

Tyrants

Updated Edition

The forces of freedom are challenged everywhere by a newly energized spirit of tyranny, whether it is Jihadist terrorism, Putin's imperialism, or the ambitions of China's dictatorship, writes Waller R. Newell in this engaging exposé of a thousand dangers. We will see why tyranny is a permanent threat by following its strange career from Homeric Bronze Age warriors, through the empires of Alexander the Great and Rome, to the medieval struggle between the City of God and the City of Man, leading to the state-building despots of the Modern Age including the Tudors and 'enlightened despots' such as Peter the Great. The book explores the psychology of tyranny from Nero to Gaddafi, and how it changes with the Jacobin Terror into millenarian revolution. Stimulating and enlightening, *Tyrants: Power, Injustice and Terror* will appeal to anyone interested in the danger posed by tyranny and terror in today's world.

WALLER R. NEWELL is Professor of Political Science and Philosophy at Carleton University, where he helped found and also teaches, in the College of the Humanities, Canada's only four-year baccalaureate in the Great Books. He has held a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for University Teachers and a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Postdoctoral Fellowship. His books include *Tyranny: A New Interpretation* (Cambridge, 2013); *The Soul of a Leader: Character, Conviction and Ten Lessons in Political Greatness*; and *The Code of Man: Love, Courage, Pride, Family, Country*. He served on the first Reagan Administration transition team in the areas of humanitarian affairs and human rights. He received his PhD in Political Science from Yale University.

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Power, Injustice, and Terror

Updated Edition

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Preface

When Russian President Vladimir Putin orchestrated an invasion of the Crimea, in violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine to which the Russian government itself had been a signatory, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry remarked in some bewilderment that Putin, with his aggressive militarism, seemed like a figure out of “the nineteenth century.”

If you agree with that, you should probably stop reading this book right now. After all, won't the progress of history take care of retrograde adventurers like Putin? He can't be more than a brief detour on our way to the spread of democracy around the world and the end of aggression.

If, on the other hand, you believe, like me, that Vladimir Putin is a figure from *every* century, then read on. Because this is a book about how and why tyranny is a permanent feature on the human landscape. It's about the kind of tyrannical governments that have existed throughout history and still do today – some since ancient times, some specifically connected to the modern age. It follows the strange career of tyranny from its origins in ancient Greece and Rome to the state-building despots who brought Europe out of feudalism into the modern age. Finally, it explains the totalitarian tyrannies that began with the Jacobin Terror of 1793 and continued through the Bolsheviks, Nazis, Chairman Mao, the Khmer Rouge, and today's Jihadists.

This book is also about the often twisted psychological makeup of tyrants, including those who aspire to become tyrants, namely terrorists. For terrorists, as we'll see, are tyrants in waiting, and tyrannies, once established, continue to terrorize their captive subjects. Finally, it's about the ways in which tyrants can attract rapt and devoted followers to carry out their murderous agenda.

If you find these topics interesting – and above all, necessary for informed citizens who want to protect and promote democracy – then this book is for you. It's not about every form of injustice of which man is capable. Its focus is

mainly on the West. But it is based on the belief that tyranny is a permanent alternative in human affairs and in explaining political action.

The progress of history, if that has actually taken place, has plainly not gotten rid of tyranny. The genocidal horrors of the last century's totalitarianism are surely proof of that, along with today's aspirants to a worldwide Caliphate, such as ISIS. Believing in the progress of history may actually, as we'll see, contribute to the spread of tyranny itself. Not only because it lulls us into thinking that tyranny is fading away, but because all of the worst totalitarian regimes, after all, have claimed that they were on the *side* of history, bringing a better world for us all in the future through mass murder and conquest in the present.

Across the world today, we are witnessing both a heroic struggle for democracy and the disturbing strength of tyrannical regimes and movements. Whether it is the Syrian civil war, Putin's aggression, or the threat of ISIS, democracy and tyranny often appear to be in a dead heat. While American forces are now engaged against Jihadism in Iraq, self-identified Muslim terrorists inspired by our enemies there conduct brutal attacks on America's own soil. Why is this happening now? How should the West respond? What are the lessons of history?

The spirit of free self-government has triumphed over tyranny again and again, from Marathon and Salamis to Waterloo, Dunkirk, D-Day, Solidarity, and Operation Desert Storm, but democracies seem to undergo periodic bouts of amnesia, unable to identify tyranny for what it is.

I hope this book will help provide a cure for that amnesia. Democracy is a better idea than tyranny on every level, and in a fair fight it almost never loses. But to defend that idea and make it successful, we need to be aware of its greatest and most resilient enemy – tyranny.

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