

CHAPTER ONE

THE GOAL



THE CHALLENGE

Back in the days of the sword and the spear, becoming a successful tyrant, though somewhat risky, was not particularly complicated. If you had enough start-up capital to hire a few thugs to terrorize and rob the local townsfolk, you could increase your wealth, hire more thugs, expand your victim base, and so on.

As long as the proportion of your thugs to your victims was high enough, usually the only real threat to your regime would be a competing tyrant. And if the other tyrant was bigger than you, he could usually be appeased with a simple pay-off, which would not only persuade him not to have you executed, but might even result in his “protecting” you from other tyrants.

Ah, the good old days. Today, however, in much of the world such simple thuggery is no longer effective. Mere brute force is not enough to acquire and maintain a successful oppressive regime. These days, because one disgruntled peasant with a hunting rifle can rather abruptly end your megalomaniacal plans, “old school” tyranny is ineffective, and new methods are needed.

THE TWO GOALS

There are two primary goals of any tyrant. The superficial goal is to have other people’s property completely at *your* disposal. This goal deals with material wealth: other people produce it, and you

take it from them and do what you want with it. Such simple material greed is the motivation of purse-snatchers, carjackers, and bank robbers, but by itself it is not what motivates true tyrants.

The deeper goal of the tyrant is to have control, not just over property, but over the very thoughts and desires of the peasantry; in short, to replace their free will with *your* will. (The desire for this is sometimes called the “love of dominion.”) In short, your goal is to eradicate the self-determination and self-ownership of every other individual on the planet. Their souls are to be replaced by your agenda.

The peasants must be trained to be slaves, physically and psychologically, but this cannot be accomplished by brute force alone. Though violence can often control the *actions* of people, it cannot control their *thoughts*. Again, if your subjects don't want to be bossed around, there will be constant conflicts to deal with. But if you are successful in training them to want to obey you, such problems will not occur. You must break their will, drain their humanity, and consume their souls, leaving them docile and subservient, unable or unwilling to think for themselves. They will be capable only of obedience; they will exist for a single purpose: to serve *your* will, and your will alone.

“Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women. When it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it.” [Justice Learned Hand]

Think of the above quote, not as a warning, but as a suggestion. If you remove from your intended victims their natural yearning

for freedom—if you can train them to not *want* to be free, they will soon be *begging* you to enslave them (and you will gladly oblige them).

The good news is that such control can be achieved using words alone. Propaganda is the single greatest controlling force in the world; as a tool for persuasion, it is far more powerful than any weapon of violence could ever be.

“The broad masses of a population are more amenable to the appeal of rhetoric than to any other force.” [Adolf Hitler]

“Print is the sharpest and the strongest weapon of our party.”
[Joseph Stalin]

In fact, in this day and age, the power of propaganda is absolutely *essential* to establishing a tyrannical regime. Brute force cannot control the informed, but is hardly even needed to control the deceived.

“Mighty little force is needed to control a man whose mind has been hoodwinked; contrariwise, no amount of force can control a free man, a man whose mind is free. No, not the rack, not fission bombs, not anything — you can’t conquer a free man; the most you can do is kill him.” [Robert Heinlein]

Control via deception and manipulation is a precise art, requiring a solid understanding of human psychology. Most people can be played like puppets: pull the right strings and they will do what you want. (Pull the wrong string, however, and the peasants might chop your head off.) The more “strings” you have attached

to the thoughts and decisions of your peasants, the deeper and more profound your control will be. Of course, the degree to which you can control the peasants will always be inversely proportional to the degree to which they can think for themselves.

PERCEPTION IS EVERYTHING

The “old school” tyrants, who ruled by simple brute force, are confounded today by two things: firearms and ideas. Firearms enable even weak peasants to kill you (or at least to kill your thugs). But it is the ideas which cause people to do such things which are the real problem for would-be tyrants.

“Ideas are far more powerful than guns. We don’t allow our enemies to have guns; why should we allow them to have ideas?”

[Joseph Stalin]

Unless your victims have the *motivation* to resist you, firearms by themselves are no threat. But if they *do* have the motivation *and* means to resist, no amount of brute force can save you.

“No state can control those who have the machinery and the will to resist.” [L. Neil Smith]

Therein lies the key to being a successful tyrant in modern times: removing from the peasants the desire to resist.

Consider two different “flavors” of crook: an armed car-jacker and a scam artist. A car-jacker just walks up to a car, points a gun at the driver, and tells him to get out of the car. Provided the vic-

tim of the theft does not have both the motivation *and* the ability to resist by force, the car-jacker will be successful. But it's anyone's guess which intended victim will surrender, and which will put a bullet in the car-jacker's brain. In this example, the driver obviously does not *want* the car-jacker to have his car, so one way or another the dispute will be settled by force.

But suppose you as the thief could make the driver want to give you his car. That may seem absurd, but consider this scenario: "*Hey buddy, this is an emergency! My wife is right around the corner, and she just went into labor. I gotta get her to the hospital right away! I see you only have a two-seater. Please, buddy, I need help! Can I borrow your car? I swear I'll bring it back as soon as I drop her off! It's an emergency! She has heart troubles, and...*"

Not only would many drivers voluntarily surrender their car in response to such an appeal, but they would feel good about it. (A few days later, when he still has no car, the owner wouldn't feel so good any more, but then it's too late for him to resist.) By persuasion and deception, the scam artist avoids the threat that the simple thug is always under. Expand that to a far more grand scale, and you have the key to being a successful tyrant: You must make your victims want you to rule them.

Trouble is, as a general rule most people don't *want* you bossing them around. In short, to control their wealth and their actions, you must first *control their minds*. If you can dictate what they think, what they want, and what they believe, then you will have no need for thuggery at all. If you can convince them to *volun-*

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tarily give up their free will to you—if you can teach them to want to be slaves, you will be the ultimate tyrant. You will have taken their very humanity, and reduced them to mere sources of power for you to use as you see fit. (Of course, you will also be completely evil, but don't let that stop you.)