

The Social Tyranny that Threatens Thoughtful Americans

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One of the earliest lessons we learned in school was likely to include the spirited explanation of Patrick Henry's "give me liberty or give me death" speech to move colonists to declare independence from the British Kingdom in 1775. By high school, some may have dug deeper into the roots of the American Revolution by reading or hearing some excerpts from Thomas Paine's famous pamphlet *Common Sense*. Most social science majors, and certainly political science majors, in college likely worked through John Stewart Mill's *On Liberty* (1859). Liberty is what we Americans cherish, and we learned in our history courses about the chains of tyranny brought on by governments.

Civil liberty (not to be confused with civil rights) is a right we are all given by the US Constitution to keep government at bay from encroaching on our person and our property. The Constitution spelled out some limited power we turn over to government to manage society, and just as important the Bill of Rights ensures what we do not want our government to do to us or for us. We expect Congress to pass no laws to infringe on our liberty, and we expect government officials or any actors to leave us and our property alone. The Bill of Rights protects us from government action to infringe or to restrict our freedom, as we go about our station in life.

Today, people don't talk about fear of tyranny when they distrust a politician or are mistreated by a government agency. Aside from a sprinkle of hyperbole by calling someone a fascist, most warn that the bad actor is a "threat to Democracy." However, we are not a Democracy. By design, the Founders were fearful of a true Democracy. James Madison in Federalist No 10 explained that given human nature, people would pursue narrow interests without regard for the rights of others and the common good. Madison and others had little faith that "cooler heads" will prevail in governing, especially on controversial issues. They were afraid of what the mob faction, affectionately called the masses of asses, would do if given all the power. Thus, as we learned, the Founders set up our Constitutional Republic with three branches of government and plenty of balances and checks to keep the system clunky enough to avoid both rule by a majority or rule by a minority that gains too much power.

What we are witnessing today on our streets, in our businesses, in our schools where we play, and even in our homes is not tyranny by Big Brother, but a *social tyranny*. John Stewart Mill's classic political philosophy treatise *On Liberty* warned not only against tyranny by government but what he called "social tyranny." Social tyranny, Mill writes, is when we are told what is socially acceptable to think, say, and do. An influential group in society, not the actual government, makes us do things at first we normally would not do, then over time they make us do things without thinking, to making us do things that are, well, unthinkable!

While Mill warned against a social tyranny by a majority that was promulgating what is customary, today we see social tyranny played out by a small, but growing group of citizens that has a chilling effect on the lives of the majority of Americans. Do what the street mob wants or risk ridicule, be ostracized, suffer economic ruin, or be labeled a racist; and if this is not enough, we risk bodily harm. Given these options, one can see that social tyranny can be more disconcerting than political tyranny. And it is working...

Schools traditionally set curriculum and instruction by subject matter experts credentialed and thoughtful about what students should learn, so they can become productive members of society. Today, administrators and teachers are strong-armed into teaching what is in vogue, with little regard for what parents assume is a "good education." The tyrants have managed to add a few Rs to the curriculum, such as renounce, remove, and resist.

Company board members and executives are tripping over each other to create new marketing strategies, including overt advertising campaigns, to show a Me Too Wokeness. And just to be safe, they will turn money over to a cause or causes that scream the loudest, not in fear of losing customers through such relatively tame strategies as a boycott, but fear of being branded *persona no grata* by the social tyrant groups. Public officials have become so derelict in their duties to protect their people and their own property that for all the noise over the years about gun control, their lack of fortitude against the social tyrants has pumped triple the number of firearms into our neighborhoods. Ironically, those to whom the tyrants claim to help are falling deeper into despair, as their city blocks and businesses burn. Family members are split between supporting law and order or supporting those victimized by the amorphous villain called systematic racism.

The social tyrants hide behind all of these good works that they ostensibly do for justice sake. More disturbing is the social tyrants hide behind peaceful protesters fighting for legitimate causes of justice and equality for all—things that any of us naturally support. These tyrants use speech that incite lawless action, such as setting fires, destroying property, looting stores, and assault and battery. They use unequivocal fighting words. This type of "speech and demonstration" is not free—a judgment any first year law student with scant knowledge of the law can see and a prosecutor with a modicum of fortitude should charge for these criminal acts.

John Stuart Mill warned about social tyranny from the majority—a majority stifling progress to shift away from old "customs." What we are experiencing, oddly enough, on the surface looks to be a minority. But is it? The tyrants are well funded by back-end wealthy individuals with their Marxist agenda. Demonstration groups are extorting money from corporations and other social service type agencies to feed the cause. Each day the media cheers the tyrants on showing peaceful protestors marching during the day, when at night they know the crowd will morph into ugly and hateful assaults on police, anyone who dares to stop them from hurting others, and citizens simply going about their station in life. Public officials and elected officials simply look on from their cozy COVID-19 bunkers as their towns burn, committing a most egregious *actus reus*. They want to hang on until their own political agenda succeeds, and they think they are winning. Maybe so, but any victory using the social tyrant army is a Pyrrhic one.

The media, many elected officials, and the many apologist groups in Hollywood, universities, and nonprofit agencies have created a Frankenstein in the street mob. People are scarred.

However, let's hope that the majority of Americans are still right minded and have the fortitude when the time comes to refuse to acquiesce to some symbolic jester. Not because they do not support the cause of those mistreated and suffering from injustice in our country, but because social tyranny forces people to act against their "natural impulses." Fear is very real. Nevertheless, there is hope, as fear perpetuated by soulless creatures in the end will not win over the minds of those who have the courage to think for themselves.

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