

## Justin Trudeau: Character & Legacy

This blog was written in October 2020 after the author completed the writing of a two-volume 'present-history' diary that recorded the impact of the First Wave of the coronavirus (COVID -19) pandemic on Canada during the spring and summer of 2020: viz. *Coronavirus Canada, The Politics, Science and Economics of a Pandemic* (vols. I & II). In re-reading the diary entries, the author decided to prepare a sketch of the character of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as revealed in the media reports of his personal conduct, public pronouncements, and political actions, during that national crisis.

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It is in times of a national crisis that the character and values of political leaders are revealed, and such has been the case with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau during the coronavirus crisis in Canada. What has been revealed is his hubris, his dislike of dissent from his views, his penchant for personal rule, his lack of understanding of the critical importance of the institution of Parliament and its function in the maintenance of a parliamentary democracy, his ethical lapses, and his lack of respect for the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary. A novelist could not make up a believable story of what has transpired with respect to the conduct of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the present Liberal Party régime in Ottawa. Indeed, it is a script that would read as follows:

A youthful and charismatic son of a prominent political family is propelled into power (October 2015 election) based on promises of being all things to all people. His party presents a platform that promises to benefit the middle class, to create jobs, to promote social and cultural programs, to redress the grievances of Indigenous peoples, to promote social justice and feminism, and to effectively address the environmental problem of global warming. It is a government that subsequently proves to be addicted to spending in running up massive deficits over its first term of office. While the economy is expanding, and government revenues are growing, his government abandons any sense of fiscal responsibility and engages in a spending spree that results in massive spending deficits (a 19.0 billion deficit in 2016, a 19.0 billion deficit in 2017, a 14.0 billion deficit in 2018, and a 19.8 billion deficit in 2019). During a subsequent federal election (October 2019), his government promises additional billions of dollars in new spending for students and young families, and the promotion of a green economy environmental policy. It is a spending program that is to be financed largely through deficit spending and borrowing with no tax increases in keeping with a mantra that 'the budget will balance itself' - supposedly through economic growth. However, there is a growing alarm among the electorate at such uncontrolled spending which results in his government being reduced to a minority status in the October 2019 federal election.

At the head of a minority government, the charismatic Prime Minister reveals himself to be a self-righteousness 'progressive' ideologue who seeks to cling to power at all costs. Through taking advantage of the need for parliament to pass legislation for the immediate provision of financial aid to the unemployed, and to businesses suffering a drastic drop in revenues, during a deadly virus epidemic, the charismatic leader makes a grasp for absolute power. In a March 2020 omnibus spending bill, a clause is surreptitiously inserted that will authorize the Finance Minister to tax, borrow, and spend for a period of twenty-one months without any parliamentary approval. When that ruse is discovered, and the clause removed at the insistence of the Opposition parties, the Prime Minister engages in a plot with another minority party - the New Democratic Party (NDP) -- to secure an unassailable majority in parliament. In return for promising to implement several costly NDP social policies - two weeks paid vacation for workers, a Day-Care plan, and a Dental Care Plan - an agreement is forged by which the NDP commits to support the minority Liberal Party government in House of Commons votes, and particularly so on any

and all non-confidence motions. It is a highly partisan, political manoeuvre that deprives parliament of its ability to hold the government to account on spending initiatives.

Thereafter, during the First Wave of the COVID pandemic, parliament is confined to brief sessions, from time to time, to rubber stamp government program expenditures which are announced beforehand by the Prime Minister in presidential-style TV addresses at his Rideau Cottage residence before a fawning Press. Otherwise, parliament is completely ignored. The Prime Minister enjoys an absolute power to tax, spend, and borrow, and to govern with the support of his unelected officials in the Prime Minister's Office. The youthful and charismatic Prime Minister establishes himself as a benevolent despot who dispenses largesse to the masses from the public treasury. Massively costly social spending programs are introduced that are focused on getting money 'immediately out the door', that are poorly administered, are available on demand, and open to fraud, in an attempt to alleviate the worst economic impacts of the COVID pandemic.

It is the story of a man who fervently believes that "L'état, c'est moi!"; and that he is 'the chosen one' to effect a social transformation within Canada and to lead the world into a new 'progressive era' through promoting identity politics, feminism, LBGTQ rights, social-economic equality, pan-nationalism, globalism, universal free trade, open borders (Roxton Road), and environmentalism. He is an individual who makes no distinction between his personal interests and the public interest, and for whom the public treasury is to be used to promote his personal agenda based on his 'progressive' Modern liberal ideology.

It is a story that has drama, deceit, cronyism, and ethical lapses. It is a story of a charismatic leader who is devoted to selfies and presidential-style 'morning show' TV appearances, who thinks nothing of indulging in personal favouritism in the granting of government contracts (the WE Charity contract), has no respect for or understanding of the principle of the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law (the SNC-Lavalin scandal), and for whom conflict of interests rules are of no concern (the Aga Khan vacation visit, the SNC-Lavalin scandal, and WE Charity contract letting scandal). It is government by a leader who tolerates a high level of fraud in the administration of government social assistance programs (CERB program), as long as it suits his political purpose of maintaining his grip on power through his political alliance with the NDP minority party in the legislature. (The New Democratic Party opposes any effort by the government to go after, and punish at law, individuals who are defrauding the CERB program.) Moreover, the charismatic leader lacks any sense of fiscal responsibility in the introduction of massive, open-ended, spending programs that are aimed at effecting a social transformation of society, and that cause the national debt to soar a level almost beyond comprehension (a projected \$1 trillion-dollar national debt for Canada).

He is a leader whose first instinct when faced with an accusation of wrong-doing, is to deny that any conflict of interest or illegal action has taken place (We Charity scandal, SNC Lavalin scandal), and then to deny any responsibility for what occurred in blaming others (the Public Service for supposedly promoting the We contract). Moreover, he refuses to acknowledge that he has breached ethical standards (the Aga Khan vacation visit, the SNC Lavalin scandal, and the awarding of the WE contract), and uses his government powers to hamstring investigations of his conduct (denying the Ethics Commissioner access to government and cabinet documents)). He has a penchant for making solemn apologies, on behalf of Canada, for any and every historic wrong experienced by any minority community at some time or other, but will engage in every evasion possible to avoid acknowledging, and apologizing for his own personal transgressions.

The youthful and charismatic leader of our story shares the same self-righteous and self-centred character as the populist President Donald Trump of the United States, with an equally grandiose vision of himself as a saviour (a 'save the world' visionary of the Left versus 'a make America great again' visionary of the Right). Yet, there is a major difference. The Prime Minister is a more cultured and better educated individual, who possesses a media-savvy and image consciousness that the brash and volatile current President of the United States lacks.

It is a story of the subversive overthrow of a democratic parliamentary government, the introduction of a highly-partisan Machiavellian politics, the establishing of a benevolent absolutist government in all but name, and the bestowal of government largesse on 'the people' to distract them from the loss of their parliamentary democracy and the silencing of the voices of their representatives in parliament. It is a story of yet another reincarnation, in varied form, of the old 'bread and circuses' program of dictators who since time immemorial have distributed government largesse to the masses and special interest groups to gain popularity and support with no regard as to the crippling public debt being incurred. It is a story that will end either in the overthrow of the benevolent despot (in the next federal election) or the bankruptcy of the nation.

It is a sad story that befalls a people when they lack political astuteness, and elect charismatic populist leaders who want to transform society and are committed to a progressive 'save the world' ideology. The conclusion of the story is that Canadians need to return to voting for pragmatic leaders with a proven record in the administration of government, who know that good government depends on upholding the rule of law and equality before the law. A government composed of men and women of a good moral character, who possess a sense of fiscal responsibility, and a commitment to stewardship in governing. The need is for leaders who are committed to reconciling differing interests among the people, to promoting an equality of opportunity for all citizens, and to pursuing the common good and well-being of the nation as a whole. Leaders who will enter upon the world stage with goodwill to promote the national interests of Canada in pursuing quid pro quo international trade agreements.

It is a truism that benevolent despots who seek to transform society through massive ideologically-driven, social assistance spending projects, invariably end up bankrupting their country and destroying the social harmony, cohesion, and economic well-being of the nation. It is 'as sure as night follows the day'.

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Postscript: As of today, Canadians have experienced eight years of government under the 'progressive' Modern liberal régime of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The social, economic, and political, ill-effects resulting from government promoting a transformative social agenda in the absence of any sense of fiscal responsibility, are becoming readily apparent.