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The Attack on Scientific Dissent Becomes Ever More Brutal

BY PAUL ELIAS ALEXANDER OCTOBER 22, 2021 PHILOSOPHY, PUBLIC HEALTH 14 MINUTE READ

The Covid-19 emergency has had devastating effects on those who were vulnerable and succumbed to it (elderly with medical risks, younger with comorbid conditions, obese persons etc.). The risk groups were clearly defined early and we know much better now how to target and manage a response (especially via use of [early multi-drug sequenced treatment](#)). We also knew very early on that Covid-19 was amenable to risk stratification where your baseline risk was prognostic on severity of outcome and mortality, underscoring the need for an age-risk stratified, ‘focussed’ approach such as espoused in the [Great Barrington Declaration \(GBD\)](#) (Gupta, Kulldorff, Bhattacharya).

In the alternative set of policies, there is no blanket carte blanche lockdown but rather a focus on those most at risk so as to reduce morbidity and mortality to them, while the rest of society has the least disruption as possible (largely unfettered making reasonable common-sense decisions). The healthy and well ‘low-risk’ are better able to handle the virus/pathogen immunologically, and in so doing, will help in protecting the vulnerable.

We locked down the healthy in society and still failed to protect the vulnerable (elderly), this causing devastating crushing harms and death.

Tragically, we shifted the burden of morbidity and mortality to the vulnerable, those least able to afford to shield. “Lockdowns did not protect the vulnerable, but rather harmed the vulnerable and shifted the morbidity and mortality burden to the underprivileged.

We instead locked down the ‘well’ and healthy in society, which is unscientific and nonsensical, while at the same time failing to properly protect the actual group that lockdowns were proposed to protect, the vulnerable and elderly. We actually did the opposite. We shifted the burden to the poor and caused catastrophic consequences for them. They were in the worst economic situation to afford the lockdowns and estimates are that it will be decades for them to recover from what we did.”

It is and was the collateral harms of the ineffective lockdowns that did not stop transmission or reduce deaths, that caused more harms, death, and despair than the virus itself (references 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107). “These measures did not significantly change the typical pattern or damage from the SARS2 virus.”

The [Brownstone Institute](#) has responded to this disaster stating “The mission of Brownstone Institute is constructively to come to terms with what happened, understand why, and how to prevent such events from happening again. Lockdowns have set a precedent in the modern world and without accountability, social and economic institutions will be shattered once again.”

In addition and tied to lockdowns, the effects of [school closures](#) were devastating for our children with exaggerated risks, and they caused many [suicides](#) (references [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [18](#), [19](#), [20](#), [21](#), [22](#), [23](#), [24](#), [25](#), [26](#), [27](#), [28](#), [29](#), [30](#), [31](#), [32](#), [33](#), [34](#), [35](#), [36](#), [37](#), [38](#), [39](#), [40](#), [41](#), [42](#), [43](#), [44](#), [45](#), [46](#), [47](#), [48](#), [49](#), [50](#), [51](#), [52](#), [53](#), [54](#), [55](#), [56](#)). There remains an unhealthy distorted relationship between the [teachers unions](#) and [the CDC](#) in maintaining such restrictions.

We even know of the [catastrophic harms](#) (real and potential) due to mask use and policies (references [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [18](#), [19](#), [20](#), [21](#), [22](#), [23](#), [24](#), [25](#), [26](#), [27](#), [28](#), [29](#), [30](#), [31](#), [32](#), [33](#), [34](#), [35](#), [36](#), [37](#), [38](#), [39](#), [40](#)). Two recent pieces in [American Thinker](#) help explain the dehumanizing aspect of masks and how it helps remove empathy and compassion, allowing others to commit unspeakable acts on the masked person. We also know of the [ineffectiveness of masks](#) (references [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [18](#), [19](#), [20](#), [21](#), [22](#), [23](#), [24](#), [25](#), [26](#), [27](#), [28](#), [29](#), [30](#), [31](#), [32](#), [33](#), [34](#), [35](#), [36](#), [37](#), [38](#), [39](#), [40](#), [41](#), [42](#), [43](#), [44](#), [45](#), [46](#), [47](#), [48](#), [49](#), [50](#), [51](#) (WHO, page 7), [52](#), [53](#), [54](#), [55](#), [56](#), [57](#),

[58](#), [59](#), [60](#), [61](#), [62](#), [63](#), [64](#), [65](#), [66](#), [67](#), [68](#), [69](#), [70](#), [71](#), [72](#), [73](#), [74](#)). We also found out about the failure of mask mandates (references [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#)).

The benefits of the governmental actions – lockdowns – have been routinely overstated and excessive while the harms have been devastating (references [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)). Those include crushing harms to our children, the poorer children and minority children, undiagnosed and untreated diseases, excess mortality in years to come from the lockdowns, the escalating suicide and drug overdoses from the lockdowns, the crushing domestic abuse and child abuse, sexual abuse of our children, the massive psychological harms, lost jobs and closed businesses, and the far-reaching catastrophic impact on women and poorer children.

We are now left to pick up the pieces of these failed lockdowns and associated policies orchestrated by misguided and oftentimes absurd Covid Task Forces. There seems to be no end in sight to these restrictive, crushing illogical mandates. Within a pandemic of propaganda and fear. The impact as we have seen, is particularly gut-wrenching and brutal for the impoverished among us, and especially so for our poorer children. Children were locked in their homes staring at their parents and keyboards for 15 months and it will be difficult for them to bounce back.

They have been damaged by these devastating lockdowns and school closures. Many children received their only meal for the day in school. Sexual abuse is usually flagged in the school first and by closing schools,

much of it went undetected. We have not seen the real impact of this pandemic yet, and it is to come and it will be far-reaching for years and decades to come (maybe 100 years to come) and it is the reason why pandemic experts ([Henderson and Inglesby etc.](#)) never advocated for such draconian lockdown steps in the face of a pandemic. They understood what the catastrophic result would be.

With that open, our focus here is on the devastating brutal attacks on [scientific dissent](#) (seminal article in Brownstone Institute) about lockdown type policies, whereby prognosticators, dissenters, and contrarians (Atlas, Gupta, Kulldorff, Bhattacharya, Heneghan, Jefferson, Alexander, Tenenbaum, McCullough, Risch, Tucker, Wolf, Ladapo, Oskoui, Trozzi, Christian, Hodkinson, Gill, Makary, Merritt, Vliet, Epstein, Davis Hanson, Levitt etc.), who raise questions about the clearly flawed and failed lockdown policies (including those regarding vaccine mandates especially for children and the denial of early outpatient treatment), are smeared and attacked by the media and by ex cathedra academic and medical [peers, including universities](#), and now, by the [scientific journal publishing domain](#). We are referring to invidious, [vicious, malicious](#), and often ruthless career-altering attacks that are lobbed against anyone who dares to speak out and voice their often 'expert' opinions against failed Covid-19 orthodoxies. These smears and slanders and even verbal and physical threats originate from persons (often those in the research medical community) [who disagree](#) with a skeptic's position on Covid-19 public health policies. Regardless of if the contrarian is making sensible and often accurate assessments.

Dissenters are subjected to punishing firings, intimidation, and maligning of their names that result in tremendous and overwhelming losses to the contrarian's personal safety, welfare, and livelihood. There is this 'cancel culture mob mentality' that ensues, and the threats and harassment are incredibly troubling, even when the skeptical academic (s) lays out their view that is entirely evidence-based. There is no room for free speech.

In other words, only the current policies and views of the enabling decision-makers are to be considered and only what they think is correct. No dissent, no debate on any of the lockdown policies or vaccine matters. No dissent, even as these policies are so glaringly devastatingly wrong and can cause (caused) so much harm and deaths. There must be absolute conformity and if there is none, then there is acrimonious and malicious intimidation and one is disparaged with impunity.

There appears to be an almost personal vendetta, vindictiveness, and scorn heaped upon alternative viewpoints, regardless of whether the alternative view may actually be more optimal. Tobin has explained the intolerance to opposing viewpoints by stating that "All it usually takes is an accusation, a circulated letter, or a demonstration of some sort, and the woke usually get their way [...] most university administrators obey the cancel mob and punish whoever has been deemed to have stepped out of line."

Yet we know deep down that science cannot advance if there is no scientific dialogue and debate on the merits of emerging research and

treatment options. The lack of openness in fueling evidence-based conversations results in one very tragic consequence for the public – the silencing of sound high-quality and trustworthy research that could be informative and contribute to the well-being of people during this pandemic.

The benefits of these societal restrictions have been totally exaggerated and the catastrophic harms to our societies and children have been very severe (the harms to children, the undiagnosed illness that will result in excess mortality in years to come, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation in our young people, drug overdoses and suicides due to the lockdown policies, the crushing isolation due to the lockdowns, psychological harms, domestic and child abuse, sexual abuse of children, loss of jobs and businesses and the devastating impact, and the massive numbers of deaths that are coming from the lockdowns that will impact heavily on women and minorities. As stated earlier, we may be dealing with the effects of the failed government lockdown policies for the balance of the 21st century.

We as societies may need to set new rules and structures to police and protect academic freedom and hold accountable those who seek to threaten this academic freedom by their reactions. Reactions that are often threatening, slanderous, and defamatory to the contrarian and skeptical viewpoints of these questionable and often failed edicts and mandates. We have witnessed a sharp increase across the world in verbal

and social media online attacks on those who hold contrarian views on Covid-19 societal lockdown policies.

What are these skeptics or dissenters really guilty of? Scott Atlas (former senior advisor in the Trump administration) is an example of one vilified by the media and peers for his views. Has the media ever taken the time to read Atlas's views? It has always been that we cannot treat Covid at all costs for it “is severely restricting other medical care and instilling fear in the public, creating a massive health disaster, separate from a potential world poverty crisis with almost incalculable consequences.” His views remain some of the most balanced and nuanced.

Is it that his (or other contrarian's) guilt arises from voicing well-founded uncertainties, hesitations, and doubt about the value and effectiveness of mass societal lockdowns and other governmental policies as a Covid-19 response? It appears that their crime is that he (they) wished to consider both the harms of the virus and the totality of the impact of the policies and mandates.

Is it because they wanted an assessment of the impact of the policies in an objective manner in which a much broader view than simply the basic science and lethality of the pathogen is reacted to? Is it because Risch and McCullough understood the vital importance of early drug treatment in high-risk symptomatic persons and sought to prevent hospitalization and death? Is it that they see the possible harms from a sub-optimally

developed vaccine with no care by the media or alphabet agencies or vaccine developers as to why this is happening?

These prognosticators who are policy experts as well as medical and academic research scientists, are arguing for a more focused protection and properly developed vaccines if needed, with proper science. They are not anti-vaxxers. They support properly developed vaccines and the fact is that the safety of the underlying technology has not been fully demonstrated. As prognosticators and skeptics, questions are being raised against policies and mandates that appear arbitrary and not evidence-informed, that have been clearly very destructive on societies, and are essentially illogical, irrational, specious, unsound, and wholly unscientific.

There is an incredible depth of hostility and acrimony against these dissenters and often by academic peers and it is clear that politics has invaded the science of Covid. While very serious far-reaching decisions are being made that are altering societal structure and function, it is politics that is underpinning the decision-making, and not the science. The result is that highly credible contrarians and dissenters are very afraid to speak out given they know they will be derided, attacked, slandered, and smeared. Is there villainy in their hearts or are the disastrous attacks mainly because they question and raise well-founded concerns and doubts about the effectiveness of the lockdowns? Or school closures? Or mask mandates? If their positions and analysis are informative and could save lives, do they not bear being considered and at the least given serious debate?

In this 'Age of Lysenkoism,' the approach is to use the hysterical media to go on the attack, to smear, and blame the skeptics who question failed policies and mandates, for the very failure of the policies and mandates that were implemented. It has gotten to a point now where the media has garnered near zero credibility and the public believes near zero in terms of what the media prints.

The smears and attacks on the reputation of such highly skilled physicians and scientists seeking to minimize Covid-19 hospitalization and death took a turn for the worse when at a [Senate hearing](#) (chaired by Senator Ron Johnson) on Covid-19 outpatient treatment, Dr. Harvey Risch (Yale Professor and clinician), Dr. Peter McCullough (Baylor University and clinician), and Dr. George Fareed (clinician and Professor), along with Senator Johnson, were [referred to as the 'snake-oil salesmen of the Senate.'](#)

How do we fix this? We have experts who are guilty of nothing other than stepping up to help reduce suffering of their populations and save lives in this Covid-19 emergency. People who were asked to serve for the public good and made the decision to. Make no mistake, they will not be the only ones burnt at the stake of 'wokeness' and this is very urgent and scandalous, for very smart dedicated people with substantial contributions and pedigree are being silenced. Their names and careers are being decimated. Their income shut off so they are suffered into silence and what is horrid about this is that thousands of doctors and scientists stand by, silent, unwilling to say or do anything (including

application of early treatment that is independent of the variants) in defense, lest they threaten their own research grant application and income stream.

These high-quality selfless and generous academics and experts from the US, Canada, and the UK (and elsewhere globally) are being maliciously attacked in the media with tremendous peril to their safety, their names, their characters, and careers. This has to be stopped immediately, for the chilling effect can have a devastating impact on free speech and the sharing and exchange of needed high-level, high-quality technical thinking and expertise when it is needed most.

Ole Petter Ottersen provides us some guidance to emerge from this shameful and disgraceful period and his words captures the situation best by saying “A tough debate and a diversity of opinions based on facts and evidence are necessary elements of science and public discourse, but hateful and scornful accusations and personal attacks cannot be tolerated. We already see that researchers retreat from the public debate after being threatened or harassed.”

Reprimanding, rebuking, and scolding scientists and medical researchers whose thinking is against mainstream media is deplorable and it stunts a more rich, evocative, and meaningful dialogue of the means to combat this pandemic. This ruination of good people, of high-quality dedicated people is reprehensible. Our young children and persons are looking on and it is essential for students to hear and consider ideas from many

sources with debate, especially the ideas they may not agree with. This is how we learn to think critically. It is imperative that they learn how to question and be skeptical, and importantly, to be open to dissimilar views. What do you think they must be thinking when they witness this destructive culture against contrarian skeptical viewpoints? Their voices will be silenced. They will be afraid to voice any opinion that is disparate. We desperately need alternative voices now to get us out of this catastrophic mess our governments, their expert advisors, and media medical advisors seem incapable of doing.

Perhaps the esteemed Professor Jonathan Turley says it best by asking Stanford to pay close attention to these words given the next move is theirs in stopping this vicious onslaught: “Faculty have largely stayed silent as campaigns target these professors and teachers. While some may relish such cleansing of schools of opposing voices, many are likely intimidated by such campaigns and do not want to be the next targeted by such groups.”

Atlas and colleagues may have indeed had the last word in their response to recent attacks by Stanford, leaving them to ask, “Does the wind of freedom still blow at Stanford? Or is it the stale breath of ideological conformism and intimidation that we detect?” Kulldorff goes further by laying blame at the decay in standards of scientific journals. “Open and honest discourse is critical for science and public health. As scientists, we must now tragically acknowledge that 400 years of scientific enlightenment may be coming to an end.”

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