



# Tyrants: A History of Power, Injustice, and Terror

By Waller R. Newell

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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: A History of Power, Injustice, and Terror will appeal to anyone interested in the danger posed by tyranny and terror in today's world.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

"The world is currently engulfed by all sorts of strongmen, authoritarians, and totalitarians. Are they all alike? Not always. In an engaging review of some 2,500 years of tyranny - drawing on a considerable knowledge of Western history and literature - Waller Newell masterfully sorts out tyrannies, ancient and modern, to remind us how they rise and why they fall - again and again. Tyrannies are the existential enemies of democracies - but not always in the same manner and to the same degree. And why that it is true makes fascinating reading."

Victor Davis Hanson, Martin and Illie Anderson Fellow, The Hoover Institution, Stanford University, California

"If I could think of one book for a young lover of democracy, or democratic politician to read about tyranny - supposedly a thing of the past - it would be Waller Newell's eloquent, approachable, fascinating Tyrants. Based on an astoundingly broad knowledge of history, from ancient times to the present, from high culture to pop culture, this book penetrates into the soul of the tyrant ... This is the biography of tyranny we have been waiting for."

Norman Doidge, MD, Columbia University, New York and the University of Toronto, and author of The Brain That Changes Itself

"This is a wonderful book, learned and insightful, acute and often brilliant. It is both a monument of scholarship and a call to action. Newell's Tyrants is as morally serious as a work of political philosophy and as sparkling with wit as an evening with the Marx Brothers."

Barry Strauss, Cornell University, New York

"Waller Newell is the most brilliant interpreter of tyranny now alive. His stories of ancient and traditional tyranny, often left to narrow scholars, are absorbing, sometimes funny, but it is the accounts of Soviet Communism and Nazism that are most intellectually compelling and passionate. Newell can sweep untidy piles of facts into elegant phrases - 'the beautification of violence' - that capture their hidden meaning. At a moment when tyranny is coming back, everyone alert to the strangeness of our world ought to be reading this book."

Charles Fairbanks, The Hudson Institute

"Waller Newell's Tyrants is a profound and original assessment of the evolution of the mass psychological basis evolving techniques of imposition of tyrannical government from ancient to modern times. It is a reinterpretation of Machiavelli's impact on the 500th anniversary of his The Prince, and attacks the relatively benign assessment of that writer as a perceptive and amoral cynic. It is a brilliant updating of the characteristics of tyranny, including its ever more pervasive banality and its comparatively recent exploitation of false ideologies and the adaptation of technology to impose totalitarian control and disguise the false and often absurd nature of the regime. This is a valuable and important book that will make a durable contribution to the vast, but not entirely up-to-date literature on the subject."

Lord Conrad Black

"In a time when tyranny is resurgent all over the globe, in a bewildering variety of forms - military and civilian, theocratic and kleptocratic, ideological and tribal - this book provides a synoptic historical and philosophic perspective that does full justice to the manifold phenomenon in all its range and complexity."

Thomas L. Pangle, Joe R. Long Endowed Chair in Democratic Studies, University of Texas, Austin

"Tyranny remains the oldest and most durable political phenomenon. Tyrants provides a stunning refutation of those who still believe that the historical process or the logic of the market will bring about a more peaceful democratic world. This book is a must-read for any serious student of political science."

Steven B. Smith, Alfred Cowles Professor of Political Science, Yale University, Connecticut

"At the highest levels of government, diplomacy and academia, are otherwise intelligent people who have convinced themselves that tyrants and tyrannies are anachronisms bound to be replaced by more enlightened forms of government. They apparently believe in a 'clock of human progress' and that the 'arc of the moral universe bends toward justice'. This rosy scenario is unsupported by the historical evidence as Waller R. Newell makes clear in his timely exploration of the durability and persistent appeal of repression."

Clifford D. May, President, Foundation for the Defence of Democracies

"Since it has its roots in the angry soul, tyranny is a permanent feature of politics, and it is one of the delusions of liberal democracy and global capitalism that universal prosperity will remove the threat of tyranny forever. For Newell, tyranny is an independent factor in human life, impossible to predict or prevent, an evil that, when it arises, must simply be resisted."

Peter J. Leithart, First Things

"Having published the very fine Tyranny: A New Interpretation in 2013, Tyrants is his less technical, less esoteric, more historical follow-up, and considering the internal and external pressures on liberal democracies at the moment, perhaps this engaging new contribution can do some good."

Aaron MacLean, Washington Free Beacon

"Tyrants: A History of Power, Injustice, and Terror is a well rounded political science book with the high concentration on historical accuracy and eloquence ... [a] highly recommended book for political analysts and world history enthusiast[s]."

cjleger.com

"Newell offers a thought-provoking and engaging overview of injustice and terror over thousands of years."

Allan Levine, Maclean's

"In his new book, Tyrants: A History of Power, Injustice, and Terror, Waller Newell provides us with a new way to make sense of the jumble of political forces at work in the world ... [i]n his sweeping history, Newell doesn't explain precisely how we are to win against today's tyrants, but he does point us in the right direction, and he does warn us of the peril of failing."

Lawrence Solomon, Financial Post

"Tyrants, is, more than anything, a book to learn from. It's as if an important television documentary series has been encapsulated in text, expanded and explained, the importance and relevance of various historical details all making a coherent point. The author has set a bar for this sort of narrative."

UNRV History (unrv.com)

#### About the Author

Waller R. Newell is Professor of Political Science and Philosophy at Carleton University, Ottawa, 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, Connecticut.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Gina Melton:**

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#### **Donald Wexler:**

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#### **Lois Bottoms:**

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