

The Ethics of Revolution

By Chris Shaw

In the first essay, I asked people to define what they wanted as a political/social structure of governance. Later, talking to friends, I realized just how hard it is for many raised in any society to imagine anything else but what that society already is. Perhaps the American anarchist/communist writer put it best:

“The assumption that what currently exists must necessarily exist is the acid that corrodes all visionary thinking.”

Indeed, unless pushed to confront the limitations of their own society and type of governance by circumstance, many will never do so, including some who oppose the various oppressive governmental measures. Essentially, many people want to tinker with the structure, without actually altering it in any fundamental way in a desperate attempt to “get back to normal.” The analogy to house renovation comes to mind: merely fixing the front steps and the roof, when the entire structure, including the foundation, is unstable is not going to work, and certainly not in the long term.

This raises the question of how we change the structure we have if it does not serve us?

There are two steps. The first, as cited above, is to decide what it is we want at every level. The second is to define how we will go about changing the structure of governance in the face of almost certain opposition, even repression, from those in power. In the face of such repression, the options are limited: compliance with what is, or revolution.

What then are the ethics of revolution? Do the ethics of those rebelling depend on the level of oppression from the existing State? What might be some features of such oppression? While we can speculate on what these might be in general, we actually do not have to do so given that current governments in Canada have made their stages of control abundantly clear in the last two years.

Some examples will suffice to demonstrate the intent and level of manipulation and coercion at present and the likely future trajectory for the same in the future.

A list of specific grievances based on the current situation in Canada might include the following, but is not restricted to these examples:

Restrictions on movement into and out of the country, even for citizens;

Restrictions on freedom of assembly and religion;

Restrictions on the ability to access a range of public locations, including restaurants, bars, cinemas, and others;

Mandates for vaccination across a range of occupations where governments at all levels have made employment status dependent of vaccination;

Further to the above, governments have put pressure on private sector businesses to enforce vaccine mandates as well;

Expansion of vaccine mandates to include children with penalties for non-compliance to include loss of access to schools and public places;

Penalties for those who refuse vaccination, including isolation, and financial punishments in the form of additional taxation (pending in Quebec).

All of the above highlight the arbitrary power of the Canadian State to relegate a fraction of the population to a second tier type of citizenship based solely on vaccine compliance. From even a cursory reading of Canadian history, it is clear that Canada has used such coercive measures in the past with populations deemed to be inferior, notably the Indigenous population whose children were forced into residential schools for over a span of 100 years, or Japanese Canadians put into internment camps during WW2.

Such governmental actions in the past have led to very realistic concerns about the potential of the Canadian State to remove children from parents who do not vaccinate them, or even to intern adults who will not comply.

Other grievances include the domination of the media by the governmental narrative, including increasingly divisive statements of government officials, including the Prime Minister, who recently said in a television interview:

“We are going to end this pandemic by proceeding with the vaccination...

We all know people who are deciding whether or not they are willing to get vaccinated, and we will do our very best to try to convince them. However, there is still a part of the population (that) is fiercely against it.

They don't believe in science/progress and are very often misogynistic and racist. It's a very small group of people, but that doesn't shy away from the fact that they take up some space.

This leads us, as a leader and as a country, to make a choice: *Do we tolerate these people?...* (italics, mine).

With words like these, the Prime Minister has declared war on the unvaccinated whose sole “crime” is to refuse a medical treatment that is not effective long term and one that comes with considerable health risks. This is precisely the language of totalitarian governments that seek to increase their power by demonizing some fraction of the population. Indeed, this is precisely the sort of rhetoric currently used by China against various populations.

When one hears the leader of one's country mouthing such sentiments, it must raise the question of who the government actually serves: the people or some other State or non-State entity?

With the above now facing Canadians, have we reached the stage where revolution becomes a necessity?

I believe we have.

The recent trucker convoy that saw thousands of Canadian take to the highways and descend *en mass* on the Parliament building in Ottawa was an example of a peaceful revolution.

If, however, the State is sufficiently oppressive, even peaceful revolutions can become violent in response.

In regard to the latter, we would be well advised to recall John F. Kennedy's 1962 statement that, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable."

Our Prime Minister should realize the dangerous place he is forcing Canadians to occupy and the consequences that might ensue. If force is used against the protesters in Ottawa, then all bets are off.

The use of force against the truckers and their supporters could well be the spark that triggers a new phase of resistance. If that were to occur, the blame for any blood spilled will rest solely with this Prime minister and his government.