medical journal, published this piece of obvious CCP propaganda.

Although Beijing has been busy spreading its propaganda since the outbreak in Wuhan, having this article accepted by the most prestigious and trusted Western medical journal is a real coup. It validates the CCP's cleverly crafted zero-COVID "science."

This is very scary. The CCP has been propagating its propaganda worldwide since it came to power in China, but now its propaganda is coming to you through the corridor of "science." An invisible Trojan horse might have already entered our countries. The Lancet could be just a small part of it.

The three authors are smart people. They know all too well that the Shanghai lockdown is wrong and costing lives, but they have to use all their professional expertise in scientific paper-writing to advance the narrative of

their CCP bosses. As opportunists they have chosen the CCP, so they must fulfill their Party obligations.

The Qin officials knew a deer was a deer, not a military horse, but being opportunists, they went along with Premier Zhao and were rewarded with money and power. The unintended consequence, however, was the fall of the dynasty, leaving the officials little time to enjoy their rewards.

One can only hope that the three Shanghai scientists' praise of the CCP's zero-COVID policy and the publication of the article by The Lancet will lead the world's people to realize that self-styled emperor Xi is not wearing any clothes. Hopefully, the CCP will become a laughingstock and quickly collapse, before too many innocent people die unnecessarily because of its senseless and destructive zero-COVID policy.

Joe Wang was a lead scientist for Sanofi Pasteur's SARS vaccine project in 2003. He's now the president of New Tang Dynasty TV (Canada), a media partner of The Epoch Times.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/pandemic-lessons-learned-deer-are-not-military-horses_4481983.html

Will the WHO Use Monkeypox to Push Vaccine Passports and Global Surveillance?



A sign of the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, on April 24, 2020. (Fabrice Coffrini/AFP via Getty Images)

John Mac Ghlionn

May 23, 2022

Commentary

The threat posed by monkeypox is real, very real. Or is it?

According to Dr. Robert Malone, not really. But you could be forgiven for thinking otherwise. The way in which the virus is being covered, [Malone recently noted](#), “provides a classical example of public health fearporn.”

CNN, one of the many outlets breathlessly [covering the virus](#), “should be reprimanded for broadcasting irresponsible propaganda—misinformation and disinformation—under the guise of journalism,” wrote Malone. In his opinion, this virus and disease, “which is endemic in Africa,” is “readily controlled by classical public health measures.”

More importantly, it “*does not* [emphasis mine] have a high mortality rate.” This insignificant biothreat “has never been considered a high threat pathogen in the past.”

Malone finished by asking the media and so-called medical experts to “stop the fear mongering, misinformation and disinformation.”

Malone’s request has been ignored, with doctors around the world telling us to [prepare for the worst](#). President Joe Biden [has also joined](#) the chorus of doomsayers. Not surprisingly, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) is [also making noise](#).

More worryingly, the WHO is making moves, and these moves could have profound effects on billions of people around the world, including those residing in the United States.

The New Panopticon

On May 20, the WHO held an “emergency meeting” to discuss monkeypox.

As [Reuters reported](#), members of the WHO’s Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Infectious Hazards with Pandemic and Epidemic Potential (STAG-IH), “which advises on infection risks that could pose a global health threat,” will soon decide whether or not “the outbreak should be declared a public health emergency of international concern.”

As the aforementioned Dr. Malone noted, it shouldn’t. But don’t be surprised if the WHO thinks otherwise.

Members of the WHO, one of the most powerful agencies in the world, [are currently working on](#) a new pandemic prevention and preparedness treaty. The drafting progress will continue for the next few months. Then, on Aug. 1, members will meet to discuss the progress made. Next year, at the [76th World Health Assembly \(WHA\)](#), they will deliver the report. If everything goes to plan, then changes will take effect two years from now.



World Health Organization (WHO) Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus at the opening of the 74th World Health Assembly at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, on May 24, 2021. (Laurent Gillieron/Pool via Reuters)

What Sort of Changes?

According to authors at [Reclaim the Net](#), a website dedicated to defending free speech and calling out bureaucratic overreach, we should brace ourselves for draconian changes. It must be noted that the authors at

Reclaim allegedly managed to get their hands on a working draft of the WHO's plans, so the following warnings could carry a great deal of weight.

Reclaim warns that the WHA, the [decision-making body](#) of WHO, "aims to have this treaty adopted under Article 19 of the WHO Constitution." If successful, this will give "the WHA the power to impose legally binding conventions or agreements on WHO member states if two-thirds of the WHA vote in favor of them." To put that sentence in context: There are 195 countries in the world; the WHO has [194 member states](#).

The WHO has framed this treaty "as an international pandemic treaty." However, the draft obtained by Reclaim shows that the accord has actually evolved to cover all manner of "health emergencies."

The WHO defines a [public health emergency](#) as a situation that "carries implications for public health beyond the affected state's national border" and "may require immediate international action."

The definition is vague, perhaps by design, allowing those in charge to push any agenda, no matter how nefarious.

Again, as authors at Reclaim warned, such an all-encompassing treaty would give the WHO "sweeping, legally binding powers to force member states to adopt many of the censorship and [surveillance](#) tools that were imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic."

International [vaccine passports](#) are not out of the question. In fact, as the draft outlines, member states will be legally required to fully "support the development of standards for producing a digital version of the International Certificate of Vaccination and Prophylaxis."

Moreover, the WHO will seek to normalize the use of "digital technology applications" for all international travel. If you are imagining contact tracing apps and extensive, self-declaration health forms, then you are imagining correctly.

Of course, vaccine passports and contact tracing are intimately tied to surveillance. More specifically, global surveillance. As the draft notes, the WHO will carry out “coordinated global surveillance of public health threats.” This can only be achieved by member states, all 194 of them, expanding their surveillance systems and contributing to “the WHO’s global systems for surveillance.”

The authors at Reclaim stress that non-state actors, which “could include Big Tech companies,” will “also be required to work with governments, the WHO, and other international partners.” Why? To “leverage their considerable data to “create the strongest possible early warning and response systems.”

As mentioned earlier, Dr. Malone has passionately called for an end to the spread of misinformation and disinformation. The draft treaty also calls for the same. The report’s authors urge members to support a globally coordinated attempt “to address the misinformation, disinformation, and stigmatization that undermine public health.”

Considering the WHO [has a history](#) of spreading false information, the call to “address” the problem seems, at best, disingenuous. All things considered, however, disingenuous messaging should be the least of our concerns here. If the current draft becomes a reality, the light from the panopticon will shine even brighter. There will be nowhere to hide. Vaccine passports will be the norm, and our right to privacy, or at least some degree of privacy, will become but a distant memory.

John Mac Ghlionn is a researcher and essayist. His work has been published by the New York Post, The Sydney Morning Herald, Newsweek, National Review, and The Spectator US, among others. He covers psychology and social relations, and has a keen interest in social dysfunction and media manipulation.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/will-the-who-use-monkeypox-to-push-vaccine-passports-and-global-surveillance_4484123.html

Monkeypox ‘Games’ Could Lay Groundwork for WHO Pandemic Response Takeover



The logo of the World Health Organization is seen at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, on June 11, 2009. (Anja Niedringhaus/AP Photo)

Joshua Philipp

May 24, 2022

News Analysis

The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) is responding to a string of [monkeypox](#) outbreaks, and will be convening an emergency meeting on the virus and its global spread.

In terms of government power, the timing of this outbreak couldn't be better for the WHO—which may soon be granted powers to manage laws on global health outbreaks, and which is oddly well-positioned for a monkeypox outbreak following a recent “germ-games” call, and recent incidents tied to figures who include Microsoft billionaire Bill Gates.

The New York Post [declared](#), “The World Health Organization is reportedly convening an emergency meeting into the alarming spread of monkeypox around the world—including a possible case in the Big Apple.” The Telegraph [reports](#) that the [United Nations](#) health authority will be bringing together “a group of leading experts” in the meeting, which is believed to be focused on how the virus is suddenly spreading so widely. It also allegedly will look into the virus's prevalence among homosexual men and on the “vaccination situation.”

The numbers of infections are by no means high. By May 23, the University of Oxford and Harvard Medical School [recorded](#) 245 either confirmed or suspected cases in the entire world. Sajid Javid, the UK health secretary, [wrote on Twitter](#): “Most cases are mild ...”



A woman is seen cycling in a completely empty Navona Square in Rome, on March 13, 2020. The city's streets were eerily quiet on the second day of a nationwide shuttering of schools, shops, and other public places. (Marco Di Lauro/Getty Images)

The timing of all of this is important. It gives the WHO a chance to show its worth, since it's in the process of trying to get new and expansive powers—under the banner of governing global health emergencies.

The United Nations is [considering various amendments](#) to the WHO at its 75th World Health Assembly in Geneva, that could give its director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the unilateral authority to declare a public health emergency with far-reaching powers over the laws of sovereign nations.

Not only would this give Tedros the ability to declare a public health emergency in any nation he wants—using whatever evidence he wants—but it would also allow him to dictate policies that the target country should adopt to respond to the U.N.'s declared emergency. If a country

refuses, a proposed amendment could give the WHO the ability to sanction that country.

If you're wondering whether giving such powers to a U.N. agency that couldn't demonstrate its independence from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) could fly in the face of U.S. law, it seems that President Joe Biden has the answer. Not only is the Biden administration allowing this shift in power to the WHO, but it's also helping advance it.

The United States proposed amendments to the WHO in January, which will be considered at the U.N. meeting in Geneva, [The Epoch Times reports](#). These included an amendment that would allow the WHO to make public declarations on a health crisis without needing to consult with the target country, and without needing to get verification from local officials. The Biden administration's proposals would also give \$2.47 billion in funding to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for things including "enhancements to domestic sentinel surveillance programs," "investments in global genomic surveillance approaches," and other systems.

As [The Epoch Times reports](#), "Respiratory surveillance platforms include video cameras and recorders that alert authorities when members of the public are seen coughing or otherwise acting in a manner that could indicate the presence of an infectious disease or help spread one already present in a population. Such equipment is widely used in China."



A man wearing a protective face mask walks under surveillance cameras as China is hit by an outbreak of the novel coronavirus, in Shanghai, on March 4, 2020. (Aly Song/Reuters)

Whether or not monkeypox poses a large threat to public health, it presents a serious threat to public freedom. The virus could act as a Trojan horse, carrying inside it all the justifications to grant the WHO a dictator's dream of global power, and give the CDC a system of surveillance beyond anything Orwell could have conceived.

Under normal circumstances, monkeypox wouldn't be a large viral risk. The CDC [states](#) that it can be transmitted human-to-human mainly by respiratory droplets that typically don't travel more than a few feet, and so it notes that "prolonged face-to-face contact is required."

Even Biden is [walking back his statements](#) that people should be concerned about monkeypox, and is clarifying that it's not as serious of a threat as [COVID-19](#).

Regardless of its inability to spread widely under normal circumstances, a global discussion on monkeypox vaccines started in 2021 after Gates

warned of a smallpox bioterrorist attack as a potential next pandemic. He called on world leaders to hold “germ games” and give the WHO new powers—similar to the ones they may soon receive—under a new WHO “Pandemic Task Force.”

Gates also called for pandemic surveillance systems, which seem eerily similar to what the Biden administration submitted in its proposed amendments for the WHO’s new powers.

“It’ll take probably about \$1 billion a year for a pandemic Task Force at the WHO level, which is doing the surveillance and actually doing what I call ‘germ games’ where you practice.” Gates said in 2021, Sky News [reported](#). “You say, OK, what if a bioterrorist brought smallpox to 10 airports? You know, how would the world respond to that?”

Even though the mention of smallpox by Gates was minor, it purportedly was used to justify new discussions on a smallpox vaccine that could also treat monkeypox. Just several days later, on Nov. 8, 2021, Precision Vaccinations [reported](#), “Gates Germ-Game Warning Motivates Smallpox Vaccine Discussions.”

The “discussions” in question were about a Jynneos Smallpox and Monkeypox Vaccine—[approved in 2019](#). Precision Vaccinations noted that it’s “the only FDA-approved non-replicating smallpox vaccine and the only FDA-approved monkeypox vaccine for non-military use.”

Movement within the CDC began a few days earlier, on Nov. 3, 2021. It says that “the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices reviewed the two presentations focused on the smallpox vaccine Jynneos.”

And then, just several days later, an even stranger occurrence took place—carrying out the idea of a “germ game” similar to what Gates proposed.



Bill Gates at the Élysée Palace to encounter the French president to speak about Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), in Paris, on April 16, 2018. (Frederic Legrand—COMEEO/Shutterstock)

The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) partnered with the Munich Security Conference to imagine a pandemic scenario with monkeypox. Following the hypothetical warning from Gates, the germ game imagined a strain of monkeypox, released through a bioterrorist attack, that had been altered to be resistant to vaccines.

On Nov. 23, 2021, the NTI [published its results](#) from the tabletop game, which showed the spread of the virus over the course of 18 months.

“By the end of the exercise, the fictional pandemic resulted in more than 3 billion cases and 270 million fatalities worldwide,” it states.

In an incredible act of foresight, the exercise from last year imagined that monkeypox would appear almost exactly when it did: in mid-May this year.

The NTI also [published a detailed report](#) on its results. According to a timeline on page 12 of the report, it imagined that in May 2022, the initial

outbreak of monkeypox would infect 1,421 people and kill four people. By January 2023, it would spread to 83 countries, infect 70 million, and kill 1.3 million. At that point, it would be discovered that monkeypox had been engineered to be vaccine-resistant, and supply chain challenges would make a response more difficult.

After one year, on May 10, 2023, it was predicted to infect 480 million people and kill 27 million, and it would be revealed that a bioterror attack on a civilian biolab had been the origin. Then, by Dec. 1, 2023, the virus would be estimated to infect 3.2 billion people and kill 271 million.

Of course, the important caveat with their estimates is that the monkeypox strain they imagined was one that had been engineered to be vaccine-resistant. Accurate or not, the exercise gives authorities a predictive scenario to justify “pandemic response” policies. And we’ve seen this happen before.



Vials of smallpox vaccine sit on a counter at a vaccination facility in Altamonte Springs, Fla., on Dec. 16, 2002. (Chris Livingston/Getty Images)

A very similar “germ game” was held just before the outbreak of COVID-19, with many of the same figures involved now making noise about monkeypox and a new “pandemic.”

New York Magazine [reported](#) in February 2020 that “two months before the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 emerged in central China, a group of public-health experts gathered in New York City for a simulation.” It also noted, “The characteristics of the virus currently causing global havoc are remarkably similar to the one proposed in the simulation, dubbed ‘Event 201.’”

Partners in the exercise included the [World Economic Forum](#) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Similar to the monkeypox “germ game” before the monkeypox outbreak, the coronavirus “germ game” before the coronavirus outbreak made predictions of a mass fatality scenario. It estimated that 65 million people would die.

The Center for Health Security [issued a statement](#) on its coronavirus exercise on Jan. 24, 2020. It stated that they weren’t predicting that COVID-19 would kill 65 million people, as the simulated virus was different from the [CCP virus](#).

Yet the important thing wasn’t the specifics of the “germ game,” but instead, how the game and its participants went on to inform government policy.

And now, with monkeypox, we’ve arrived at a similar impasse. A “germ game” imagined the potential effect of the virus, and produced inflated numbers of deaths and infections by an imaginary version of monkeypox as the model, which was resistant to vaccines. Most importantly, this also coincides with the international community weighing whether the WHO should be granted powers to govern global health emergencies.

Among the trends of COVID-19 is that governments may now be more inclined to use a seasonal virus, already declared as endemic, to justify an indefinite global emergency. Additionally, small outbreaks can also be used to justify deeply authoritarian policies that aren’t limited to health care.

Read More

[Narrative and Ideological Warfare: The Ongoing Battle Between Liberty and Authoritarianism](#)

The worst example of this is the CCP, which is claiming to use single-digit infections to lock down entire megacities. And remember that under the

Trump administration, the WHO [was shown](#) to be unable to demonstrate its independence from the CCP.

Health emergency response is also no longer limited to just medicine. The COVID-19 model included mass changes to election systems that undermined the basic integrity of elected government, and widespread censorship under the narrative of fighting “disinformation” and “misinformation.” Remember that at the beginning of the pandemic, the WHO and various U.N. agencies [declared](#) an “infodemic” that required controls and censorship of public information.

In the backdrop of the monkeypox scare, the world is preparing to hand the keys to the kingdom to the WHO. And with the strange track of “germ games” and overblown numbers by the so-called experts pulling the strings, the groundwork for this public takeover has already been laid.

Joshua Philipp is an award-winning investigative reporter with The Epoch Times and host of EpochTV's “Crossroads” program. He is a recognized expert on unrestricted warfare, asymmetrical hybrid warfare, subversion, and historical perspectives on today's issues. His 10-plus years of research and investigations on the Chinese Communist Party, subversion, and related topics give him unique insight into the global threat and political landscape.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/monkeypox-games-could-lay-groundwork-for-who-pandemic-takeover_4484764.html

The WHO Treaty Is Tied to a Global Digital Passport and ID System



(sdecoret/Shutterstock)

Aaron Kheriaty

May 24, 2022

Commentary

The [WHO](#) recently announced plans for an [international pandemic treaty](#) tied to a digital passport and digital ID system. Meeting in December 2021 in a special session for only the second time since the WHO's founding in 1948, the Health Assembly of the WHO adopted a single decision titled, "[The World Together](#)."

The WHO plans to finalize the treaty by 2024. It will aim to shift governing authority now reserved to sovereign states to the WHO during a pandemic by legally binding member states to the WHO's revised [International Health Regulations](#).

In January of 2022 the United States submitted proposed [amendments](#) to the 2005 International Health Regulations, which bind all 194 U.N. member states, which the WHO director general accepted and forwarded to other member states. In contrast to amendments to our own constitution, these amendments will not require a two-thirds vote of our Senate, but a simple majority of the member states.

Most of the public is wholly unaware of these changes, which will impact the national sovereignty of member states.

The proposed amendments include, among others, the following. Among the changes the WHO will no longer need to consult with the state or attempt to obtain verification from the state where a reported event of concern (e.g., a new outbreak) is allegedly occurring before taking action on the basis of such reports (Article 9.1).

In addition to the authority to make the determination of a public health emergency of international concern under Article 12, the WHO will be granted additional powers to determine a public health emergency of regional concern, as well as a category referred to as an intermediate health alert.

The relevant state no longer needs to agree with the WHO Director General's determination that an event constitutes a public health emergency of international concern. A new Emergency Committee will be constituted at the WHO, which the Director-General will consult in lieu of the state within whose territory the public health emergency of international concern has occurred, to declare the emergency over.

The amendments will also give "regional directors" within the WHO, rather than elected representatives of the relevant states, the legal authority to declare a [Public Health](#) Emergency of Regional Concern.

Also, when an event does not meet criteria for a public health emergency of international concern but the WHO Director-General determines it requires heightened awareness and a potential international public health response, he may determine at any time to issue an “intermediate public health alert” to states and consult the WHO’s Emergency Committee. The criteria for this category are simple fiat: “the Director-General has determined it requires heightened international awareness and a potential international public health response.”

Through these amendments, the WHO, with the support of the United States, appears to be responding to roadblocks that China erected in the early days of covid. This is a legitimate concern. But the net effect of the proposed amendments is a shift of power away from sovereign states, ours included, to unelected bureaucrats at the WHO. The thrust of every one of the changes is toward increased powers and centralized powers delegated to the WHO and away from member states.

Leslyn Lewis, a member of the Canadian parliament and lawyer with international experience, has [warned](#) that the treaty would also allow the WHO unilaterally to determine what constitutes a pandemic and declare when a pandemic is occurring. “We would end up with a one-size-fits-all approach for the entire world,” she cautioned. Under the proposed WHO plan, pandemics need not be limited to infectious diseases and could include, for example, a declared obesity crisis.

As part of this plan, the WHO has contracted German-based Deutsche Telekom subsidiary T-Systems to develop a [global vaccine passport system](#), with plans to link every person on the planet to a QR code digital ID. “Vaccination certificates that are tamper-proof and digitally verifiable build trust. WHO is therefore supporting member states in building national and regional trust networks and verification technology,” explained Garret Mehl, head of the WHO’s Department of Digital Health and Innovation. “The WHO’s gateway service also serves as a bridge between regional systems. It can also be used as part of future vaccination campaigns and home-based records.”

This system will be universal, mandatory, trans-national, and operated by unelected bureaucrats in a captured NGO who already bungled the covid pandemic response.

Originally published on the author's [Substack](#), reposted from the [Brownstone Institute](#)

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https://www.theepochtimes.com/the-who-treaty-is-tied-to-a-global-digital-passport-and-id-system_4487308.html

The Loss of Trust Is Well Earned



(Vitalii Stock/Shutterstock)

Jeffrey A. Tucker

May 30, 2022

Commentary

Society is broken at many levels, and the economy, too. We face a mental health crisis among young people following two years of unprecedented educational and social disruption. The highest inflation in most people's lifetimes has people nearly panicked about the future, and that combines with strange and unpredictable shortages.

And we wonder why. Few dare call it for what it all is: a result of [lockdowns](#) and overweening [control](#) that has compromised essential rights and liberties. That choice shattered the world as we knew it. We cannot simply move on and forget.

The question I'm constantly asked is: Why did this happen to us? There's no one easy answer but rather a combination of factors that involved both misunderstandings of cell biology and the social contract but also something more nefarious: the deployment and use of a crisis to further special interests.

Let's try to sort through this.

We hoped that the disaster of the COVID response was a one-time event. And that it had nothing to do with politics and interest groups. Maybe it was all some giant confusion? In which the whole thing could be reversed and wasn't part of some larger plot but merely an enormous screw-up.

I've been hoping that since about March 20, 2020, when I figured that the politicians would get over their disease [panic](#) while completely ignoring cell biology. People would surely clamor to get back to normal once the demographics of risk became obvious, rather than trying to live out Hollywood fantasies.

I was absolutely sure that would happen by the last week of March 2020, when major research journals [spelled it all](#) out in bold strokes, and the strategy of [focused protection](#) would be the normal. The popular scientific press even [headlined it](#).

So it went for me and many of us through the summer. Then the fall. Then the winter. Then the spring, summer, fall, and winter. And yet here we are today with major U.S. cities reimposing mask [mandates](#) to "protect" against COVID. You still can't walk into a DMV in the northeast of the United States without a mask.

This is despite the complete absence of compelling evidence from anywhere in the world that masks are effective in stopping or even slowing

disease spread. We knew for sure that lockdowns would wreck the market, social functioning, and public health. We didn't know that they would achieve any good at all, and we learned that they didn't.

Evidence somehow stopped mattering in March 2020. Our new belief system somehow took over and all the rest just became words and numbers that had no connection to the reality that most people imagined to exist.

That points to the real problem of the past two years of our life: We have lived in a sea of intellectual confusion. People stopped understanding and thus trusting evidence and science in general.

In addition, there is a much more grave problem that will take many years to unravel. We don't have a clear understanding of the relationship between the idea of human freedom and the presence of pathogens. For this reason, the social contract, which had been endogenous and evolved through centuries, was shredded.

If we want to fix that core problem, we have to look to this intellectual realm. We need a new understanding. We are nowhere near gaining that, sadly. If we think of COVID as a one-time event, and not a symptom of a larger problem, we will be no closer to gaining that deeper understanding. This isn't so much a partisan problem. The confusions were on the right, the left, and even (and often especially) on the part of libertarians, much to my tribal embarrassment.

Whenever people ask me the great question of why all this happened, my answer is always: at root, intellectual confusion. The problem traces to the ideas the broad culture holds that are simply incorrect, among which is that the state has the power and should exercise the power wholly to stamp out all bad germs that could make us sick.

If we grant that presumption, and give over personal volition to an overweening state, there will be no end to the despotism under which we will live ... forever. That's because pathogens are everywhere forever, and thus so too the machinery that purports to control them.

The Plot

Another real problem from the past 26 months is the lesson that it taught those who long ago stopped believing in the idea of human freedom. They got their way and were handsomely rewarded for it.

The COVID years were the greatest triumph of the administrative state since Louis XIV built Versailles. It ballooned out of control, and then [fought back](#) when a court dared question its authority.

The administrative state is the meta layer to the political state that imagines itself to be invulnerable to juridical and legislative oversight. It also regards itself as immortal: It cannot die the death no matter who gets elected. This layer of the state has gradually assumed ever more power over the last one hundred years of wars and other crises, including now with [pandemic](#) disease.

This meta layer of the state, which operates outside of electoral politics, had a field day with COVID, gaining power, issuing edicts, and eliciting new funding. It isn't a "conspiracy theory" to observe that this tendency exists and that the state has its own interests that aren't always perfectly in accord with the public interest. To dismiss the problem of special interests this way runs contrary to analytical rigor.

To deny that the public sector consists of self-interested individuals is itself mystical, ideological, and essentially unscientific. To examine their motivations means facing reality ("politics without illusions") and doing quality political economy. It isn't "conspiracy theory," it's looking at the reality of politics without the sugar coating.

All states ancient and modern, and their associated interest groups in society (whether the aristocracy or large corporate), search for compelling public rationales for securing their stability of rule over the rest of us. The rationales change through the ages. It could be religious. It could be ideological. It could be [fear](#) of the other. Fear of insecurity or hostile attack. Or infectious disease. The latter has proven to be highly effective at attacking liberty at its root.

Among the lessons we should have learned over two years:

- Certain interest groups have a strong incentive to exaggerate threats and minimize risk gradients as a way of scaring the whole population into ready compliance.
- Legislatures have every incentive to go along in the interest of eliciting greater public funding.
- Corporate interests that benefit from new patterns of consumption are incentivized to back policies that bring those configurations about.
- Product manufacturers that provide protection against the great threat who experience revenue growth (whether defense contractors or mask makers or pharmaceutical companies) want to keep the crisis going as long as possible.
- Whole industries that benefit from keeping people glued to their content lack motivation, report precise science with precision, and prefer stark lines that generate viewer interest.

There are probably a hundred more lessons here, too. Are we really supposed to believe that they don't apply more broadly, that the next pandemic will include none of these dynamics but instead will be about precision, human rights, freedoms, and coherent public health messaging?

Are we really supposed to believe that the interest groups that benefited very recently from fanning the flames of public fear don't and can't band together in a common interest and even plan those campaigns ahead of time?

If we rule that out, we are being completely naive, ridiculously so.

Are we really just supposed to forget completely about what just happened to the nation and the world, to go on with our lives and, once again, fully [trust](#) the elites to manage our future for us?

We know for certain that this is what they want. As Klaus Schwab said at the WEF: "The future is not just happening. The future is built by us, by a powerful community."

NEW – Klaus Schwab tells attendees at his World Economic Forum in Davos that “the future is being built by us.”

pic.twitter.com/ylqB4jclNd

— Disclose.tv (@disclosetv) [May 23, 2022](#)

That said, such people and interest groups wouldn't and couldn't have exercised power over the population if public philosophy upheld principles such as freedom, human rights, and public health principles. They instead would be considered ridiculous and dangerous people. The public would laugh derisively at media organs that called for lockdowns. We would denounce the private interest groups trying to browbeat the population into submission. And the public bureaucracies that handed out edicts would find them widely ignored.

The “conspiracy” can only work in the presence of confusion, which is to say the ultimate answer to protecting freedom lies not just with exposing pressure groups, but also in promoting the principles of a good and free society in order to inoculate the public against falling for the plots and schemes of the well connected and powerful.

Therefore, the answer to the question “confusion or conspiracy” is that they are both operating at the same time. The confusion part is the more serious problem because it's the more difficult thing to fix.

Too often, the attempt to observe dangers to public interests, insofar as they are organized into groups, is denounced as paranoia, even when we have the receipts, and even when the groups themselves announce their plans and their goals. And even when we have only recently suffered under the yoke of expert control.

For example, on the very same weekend that the [WEF](#) met, the [WHO](#) was ramming through a new treaty that would codify lockdowns as an approved policy, even as Biden raised alarm bells about monkeypox and states are already announcing possible quarantines. Are we really not supposed to notice what H.G. Wells called the “open conspiracy”?

It's impossible not to notice. We'd be fools not to.

So why are those who draw attention to this so heavily criticized? Because calling them out has become a taboo. It's a taboo that should be broken, or else trust will never return.

From the beginning of recorded history, the ruling class in all places has plotted, but the extent to which those plots are realized in the direction of history is contingent on public philosophy. So who is to blame when things go wrong, which is to say, when the “conspiracies” actually work? It's all of us.

Human freedom is the public practice of not being trolled by the ruling class, which is forever telling us that life will be better once the most intelligent and most powerful among them are granted all trust to do with our lives and property as they see fit. When we decide that it ends, it ends.

From the [Brownstone Institute](#)

Jeffrey Tucker is founder and president of the Brownstone Institute. He is the author of five books, including “Right-Wing Collectivism: The Other Threat to Liberty.”

[Website](#)

https://www.theepochtimes.com/the-loss-of-trust-is-well-earned_4500452.html

COVID-19: Assessing the Madness in Year 3



Workers in protective suits keep watch on a street during a lockdown amid the COVID-19 pandemic, in Shanghai, on April 16, 2022. (Aly Song/Reuters)

William L. Anderson

Mises Institute

June 1, 2022

Commentary

On the morning of Wednesday, May 4, I woke up feeling the onset of illness. My eyes burned and my muscles ached. As someone who had not been ill for more than a decade, I knew there was a problem, and I wondered if I had caught COVID-19 after avoiding it ever since its outbreak in the United States more than two years ago.

Because of the contagious nature of COVID, I stayed in isolation in our bedroom. (My immune-suppressed stepdaughter lives with us, and my wife and I agreed we needed to take measures to protect her. And we have a VERY comfortable bedroom, one that would be the envy of most of our readers, so I didn't exactly languish during my convalescence.)

However, I did contact friends and acquaintances who had contracted COVID, and most of them reported symptoms like mine. Although my experience was not necessarily "typical" of COVID patients, the notion that COVID was a deadly threat to everyone was overblown, and there is something we can learn from that, some very hard lessons.

The first thing to remember about the outbreak of COVID-19 is that the news media, academic, and political classes in general (or what we might call America's "ruling class") immediately saw COVID as an opportunity to drive Donald Trump from the White House. I remember seeing posts by Democratic friends of mine on Facebook blaming Trump for every single death related to COVID and excoriating him for not immediately locking down the entire country.

Thus, COVID-19 entered the United States as both a novel virus and a political vehicle to place progressives back in power, as progressive politicians and their media allies used COVID as a political weapon, not just against Trump, but against anyone that dissented from the narrative created by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

By turning COVID into a political virus (just as the CDC and NIH had done with AIDS nearly forty years before), governments at all levels imposed the typical political "solution," operating according to the fiction that everyone

was *equally* at risk, which thus supposedly required lockdowns, school closures, and shutting down huge swaths of the economy. Note that this one-size-fits-all approach was not necessary, but once the situation was labeled a crisis, all that was left was for the authorities to crack down on American liberties, knowing that the media had their backs.

Not that the politicians made these decisions without voices of “authority” behind them. Perhaps the loudest voice in the early days was that of [Neil Ferguson of Imperial College London, who created an epidemiological model](#) that predicted up to 2.2 million COVID deaths in the United States unless authorities immediately imposed hard lockdowns. Not surprisingly, [The New York Times immediately endorsed](#) the “study” and urged American authorities to enact draconian policies immediately.

From that point on, progressive American governors and mayors engaged in a perverse competition to see who could close the most businesses and lay out the most draconian policies of school closure and quarantine of healthy people. Those governmental executives who favored an approach of personal freedom *and* personal responsibility, like South Dakota governor Kristi Noem, [were savaged](#) by the progressive media.

While the media called Noem an “angel of death,” they heaped praise upon a *real* angel of death, the former New York governor Andrew Cuomo, who [recklessly ordered](#) COVID patients into nursing homes, resulting in mass deaths. To put it another way, much of the media coverage of COVID and the policies used to deal with COVID followed strict narratives that were upheld even when those narratives collided with the facts.

Two years later, we know things that progressives still don’t like to admit. The first is most important: by emphasizing COVID reduction above everything else, progressives created a string of disasters elsewhere that now are destroying civil society. Politicians believed that they could shut down millions of businesses, put people out of work, and then print *trillions* of dollars to ostensibly replace the lost incomes and lost goods and services. The result has been the [highest rates of inflation in forty years](#), and these are almost guaranteed to go higher.

There is almost no part of U.S. life that has not been harmed by the COVID measures. Even government authorities that two years ago were gung ho for [closing schools](#) and [locking down](#) whole communities now are reassessing those policies. Austrian economist Henry Hazlitt in [Economics in One Lesson](#) noted that the difference between “good” economists and “bad” economists involved looking at the *entire* effects of policies, not just immediate effects:

The whole of economics can be reduced to a single lesson, and that lesson can be reduced to a single sentence: The art of economics consists in looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups.

How one assesses the success or failure of public health policies—in this case, the response toward the COVID infections—should follow the same line of reasoning. While public health officials and the media have demanded policies that emphasized keeping as many people as possible from getting COVID in the first place, they ignored the harmful effects of zero-COVID measures.

Furthermore, we know now that [the vast majority of people who have caught the virus](#) have mild symptoms, much like what I experienced. Those most at risk are [over 65 years old or have other physical conditions](#), such as diabetes, that make people vulnerable to other illnesses. The official death toll of COVID shows that most fatalities were [concentrated in the upper age groups](#) and in people who had other health issues.

Even in the early days of the pandemic, it was obvious who was most at risk of dying from COVID, yet the progressive authorities treated everyone as being equally vulnerable, distributing resources to deal with the problem accordingly. The political response to the spread of COVID produced political results: death and destruction. [Massive school closures and isolating children](#) led to a rash of suicide and mental health crises, yet to this day, no one in an official capacity has admitted to wrongdoing.

While no government entities in the United States have yet tried to emulate the massive lockdowns seen now in China, no progressive politician here has openly condemned those extreme measures, either. Instead, progressives continue to mirror what Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand [wrote of the Bourbons](#) when they were reinstated to power in France: “They had learned nothing, and forgotten nothing.” Indeed, people in authority who refuse to admit they were wrong the first time almost surely will do the same thing again and again.

William L. Anderson is a Fellow of the Mises Institute and professor of economics at Frostburg State University. He has published numerous articles and papers on economics and political economy in many publications and is a frequent contributor to LewRockwell.com.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/covid-19-assessing-the-madness-in-year-3_4502857.html

How the Pandemic Response Changed My Thinking



(Mike Pellinni/Shutterstock)

Jeffrey A. Tucker

June 7, 2022

Commentary

Looking back to the “before times”—meaning before the middle of March 2020—we were all quite naive about liberty, technology, the mob, and the state. Most of us had no idea what was possible and that the dystopia in movies could become real in our times, and so suddenly. The intellectual

parlor games were over; the fight spilled over from the classrooms to the streets.

It's even difficult for me to recreate the thinking behind my exuberant confidence that we faced a future of peace and progress forever, times when I could not conceive of circumstances that would disable the whole trajectory. I was previously sure that the state as we know it was melting away bit by bit.

Looking back, I had become like a Victorian-style Whig who never dreamed that the Great War could happen. To be sure, I might have been correct in my empirical observation that public institutions were losing credibility and had been for thirty years. And yet it is for this very reason that some major fear campaign was likely to come along to disrupt the trajectory. It had not occurred to me that it would succeed so marvelously.

The experience has changed all of us, making us more aware of the depth of the crisis and teaching us lessons we can only wish we did not have to learn.

#1 The Role of Information

My previous naivete, I think, was due to my confidence in information flows from my study of history. Every despotism of the past was marked by lack of access to truth. For example, how is it that the world believed that Stalin, Mussolini, and Hitler were men of peace and could be skillfully managed via diplomatic relations? Why did people believe the reports emanating from The New York Times that there was no famine in Ukraine, that Mussolini had cracked the code to efficient economic planning, and that Hitler was over-the-top but essentially harmless?

My previous view has been that we did not know better because we did not have access to accurate reports. The same could be said about other egregious incidences of despotism from history. Humanity wallowed in darkness. The Internet fixes that, or so we (I) believed.

That turned out to be wrong. The speed and abundance of information actually amplified error. At the height of the [pandemic](#) response, anyone could have looked up the demographics of risk, the failings of PCR and masks, the history and significance of natural immunity, the absurdities of plexiglass and capacity restrictions, the utter futility of travel limits and curfews, the pointless brutality of school closures. It was all there, not just on random blogs but also in the scholarly literature.

But the existence of correct information was nowhere near enough. It turns out (and this is perhaps obvious now) that it is not the information availability as such that matters but people's capacity to make sound judgments about that information. That is what was lacking all along.

Localized fear, parochial germophobia, general innumeracy, superstitious [trust](#) in talismans, meaningless ritualism, and population-wide ignorance of the achievements of cell biology overrode rational argumentation and rigorous science. It turns out that floods of information, even when it includes that which is accurate, is not enough to overcome weak judgment, a lack of wisdom, and moral cowardice.

#2 Trust in Big Tech

In the early years of their founding, companies like Google, Microsoft, Twitter, and even Facebook had a libertarian ethos bound up with the ideas of industrial disruption, free flow of ideas, and democratic participation. Legacy media was terrified. We came to see the new companies as the good guys and the old media as the bad guys. I wrote whole books heralding the dawn of the new, which in turn was connected to my confidence that more information would allow the best information to dominate public debate.

At some point in this trajectory, all these institutions became captured by a different ethos. How precisely this came to be has a mix of explanations. Regardless, it happened, and this became incredibly obvious and painful during the pandemic, as these CEOs volunteered their efforts to amplify CDC and WHO information no matter how wrong it turned out to be. The

more users pushed back, the more brutal tactics of censorship and cancellation became the norm.

Clearly, I had not anticipated this but I should have. The long history of collaboration of big business with big government shows how they often work hand in glove (the New Deal is a case in point). In this case, the danger became especially pronounced because Big Tech has a very long and deep reach into our lives via location tracking and compelling notifications, to the point that nearly every American carries on his person what turned out to be a propaganda and compliance tool—the very opposite of the initial promise.

Another example of big business, and perhaps the preeminent one, was Big Pharma, which likely played a sizable role in policy decisions made very early on. The promise that the shot would fix everything turned out to be untrue, a fact which many are still unwilling to admit. But consider the expense of this misjudgment! It's unthinkable.

#3 Administrative State Revealed

There are three kinds of states: the personal state, the elected/democratic state, and the administrative state. Americans think we live in the second type but the pandemic revealed something else. Under a state of emergency, it's the bureaucracy that rules. Americans never voted for mask mandates, school closures, or travel restrictions. Those were imposed by edicts by "public health" officials who seem delighted by their power. Further, these policies were imposed without proper consultation. At times, it seemed like the legislatures and even the courts were utterly powerless or too cowardly to do anything.

This is a serious crisis for any people who imagine themselves to be free. The United States was not founded to be this way. The administrative state is a relatively new invention with the first full deployment tracing to the Great War. It has only gotten worse.

The apotheosis of the U.S. administrative state was surely the pandemic period. These times revealed the "political" class to be not much more than

a veneer for something far less accountable. It became so bad that when a Florida judge ruled a CDC edict as inconsistent with the law, the CDC objected mostly on grounds that their authority cannot be questioned. This is not a tolerable system. It's hard to think of a higher priority than containing this beast.

This is going to take a change more far reaching than a shift in which party controls the legislature. It is going to take foundational change, the establishment of walls of separation, paths of accountability, juridical limits, and, ideally, abolition of whole departments. That's a tough agenda, and it simply cannot happen without public support which in turn depends on the cultural conviction that we simply cannot and will not live this way.

#4 The Issue of Inequality

With economics education, I never really took issues of wealth inequality as such very seriously. How possibly could it matter what the "gap" between the rich and the poor happens to be so long as there is mobility between the classes? It doesn't somehow hurt the poor that others are rich; you can even make the opposite case.

I always found the idea of class itself to be largely exaggerated and even irrelevant from the point of view of political economy, a Marxian construct that has no real impact on social organization. Indeed, I've long suspected that those who say otherwise were seizing on class as a way of dividing up the social order that is otherwise universally cooperative.

And so it would be in a free society. That is not where we are today. And this much we know: the professional class exercises outsized influence over the affairs of state. That much should be exceedingly obvious, though I'm not sure that it was to me before 2020. What we saw was the unfolding of a coercive social system that favored the professional class over the working class, a group rendered nearly voiceless for the better part of two years.

Now it is very obvious to me why a society with entrenched social classes really matters for the operation of politics. Without class mobility both up

and down the social ladder, the ruling class becomes protective of its rank and deeply fearful of losing it, even to the point of pushing policies to entrench its privileges. Lockdown was one of them. It was a policy constructed to deploy the working classes as sandbags to bear the burden of herd immunity and keep their betters clean and protected. It's truly impossible to imagine that lockdown would ever have happened in absence of this class stratification and ossification.

#5 The Mob

Along with my confidence in information flows comes an implicitly populist sense that the people find intelligent answers to important questions and act on them. I believe that I always accepted that as an ideological prior. But the [covid](#) years showed otherwise.

The mob was unleashed in ways I've never witnessed. Walk the wrong way down the grocery aisle and expect to get screamed at. Millions slapped masks on their kids' faces out of fear. The compliance culture was out of control, even when there was zero evidence that any of these "nonpharmaceutical interventions" achieved their goal. The non-compliers were treated as disease spreaders, subjected to demonization campaigns from the top that quickly trickled down to coronajustice warriors at the grassroots.

The cultural divisions here became so intense that families and communities were shattered. The impulse toward segregation and stigmatization became extreme. It was infected vs uninfected, masked vs not, vaccinated vs not, and finally red vs blue—severe indictments of others manufactured entirely in the name of virus management. Truly, I had no idea that such a thing would be possible in the modern world. This experience should teach us that the onset of tyranny [is not just about top-down rule](#). It's about a whole-of-society takeover by a manufactured mania.

Perhaps some form of populism will lead us out of this mess, but populism is a two-edged sword. It was a terrified public that backed the irrational

response to the virus. Today the rational seem to outnumber the irrational but that could easily flip the other way.

What we really need is a system that is safe for freedom and human rights that protects those ideals even when the madness of crowds—or the arrogance of intellectuals or the lust for power of the bureaucrats—wants to scrap them. And that means revisiting the very foundations of what kind of world in which we want to live. What we once believed was a settled matter has been completely upended. Figuring out how to recover and restore is the great challenge of our times.

So, yes, as with millions of others, my naivete is gone, replaced by a harder, tougher, and more realistic understanding of the great struggles we face. People in wartime in the past must have gone through such similar transformations. It affects us all, personally and intellectually. It's the great moment when we realize that no outcome is baked into the fabric of history. The lives we live are not granted to us by anyone. That we must make for ourselves.

From the [Brownstone Institute](#)

Jeffrey Tucker is founder and president of the Brownstone Institute. He is the author of five books, including "Right-Wing Collectivism: The Other Threat to Liberty."

[Website](#)

https://www.theepochtimes.com/how-the-pandemic-response-changed-my-thinking_4518635.html

An Inside Look at the ‘Zero-COVID’ Lockdowns in China



A worker in a protective suit walks on a closed bridge during the lockdown in Shanghai, China, on May 18, 2022. (Reuters/Aly Song/File Photo)

The lockdowns serve the CCP's purposes while demoralizing Chinese citizens

Stu Cvrk

June 8, 2022

Commentary

State-run Chinese media have been trumpeting the supposedly glorious efforts of Chinese public health officials—with their local security enforcers in the background—in containing the spread of COVID-19 in Chinese cities under the umbrella of the Xi Jinping’s grand “Zero-COVID” policy.

The continuous agitprop on this subject serves several purposes for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP): (1) convincing the Chinese people and the world that the totalitarian “[zero-COVID](#)” that is ruining Chinese lives actually works; (2) propagating the fear porn message to the world that the “pandemic” is still ongoing; (3) keeping a lid on any domestic dissent, especially in Shanghai, leading up to the expected approval of Xi’s continued leadership status at the upcoming 20th National Congress of the CCP; and (4) camouflaging Chinese economic woes through purposeful interruption of global supply chains that adversely affects the world economy.

The CCP appears to be playing some high-stakes poker in pursuit of these purposes because, whether intended or not, the “zero-COVID” [lockdowns](#) are also destroying the Chinese economy, as previously reported by Epoch Times [here](#).

The eyes gaze at the endless stream of “zero-COVID” headlines that reinforce the CCP propaganda purposes behind “zero COVID.” Some recent examples include the following:

- “Experts: Anti-COVID strategy works” ([China Daily](#))
- “Dropping dynamic zero-COVID approach in China could cause 1.55 million deaths: study” (China Daily)
- “Shanghai records lowest daily tally since March 24, may need fight at community level ‘till June 8’” (Global Times)
- “China’s zero-covid will be proven beneficial for world economy” (Global Times)
- “Racing against time and virus, China merits global confidence” (People’s Daily)

- “Dynamic zero-COVID approach, China’s choice to safeguard lives, underpin economic growth” (China Daily)

Ad nauseum. Regarding that last item, does the CCP seriously believe that “Zero COVID” is “China’s choice”? Read on.

What do lockdowns really mean to average Chinese citizens who have to endure them?

As The Wall Street Journal reported [on May 10](#), if a single person in an apartment building tests positive, people in the entire building need to be isolated while the infected person and all occupants of that apartment are moved to centralized quarantine facilities.

The Journal further reported [on May 15](#) that mass testing is now the norm, with negative tests required to complete simple daily activities such as buying groceries or riding the subway. Imagine having under that regimen day after day!

To summarize what the harsh lockdowns mean for average citizens: lockdowns initiated at any time without advance notice; restriction to one’s living quarters (including being physically locked in); being sent to a quarantine facility if testing positive; limited or no access to hospitals for routine medical procedures and urgent care; reduced availability to food supplies (some may be government-provided and some mass-ordered for delivery if fortunate); and “escape” from home quarantine authorized only for mandatory daily COVID tests.



A security worker locks a door with a chain in a neighborhood under a COVID-19 lockdown in the Jing'an district of Shanghai on June 2, 2022. (Hector Retamal/AFP via Getty Images)

Is the patience of the people wearing thin into the eighth week of the lockdowns in Shanghai and other Chinese cities?

A video tweeted [on May 16](#) by Fang Zhouzi (@fangshimin), a Chinese muckraker who is [an opponent of pseudoscience and other fraud](#), provides striking evidence of discord. In it, two groups of people clad in biosafety suits attack each other outside what is probably an apartment building.

While the context of the confrontation is unclear, a logical deduction is that the situation had something to do with the “zero-COVID” lockdown enforcement, given that everyone in the video was clothed in a biosafety suit. Some informed speculation is provided below, courtesy of a friend who is fluent in Chinese and has routine communications with long-time Chinese friends on the mainland. He described the situation as “a mess” (yī

tuán luàn—團亂). And given that the Chinese population is seething over the continuing lockdowns, the likelihood is high that this sort of incident is probably happening elsewhere.

First of all, my friend has frequently referred to Chinese medical personnel wearing biosafety suits by the term “big white” (dàbái 大白). These people were all health workers at the start of the pandemic in China. Since the brutal Shanghai lockdowns began, many “zero-COVID” enforcers were dressed in white hazmat suits with blue stripes.

As time passed and the lockdowns became institutionalized and the procedures more brutal, a considerable portion of the “big white” morphed into enforcers, including “[urban management](#)” (chéngguǎn 城管), the dreaded [parapolice](#) who plague Chinese cities. That’s truly disturbing since the latter—in years past—were infamous for beating to death fruit sellers on the streets and people who resisted having their homes demolished (“chāi 拆”) during forced urban renewal and expansion projects.

The incredible video clip from Fang Zhouzi provides a template for what’s almost certainly happening in China regularly these days: the police are beating “the people,” and there’s strife between hostile groups of individuals who want—as reflected by their dress, behavior, and equipment/accouterments—to be viewed as carrying out the wishes of some authority.

Here’s some speculation from one of his friends in China on the video. He only heard “the police hit someone” (警察打人了) from spectators (maybe the one taking the video, who was then harshly criticized in the comments for being a coward and not daring to join the fight). Some comments suggest that the people in blue were real guards, whereas those in white were the ones being quarantined. It seems the blues are police as they were beating the white.

Next is some speculation from an “ardent patriot of the People’s Republic of China,” who views the video as a confrontation between blue-clad community association representatives and white uniformed hospital/health

workers who want to enter the community to do their “zero-COVID” activities. According to this person, the clash took place at the entrance to a “community” (xiǎoqū 小区).

The people in white robes are from the “medical system” (医疗系统). They are nurses, doctors, and medical people—generally outsiders to a community but higher in the hierarchical system regarding regulations and commands. The people in blue robes are from the “community work system” (社区工作系统) or “street office” (街道办事处). They are usually “public servants” (公务员) who were selected (or volunteered) to serve the community. In normal times, they would mediate quarrels between two families; they would be familiar with everybody who lives in the community, and if you run into them, they’d say “hi” to you and ask how you’re doing, or they would be in charge of all kinds of community/condominium affairs.

So, in short, this seems most likely to be a “battle” at the entrance of a certain community between “insiders” and “outsiders.” The “insiders” wear blue. Their job is to serve the community, and some of the blue robes may be representatives of the residents in the community that they work for. So they speak for the community. The “outsiders” wear white. They are medicare workers dispatched from hospitals. They don’t care about any individual community; they care about the COVID situation in general, and they visit every community.

Therefore, the scenario looks like the white-robed “medicare outsiders” want to come inside a certain community—perhaps to seal people’s doors with “quarantine tape,” or maybe to keep building a wall, or doing other things. The blue-robed “community service insiders” want to prevent them from entering, and so they keep pushing them out—perhaps they’ve already been quarantined too long and just gained their freedom, or they wanted to protect a particular family from being carried away to the “square cabin hospital” (方舱医院) or a quarantine facility, or for some other reasons.

At the end of the video, you can see that two white-robed people were lying on the ground, beaten by the blue-robed ones. Those beaten white robes

may also be a reason for swarms of white robes wanting to come inside. Maybe it's not so much about the quarantine, but simply they wanted to save their own people.

Concluding Comments

Most Americans and other Westerners are entirely ignorant of the draconian “zero-COVID” lockdown measures being implemented in many Chinese cities. All individual liberties and freedoms are sacrificed for what the CCP arbitrarily conveys as the “common good of the Chinese people” (a typical CCP euphemism).

There is complete stratification in Chinese society and an incredible hierarchy of officialdom that reaches down into the very living quarters of average Chinese citizens to take even the most basic of decisions away from the average Chinese. Woe be unto those brave souls who buck the system!

The most amazing insight from the above speculation about the blue-versus-white video confrontation was the blithe and unemotional attitude expressed by the supporter of the Chinese regime, who seemed to accept without concern that what transpired was a normal experience to be expected in communist China.

Heaven forbid that Americans ever experience similar complacency during future lockdowns in the United States. You just know that day is coming if the Democratic Party has its way.

Stu Cvrk retired as a captain after serving 30 years in the U.S. Navy in a variety of active and reserve capacities, with considerable operational experience in the Middle East and the Western Pacific. Through education and experience as an oceanographer and systems analyst, Cvrk is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, where he received a classical liberal education that serves as the key foundation for his political commentary.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/an-inside-look-at-the-zero-covid-lockdowns-in-china_4515147.html

The Politics of Natural Infection



(KPixMining/Shutterstock)

Jeffrey A. Tucker

June 8, 2022

Commentary

From the very outset of this pandemic, the topic of [natural infection](#) has been a taboo. To suggest that anyone might have been better off risking infection and thereby gaining immunity from a respiratorial virus rather than hiding under the sofa for two years was seen as outrageous and irresponsible.


My theory is that the reason has always been political. And that's tragic.

Generations have gone by that have understood it. A life strategy to flee all pathogens is deeply dangerous. The immune system, in order to be trained to protect against severe disease, needs exposure. Not to all things, of course, but to many pathogens that are not finally debilitating or fatal. We've evolved with pathogens in what Sunetra Gupta calls a "dangerous dance." This dance is unavoidable, especially for fast-mutating viruses like SARS-CoV-2.

And yet from the beginning, this knowledge seemed to be lost. This is gravely embarrassing since it's been known for 2,500 years. It was worse than just lost. As a person who wrote almost daily during the pandemic, I too was careful not to discuss this topic with too much bluntness. We all felt the political pressure to say silent or at least cloud our prose with euphemisms.

The single most controversial sentence of the Great Barrington Declaration was this one: "The most compassionate approach that balances the risks and benefits of reaching herd immunity, is to **allow those who are at minimal risk of death to live their lives normally to build up immunity to the virus through natural infection**, while better protecting those who are at highest risk."

That talk about building up immunity is what drove people bonkers, as if no one was somehow allowed to utter a settled scientific truth. And yet long before Fauci began to speak as if getting infected was the worst possible fate, he was more honest.

Dr. Fauci says you don't need  if you've been infected. Infection is the best protection. [#drfauci](#) [#fauci](#) [#Naturalimmunity](#) [#immunity](#) [#Covid_19](#) [#COVIDVACCINE](#) [#endthemandates](#) [#freedom](#) [#TrudeauMustGo](#) pic.twitter.com/Kjr5gzmZhB

— Live From The Shed (@livewiththeshed) [May 25, 2022](#)

Even I knew (from what I learned in 9th grade and what my mother taught) that the pandemic would only end with endemicity naturally earned. That is precisely what is happening. The CDC's publication MMWR [printed a seroprevalence study](#) showing that from December 2021 to February 2022—that period during which it seemed like everyone in the country got [covid](#)—went from 33.5 percent to 57.7 percent. In children, it went from 44.2 percent to 75.2 percent. It's higher in both groups now.

That the study got no real attention to it shows that we are fast moving toward the end, and how? Not through vaccination, which protects against neither infection nor transmission. It ends with everyone meeting the virus. There is of course some threshold of herd immunity with this virus, though it keeps rising with each mutation, requiring ever more rounds of infection to achieve it. It is surely higher than 70 percent but probably less than 90 percent depending on population mobility and other factors.

We can look at that data today and wonder. What if we had never locked down? What if we had gone on with life as normally while urging those in risk categories to wait it out a bit while we achieved endemicity? How long would it have taken to get there?

Might it have been over by the summer of 2020? It is possible. It's hard to know such counterfactuals with precision, but it does seem highly likely that the lockdowns achieved nothing good, caused tremendous damage, and also unnecessarily prolonged the pandemic. In addition, they degraded everyone's immune system: we didn't just avoid covid but everything else too.

And the main reason was due to the unwillingness of public health authorities to talk about actual science. When Fauci was asked about [natural immunity](#) in September 2021, he said "I don't have a really firm answer for you on that. That's something that we're going to have to

discuss regarding the durability of the response...I think that is something that we need to sit down and discuss seriously.”

The WHO even [changed its definition](#) of herd immunity to exclude natural infection as a factor! The whole institution gave itself over to vaccine sales based on wild exaggerations of their effectiveness while all-but-denying robust and broad immunity through exposure.

A key political factor to natural immunity is that it does not call on government to assume totalitarian controls to stop a virus. It presumes the operations of a normal society. The government wanted all power and deployed it to stop the virus. Therefore, science was out of the question, replaced by political propaganda from start to finish.

It's not well understood that the US policy from the very outset accepted and adopted a zero covid approach. That gradually unraveled over time as unworkable. Trump's own advisors tricked him into believing that he could achieve that just like Xi Jinping did. [He fell for it](#), and pushed the two weeks to flatten the curve under the belief that this would make the virus go away. His rhetoric that day set the stage for more than two years of utter nonsense.

And here we are all this time later and top headlines are finally admitting what should have been obvious from the beginning. For a virus this prevalent, it ends with widespread natural immunity. Here's the [Bloomberg headline](#):

How Often Do We Have to Get Covid to Stop Getting Covid?

Natural immunity will be key to downshifting the pandemic to endemic status. That doesn't mean you should go out and try to catch the virus tomorrow.

The rest of the article is designed to walk back that core claim. We are still not ready to face the terrible realities that the lockdowns achieved nothing and that the vaccines did not end the pandemic. The taboo subject of

meeting the virus is still today what it was 30 months ago, nearly unsayable.

My theory is that this is entirely for political reasons. They hatched a wild plan to control a virus that would come and go like all such viruses in history, and so therefore they had to pretend their efforts were essential to the great task. They never were. That's the bitter reality.

Reflecting on this topic of exposure and immunity eventually leads a person to realize that we don't need centralized control, coercion, and dictatorial power to manage a pandemic. Pandemics are unavoidable but they largely manage themselves while the best-possible outcomes rest with the intelligence of individuals informing choices based on their own risk assessment. (I feel like I've been writing some version of that sentence for 33 months.)

And this speaks to the big problem we have today. The people who did this to us have not admitted error and probably won't. Despite all the failures, these same people are gearing up for another round of lockdowns based once again on the ideology that the worst-possible fate for anyone is to face a virus naturally and bravely.

Think about this: our lords and masters are saying that our only choice in the face of any prevalent pathogen is to hunker down, don't hold parties, don't send kids to school, don't go to church, don't go work, don't travel, and instead just wait for them to make a fancy serum to inject in our arms, which we must accept whether we like it or not.

In short, a government that seeks to control all pathogenic spread is one with totalitarian powers that knows not human rights or freedoms.

From the [Brownstone Institute](#)

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https://www.theepochtimes.com/the-politics-of-natural-infection_4521058.html