

THE COVID CONSENSUS

The New Politics of Global Inequality

By Toby Green

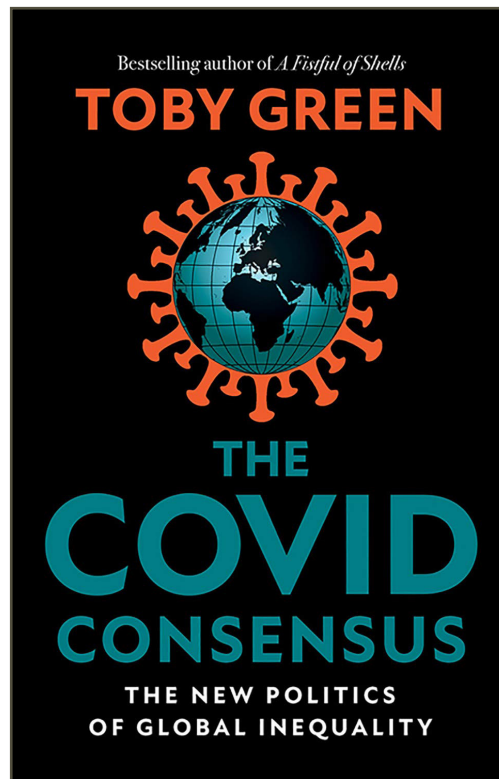
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Why does Western pandemic policy have support across the political spectrum, when its social impacts conflict with ideology on both Right and Left?



ABOUT THE BOOK

Why does Western pandemic policy have support across the political spectrum, when its social impacts conflict with ideology on both right and left?

During the pandemic, the Left has agreed that ‘following the science’ with hard lockdowns is the best way to preserve life; only irresponsible right-wing populists oppose them. But social science shows that while the rich have got richer, those suffering most under lockdown are the already disadvantaged: the poor, the young, and—most overlooked of all—the Global South. The UN is predicting tens of millions of deaths from hunger and warning that decades of development are being reversed. Equally, why have conservatives backed lockdowns and other major interventions, creating the big state that they usually abhor?

These contradictions within the great consensus of Western pandemic response are part of a broader crisis in Western thought. Toby Green peels back the policy paradoxes to reveal irreconcilable beliefs in our societies. These deep divisions are now bursting into the open, with devastating consequences for the global poor.

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Toby Green, formerly a journalist and travel writer, is Professor of Precolonial and Lusophone African History and Culture at King's College London. His 2019 book *A Fistful of Shells* won the British Academy's Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize for Global Cultural Understanding, the American Historical Association's Jerry Bentley Prize in World History and the Historical Writers' Association Non-Fiction Crown.

REVIEWS

“Whether or not the reader is persuaded by [Toby Green's] arguments against lockdown, it is undeniable that such restrictions have disproportionately affected the young and poor. Green's unique take explores how these groups, often lacking the facility for remote work and with their education severely limited, are likely to experience staggering inequalities for years to come.” — *New Statesman*, ‘The Best Books About the Covid-19 Pandemic’

‘A meticulously referenced, shocking catalogue of Western hypocrisy and the destruction wrought by global lockdowns on the poorest nations...Green's book is a depressing tale of hubris, mindless groupthink and cynical power grabs by bureaucrats and governments, taking advantage of a “health crisis”’ — *The Australian*

‘A thoughtful analysis of the forces and attitudes that unleashed lockdowns upon the global poor, with harrowing descriptions of the consequences.’ — Sunetra Gupta, Professor of Theoretical Epidemiology, University of Oxford, and co-author of the Great Barrington Declaration

‘An excellent book at a critical time. Pandemics breed hysteria, to which the only cure is reason. This book is a masterly dose of reason, challenging, questioning and sceptical in the best sense of the word.’ — Simon Jenkins, author and columnist

‘Nuanced and rigorous. This is not a thoughtless polemic, but a reasoned plea for progressives to put social inequality at the centre of pandemic responses.’ — Labour Hub

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