

White hoods or masks; it's all the same tyranny

Tyranny comes in many forms. Throughout history it has been the currency of zealots and power-hungry people who feel entitled to ride roughshod over their countrymen. We've seen it operate, openly and brazenly, making no apologies for its existence. And we've watched it disguise itself, adopting new language and new symbols as it attacks our institutions, values and even our laws.

Tyranny relies on a combination of time and space, revisionist historians, ideologues and power vacuums - and crises - to gain root and to rise up. Tyranny is malevolent and devious, and like a virus it can spread throughout our society while working on our consciousness and our subconscious, simultaneously. It encourages us to retrieve and revive all the vestiges of bigotry or bias that we have long suppressed and creates a new paradigm of 'common sense' that it sells to those who would desperately cling to truth, objectivity and fairness.

Tyranny cannot live in the rarified atmosphere of open debate, nor can it reproduce without first destroying everything and everyone that would oppose its imposition. It relies on self-repression as well as external oppression and can only flourish when ITS truth replaces THE truth. Tyranny walks two paths. The first gives it carte blanche to impose its *new truths* from above; the other depends on our own self-acquiescence. Tyrants use both, interchangeably and simultaneously, to make us doubt ourselves and to win over our faith, encouraging us to trust them rather than our own instincts.

Tyrants are both shape-shifters and chameleons. They are versatile and will do what is necessary to wrestle us away from adherence to proven and well-established norms in order to embrace their version of reality. Everyone knows the tyrants of the 20th century: Hitler, Stalin, Franco, Mussolini, Idi Amin, Saddam Hussein, etc. and we are well aware of the tools they used to prey upon their own people. All used fear and doubt - and eventually force - to realize their ambitions. The hard tyranny of actual flesh and blood tyrants is easier to identify and fight than the 'soft tyranny' of ideas and symbols that they use. Those ideas and symbols become lethal when they are combined with real life situations and crises.

Case in point: the Ku Klux Klan - an organization started after the Civil War as a social club in Pulaski, Tennessee in 1865, it quickly morphed into a White supremacist organization that opposed reconstruction and any progress of political and economic equality for the American Negro. The Klan used imagery, brotherhood, fear and hatred along with extreme violence and profited from the South's loss of self-respect and self-esteem after losing the war to grow its base. Masked, hooded and robed, the *Klan* (taken from the Greek 'kyklos' meaning circle) terrorized the South, and though the U.S. government did curb its spread, it blossomed up in the 1960s.

In many cases, tyranny depends on the use of tribalism and the belief in the preeminence or superiority of one group's *natural right* to govern all the others, but as stated earlier, tyranny comes in many forms. There is the tyranny of one official *acceptable* idea or speech which leads to censorship; the tyranny of preferential treatment under the law which leads to a two-tiered society; the tyranny of promoting the collective over the individual which leads to a loss of personal freedom; the tyranny of abusive one-party control of government which leads to limited debate; and, as we've seen over the past two years' of the pandemic, the tyranny of power-hungry government officials to use crisis management and the "protection of the citizenry" as an excuse to exert and justify control over their constituents.

Tyrants separate people before eventually re-unifying them according to their own recipe.

The Coronavirus epidemic is the most recent vehicle that has empowered would-be tyrants to take control over the population. They imposed mask mandates, social distancing, sequestration, quarantines and finally mandatory vaccinations. They used fear, coercion and intimidation and threats to achieve their objective which was to gain and maintain total control. They forced people

to choose between their conscience and their livelihoods and used every means to stigmatize those who resisted. It's easy to draw historical parallels between the 'divide and conquer' mentality of Germany's brown-shirted anti-Semitic thugs of the 1930s and those of today's elite ruling class who believe in the right and rule of the collective over the individual as is evidenced in the current nationwide 'emergency' lockdown in Canada, for example.

Intimidation is the tyrant's stock in trade, but it isn't always overtly recognizable. It is sometimes woven together as part of a package of subtly-worded bureaucratic regulations, the choice of 'socially-acceptable' schoolbooks and 'approved' curricula. The media are willing co-conspirators, too, choosing to exaggerate certain narratives (such as the "insurrection" of January 6th and its root causes in 'White supremacy') over the truth and by their non-coverage of certain important events like the chaos at our southern border, the first family's connections to China, the real causes for our rising crime rates, etc.

Tyranny rarely bursts onto the scene. It is usually a slow, methodical process that gradually increases over time. One exception might be the rapid rise in the tyranny of one particularly destructive force - the push to label the American experience as one built on "systemic racism" by many groups who see the end result (instilling doubt in the minds of young voters) as a vacuum that they can fill with candidates that will challenge those currently in positions of authority and replace them with their own 'woke' members.

There are many other examples of tyranny in action - both here and abroad - and they are growing and gaining ground. Whether it's China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, Burma on one side of the 'fence' to other more historically open societies such as Australia and Canada on the other, tyranny knows no boundaries. It is like a recessive gene that resides in the body of any society until conditions change to awaken it. We all need to be acutely aware of that simple fact and realize that *it* can happen here and that ignoring it won't protect us from it...neither will a Constitution that no one is willing to enforce.

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