

ONWARD & UPWARD

By Damian Stephen



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'We've developed a bit of Stockholm syndrome or agoraphobia due to these restrictions where we feel "safe". And as a result of feeling "safe" a form of safety-ism has arisen. In the name of which, we have been willing to argue for the curtailing of our civil liberties much more forthrightly than we ever have done before while thinking we're the good guys.'

These were [the words spoken by Maajid Nawaz on LBC Radio on 6th July 2021](#) as the United Kingdom was promised a '[one-way road to freedom](#)' by British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, back in February 2021. Successively, the Prime Minister and his government peddled back on what was to prove a superficially intrepid statement with COVID-19 restrictions going on into mid-summer and with businesses, particularly hospitality, suffering their residual effects.

I noted myself the overhanging of these restrictions when they had been officially lifted by being asked to produce a smart phone with the NHS Covid-19 app installed to gain entry to a pub – even when there was no legal obligation to do so, nor having the system in place. I was directed to do so by masked doormen who were all too glad to be back at work after nearly a year of inaction under furlough, and I know better than to second guess a bouncer. Naturally myself and my group went next door instead, but in London there was a man on one of Britain's leading political radio shows, Maajid Nawaz, who had long been opposed to the new society we had grown to live in. Those that know his backstory take what he says very seriously when it comes to issues of excessive government, civil liberties and the banality of evil.

Nawaz, who was radicalised as a teenager by Islamist fundamentalists and documented in his 2012 memoir *Radical* his path from hate, has been for nearly two decades a proud Islamic reformist with insight into countering extremism in all forms, helping found the Quilliam foundation with former radical Ed Husain. His book was commended by both the British press and Amnesty International. In the LBC broadcast on July 6 2021, Nawaz succinctly covered the conclusions of political philosopher Hannah Arendt in her fascinating 1963 book *Eichmann In Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*; a book which covers among many things the collective societal psychology of Nazi Germany with a particular focus on virtue being placed by authority on particular actions and how large levels of public compliance result.

Nawaz holds civil liberties and liberty as the highest goals of Western civilisation, and as such was an immediate sceptic of government restrictions and their implementation largely based on effecting societal behaviour over any scientific method of combating the spread of COVID-19, or whatever

changing purpose the restrictions existed for. Indeed, the content of Nawaz's online profile, particularly Twitter and Instagram, reinforce his political values and his claims are very much supported by two of the most significant books on the matter of government restrictions and their purpose; the 2020 book *Corona, False Alarm?* by Dr Karina Reiss and Dr Sucharit Bhakti, and the 2021 investigative book *A State of Fear* by Laura Dodsworth.

Dodsworth particularly plays close attention to the leading role of behavioural psychologists, not virologists, in the policy process. These figures created what was creepily called back in 2020 'the new normal', a society placing virtue on following government restrictions and guidelines. She also highlights a complex web of policy development within the British government, so unbelievably distanced and malformed from contemporary cabinet offices and their civil servants that you might get taught in A-Level Politics.



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There is the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and the nudge units known as Behavioural Insight Teams (BIT) along with New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) and their interaction with Public Health England (PHE), [who in their own documentation set up an unscientific campaign of fear on the British people](#). The result of the book is that there exists an entire unelected web of bureaucracy and policy development with no democratic mandate set up in parallel with the Department of Health which used [undemocratic methods to introduce restrictions with a retrospective vote and curtailed debate](#).

Whilst there has been [legitimate criticism on those who oppose compulsory COVID-19 vaccination and government restrictions](#) for appropriating symbolism and lines of argument for minorities oppressed and killed by the Nazis, there is a consistency in their position of comparing the impact of restrictions to those of an autocracy, even if the eventual goal is something far less macabre. I would criticise them for their taste and proportion, and I understand those in the Jewish community who condemn this, but I empathise with the anxiety and why drawing on high profile historical comparisons is an understandable tactic – for who knows where we are headed, or how long it will be. It is also prudent to step back and say the experiences now under government restrictions are obviously nothing compared to those of the Holocaust. But where is the sanity in tolerating something that is half as bad, or quarter as bad?

Is it not a fact that we now live in divided societies? Passes enabling some people rights that others do not? [Leaders of once Western democracies laughing about their decisions whilst they exercise unprecedented power?](#) Is it not also true that the claim of freedom has been both promised and renegeed repeatedly? Or that some Western democracies have mandated medical treatment via the introduction of criminal prosecution, a feat not seen since the introduction of euthanasia by the Nazis? All these questions and their implications on what road the West now walks down are questions that have been asked repeatedly by Maajid Nawaz on LBC and social media, battling boldly with callers, editors and [presenters alike](#). His show on LBC, [his family's only source of income](#) as he declared on Twitter, has ended and himself sacked from LBC. He was on schedule to appear the day after, had not handed in any letter of resignation and was contracted as a presenter until April 2022. LBC gave an incredibly short statement with no identifiable reason for his dismissal. 'Maajid Nawaz's contract with LBC is up very shortly and following discussions with him, Maajid will no longer present a show on LBC with immediate effect'. One wonders how two-way that conversation really was.

So, farewell to Mr Nawaz; a man of conviction, candour and great humour, a man who has achieved a great deal at only 43, who from power of deduction has been removed because he happens to hold a set of opinions. A journalist and campaigner has been jettisoned by a station that is all too close to the government machine. To those in this debate that implore us to turn our ears to experts, may I not lend my ear to those who understand societies, economies of scale, political science, policy and principle? Can I not listen to Hannah Arendt, Thomas Paine or George Orwell and form my own conclusions? Or when told to listen to experts, am I actually being obliged to listen to a very narrow channel of behavioural scientists and public health officials operating without scruple in the corridors of power that have no wider knowledge or wisdom save their slither of expertise?

With this whole affair, there is one conclusion: our society increases in similarity to the evil regimes of old. I am reminded of the findings by historian Laurence Rees; the Gestapo were never large in number, they were reliant on the population's willing cooperation for their success. For Nawaz, he embodies Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians at this second – a man who has cited the need to learn and understand past mistakes and focus on a goal for the future.

*'Brethren, I count not myself to have
Apprehended: but this one thing I do, for-
Getting those things which are behind, and
Reaching forth unto those things which are before'
Philippians 3:13*

OBEDIENCE – A LAYMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

By James Goad ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Gettr](#), [Rumble](#))

Meandering through the early stages of the [Great Reset](#) has not been pleasant. I hope it's the same for those who have perpetrated the crimes. For them it's 'shit or bust' after all. Most disappointing is the extent to which people have gone along with each stage of the oppression ratchet. The state narrative was muddled from the start. If it wasn't obvious the lockdown measures were unnecessary in March 2020, it should have become so during that year as the message kept shifting. From 'three weeks to flatten the curve', to no need for masks, to masks and the need for inoculation. The stench of bullshit grew stronger every week. It did not take intellect to come to that conclusion, just a little common sense.

Why the failure to identify lies and comply with transparent nonsense? I have no background in behavioural studies, but the compliance defied logic and must be a result of something. It would stand to reason that psychological conditioning via education is likely to be a significant factor. We are conditioned to obey from the start. Most people believe we live in enlightened, liberal times, but how liberal is an educational system that corrals children together away from their families for hours every weekday in a maladaptive, collectivised, one-size-fits-all environment? It is a system that erases creative traits, stymies individuality, and produces identikit consumers operating within the parameters of allowable opinion.



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Looking at the roots of our education system can help to understand its objectives. Libertarians often view the 19th century as a classical liberal golden age. However, it is the period within which certain seeds were sown. The British state education system was adapted in part from the one in Massachusetts, where the [state dominated education](#) at all levels. The Massachusetts system was itself adapted from the [Prussian common schools](#) introduced in the late 18th and early 19th century following Frederick the Great's 1763 compulsory education decree. Although generally enlightened, the programme contained the strict ethos of moulding pupils through 'duty, sobriety and discipline'. Prussia, perhaps by necessity, was a war-like state which had the most disciplined, advanced military machine in Europe. The onus on developing obedient, efficient soldiers and civil servants was intrinsic to the survival and prosperity of the Prussian state. Those who have seen Stanley Kubrick's [Barry Lyndon](#) will remember the section of the film within which the protagonist is [pressed into service into the Prussian Army](#).

There are exceptions where the conditioning has failed. Critical thinkers still emerge. Sometimes

children are more influenced by critical thinking parents than by their teachers, or via private schools which allow a wider Overton Window than their opposite state numbers. Some find enlightenment later in life. The conditioning varies from person to person, possibly in relation to the duration of their exposure.

The point is, we need more numbers to turn the tide in our ongoing battle with the 'global state' (a term I've just coined to summarise the pyramid of power sitting over our hapless elected representatives). To win numbers to our side, we need a means to break the conditioning quickly and comprehensively, en masse. We need to make special inroads into the highly brainwashed and suggestible middle-classes; these people who can fulfil often highly complex professional roles, and yet somehow revert to infancy when assessing what is, and what is not, reality. To do so means not only breaking through the learned conditioning but overcoming the considerable propaganda forces of state and corporate media, which is still ingested by most. I'm afraid I don't pretend to have the answer, but it's almost as if we need the force of our own MK Ultra-style programme to tip the scales in our favour. Suggestions are welcome.

CUT THROUGH AND OPPORTUNITY

By Mike Swadling ([Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Gettr](#))

It's not a bad idea in a democracy to be popular as well as right. One of the depressing things surrounding the stories of Boris Johnson and Partygate has been the number of social media posts from liberty lovers saying the story isn't the party. Instead, the story is that the rules were wrong.



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They are right of course; the rules were wrong. No doubt most reading this have broken lockdown rules, some even as early as the spring of 2020. But there is a difference when the rule breakers are those that impose them. Politics requires cut through, and often requires opportunism. Partygate gives both.

Most people in May 2020 were studiously following the rules, and they simply don't like the hypocrisy of the PM, cabinet members, senior civil servants and their assistants, being out partying when we couldn't get together with family to bury a loved one. Yes, the rules were wrong, but saying the rules were wrong two years ago doesn't have the cut through of pointing at a ruling class laughing at us.

There is another issue here that really matters – the Government must follow the same rules as the governed. Magna Carta set out the need for the Monarch to follow the law as much as the commoner. Today much the power of Monarch is effectively held in Downing Street, and rather than taking their cue from Runnymede our current government seems to have looked to Versailles. [John Locke wrote](#) that 'freedom in society means being subject only to laws made by a legislature that apply to everyone'. The rule of law is a common enough expression, indeed [according to the National Curriculum it is a fundamental British value](#).

I firmly believe the best case for liberty is made when liberty lovers connect with a broad swathe of voters and show the hypocrisy of government and the desperate need we all have to constrain it. Can we build a majority that says all people must be free to act with complete liberty? I doubt it. But can we effect change or even build a majority by saying never again can the government be able to act outside of the laws it requires us to follow? Absolutely!

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