



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on February 23, 2018

“Handbook of Tyranny” Presents Infographic Evidence of Despotic Excess

“The cause of all this is desire of rule, out of avarice and ambition; and the zeal of contention from those two proceeding. For such as were of authority in the cities, both of the one and the other faction, preferring under decent titles, one the political equality of the multitude, the other the moderate aristocracy; though in words they seemed to be servants of the public, they made it in effect but the prize of their contention.”

— Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*



A new infographic book provides 160 pages of graphically designed despotism. The book is aptly titled *Handbook of Tyranny* and is the work of architect and designer Theo Deutinger.

The publisher provides the following summary of the curious book:

Handbook of Tyranny portrays the routine cruelties of the 21st century through a series of detailed nonfictional graphic illustrations. None of these cruelties represent extraordinary violence — they reflect day-to-day implementation of laws and regulations around the globe.

Every page of the book questions our current world of walls and fences, police tactics and prison cells, crowd control and refugee camps. The dry and factual style of storytelling through technical drawings is the graphic equivalent to bureaucratic rigidity born of laws and regulations. The level of detail depicted in the illustrations of the book mirrors the repressive efforts taken by authorities around the globe.

Admittedly, the graphics included in Deutinger’s offering are off-putting. This includes the graphics depicting “our current world of walls and fences,” which pertain to prisons such as those in which political prisoners are held. For those unfamiliar with the format, infographics are “a visual presentation of information in the form of a chart, graph, or other image accompanied by minimal text, intended to give an easily understood overview, often of a complex subject.”

Tyranny is certainly a “complex subject,” and the content of *Handbook of Tyranny* covers much of the mayhem manufactured by despots.

With chapter headings such as “Walls & Fences,” “Refugee Camps,” and “Crowd Control,” readers will discover digests of some of the most inhumane excesses of governments (and the powers behind them).

In fairness, it would be hard to present a rosy picture of an institution (government) that was



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responsible for over 300 million murders in the 20th Century.

A review published by [wallpaper.com](#) provides a tongue-in-cheek summary of some of the information conveyed by the charts in *Handbook of Tyranny*:

“The breadth of information here is never less than fascinating. Discover which 14 countries ‘welcome every citizen from any country in the world with a valid passport without any visa restrictions,’ or the myriad designs for keeping people out (and in) of the world’s many contested and conflicted border zones.”

One theme running through the book’s brilliant artwork is that government atrocities are usually the result of conspiracies between governments and their silent partners.

This subject was one with which the Founding Fathers of the United States were very well versed, as were the notable writers of antiquity from whom they learned their distrust of demagogues and despots.

James Madison, James Wilson, and others who systematically studied the ancient republics and confederacies noted that conspiracies were rampant among them. Those who were successful in carrying out such evil designs would expose and vehemently rail against similar acts on the part of others, thus painting themselves as guardians of liberty. The source of all this evil was an unquenchable thirst for power. Power was the end, and conspiracy was the means commonly used to satisfy the rapacious appetite for dominion.

From Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Jefferson, Adams, Dickinson, Madison, Hamilton and other diligent patriot-scholars learned of a particularly pernicious deception practiced by tyrannically minded conspirators. These instigators would place their fellow conspirators in leadership positions on both sides of a controversy, constantly inciting the “opposing” factions against one another until the innocent citizens didn’t know what to believe.

Our American republic in the 21st century is little different, as Democrats and Republicans adamantly “oppose” one another, while between their rival policies lurks not a dime’s worth of difference.

A companion evil to the conspiracies that contaminated and eventually annihilated the ancient commonwealths was the gradual erosion of liberty by seemingly harmless and legal acts. In Demosthenes’ writings, the Founders read of how Philip of Macedon — by slow and nearly imperceptible means — dismantled Athenian freedom. Philip was an enemy even to those who fancied themselves his allies. He used “legal” means to subvert the constitution and rob Athens of her liberty. His favorite tactic was to create frivolous diversions and provide luxuries to lull the Athenians into a false sense of security and distract them from noticing Philip’s usurpations.

Thumbing through Deutinger’s visually compelling chronicle of the terrors committed by tyrants and their supporters, I wished that he had expanded his historical scope and included infographics communicating the savagery and subtlety perpetrated by the autocrats across the ages.

James Madison insightfully noted that most of the tyrants of history masqueraded as democrats, and over time revealed themselves to be power hungry dictators and shameless demagogues. Alexander Hamilton, an astute student of classical history, devoted his first contribution to *The Federalist* to a warning against tyrants or “men who have over-turned the liberties of republics, commencing as demagogues and ending as tyrants.”

From such statements, it is evident that Adams, Madison, Hamilton, and other Founders understood that, throughout the history of the Greek and Roman republics, tyrants were more likely than not to



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begin their political careers as populists and democrats and to end them as despots. Such demagogues were men of prominence who used their popular support to force their will upon an unsuspecting and trusting populace. As Greek historian Thucydides remarked, “You may rule over anyone whom you can dominate.”

One can only imagine how much more effective Deutinger’s book would have been at exposing the excesses of oppressive regimes if he would have drawn from the voluminous records of imperial Rome or of the demagogues turned dictators in Ancient Greece.

Finally, it is very important that liberty-minded readers understand that there are a few chapters of the *Handbook of Tyranny* with which they will not agree. For example, Deutinger includes many graphics calling for an end to the eating of meat, warning of the dangers of climate change, and espousing the theory of the evolution of man.

One could argue, in fact, that the very solutions he supports are, themselves, tyrannical.

Maybe before the second edition comes out Deutinger will study history and eschew the Progressive propaganda that he promotes.

Handbook of Tyranny by Theo Deutinger is published by Lars Müller Publishers and is scheduled for release on February 27.



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