



Journalist Ventures into Freedom Convoy, Finds It's Really About Freedom

What does the Freedom Convoy want? Is it simply an end to the cross-border vaccine mandate? Or is it some recognition that the lives and livelihoods of ordinary Canadians matter just as much as those of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his compadres in the liberal-elite establishment?

Trudeau, of course, can't be bothered to talk to the truckers, let alone take their concerns seriously. He prefers to denounce them as "racists" and "misogynists."

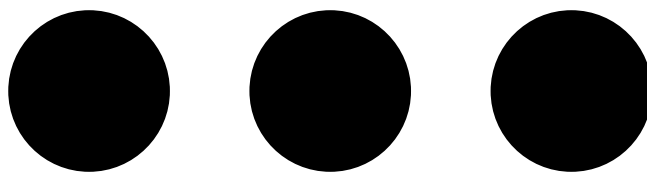
One independent journalist, however, did take the time to walk among the protestors, and after speaking to nearly 100 of them, found that "not one of them sounded like an insurrectionist, white supremacist, racist or misogynist." In fact, wrote [Rupa Subramanya](#), they constituted a broad cross-section of Canadian society — "vaxxed, unvaxxed, white, black, Chinese, Sikh, Indian" — who are "outraged with a country that seemed to have forgotten they existed."

"The convoy is spearheaded by truckers, but its message of opposition to life under government control has brought onto the icy streets countless, once-voiceless people declaring that they are done being ignored," observed Subramanya. "That the elites — the people who have Zoomed their way through the pandemic — had better start paying attention to the fentanyl overdoses, the suicides, the crime, the despair. Or else."

Many of those participating in the convoy — including spokesman B.J. Dichter, who pointed out the irony in being called a "white supremacist" given that he's "Jewish" and has "family in mass graves in Europe" — have taken the jab. The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA), which represents about 4,500 carriers, owner-operators, and industry suppliers, says "the vast majority" of Canadian truckers have been vaccinated.

Clearly, then, the issue at hand is not merely the cross-border mandate. If it were, the Freedom Convoy would hardly attract the already-vaccinated, let alone inspire copycat protests around the world. No, penned Subramanya, the Freedom Convoy is protesting something much bigger: "a sense that things will never go back to normal, a sense that they are being ganged up on by the government, the media, Big Tech, Big Pharma."

This unease is reflected in the fact that many of those who spoke to Subramanya refused to give their last names, usually because they feared government retaliation or loss of employment. Subramanya



AP Images



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on February 11, 2022

noted that this “was not entirely crazy” given that the anti-Freedom Convoy CTA issued a [statement](#) warning truckers that “your behavior today will not only reflect upon you and your family but the” rest of the industry.

The skyrocketing cost of living is a major driver of the protests. Truckers told Subramanya “it was getting really expensive to get by.... Almost everyone who was poor or even middle-class was mired in debt.” Not surprisingly, therefore, “The divide that already existed between the haves and have-nots largely mapped onto the new chasm between those who supported the mandates and those who did not.” One trucker, a Sikh immigrant from Montreal, told Subramanya he was protesting because Quebec’s banning the unvaccinated from big-box stores has added \$200 a month to his family’s grocery bills.

Then there are the vaccine passports and the division they have created. “If you’re not vaccinated,” said Ontario trucker Peter, 28, “they treat you like garbage lying on the streets.”

One non-trucker, 24-year-old Theo, told Subramanya he’d quit his previous job because he was forced to wear a mask all day after refusing to get the jab because of a heart condition. His younger brother, who is likewise unvaccinated, was taking law-school classes online but now can’t complete his degree because some of the required classes are in-person only — and the unvaccinated are forbidden to attend.

There are also those protesting because of the insanity of the mandates. Mackenzie, 24, who works at a downtown-Ottawa restaurant, had COVID-19 and doesn’t believe she needs to be vaccinated against it. But thanks to the “follow-the-science” mandates imposed in Ottawa, she isn’t allowed to dine in the very restaurant where she serves.

In the end, the Freedom Convoy is not really about any particular mandate but about preserving a way of life. “We came to Canada to be free — not slaves,” said Ivan, 46, who emigrated with his wife from Ukraine. “We lived under communism, and, in Canada, we’re now fighting for our freedom.”



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