What is tyranny?

Webster defines tyranny thus...

1. The arbitrary or despotic use of power; or, the exercise of power over subjects and others with a rigor not authorized by law or justice, or not requisite for the purpose of government.
2. Cruel government or discipline; as the tyranny of a master.
3. Unresisted and cruel power.
4. Absolute monarchy, cruelly administered.
5. Severity; rigor; inclemency.

To our collective shame, humankind has always existed under what is called, tyranny. And generally speaking, the tyrants came from one of two classes of "ruler"; either those who became rulers by accident of birth – kings, queens, princes(ses) and such – or those who became rulers because they "won the war" and were now in charge of all the former subjects of the enemy that had just been defeated in that war. People lived under these conditions, largely unable to do anything about it. Tyrants are always watching for uprisings, and putting them down before they can gain sufficient traction to be effective in resisting the tyrant's rule.
So while it may be difficult for us to understand in our highly empowered, Western American culture, where most people feel like they have at least some control over their destinies, for most of the world, throughout most of history, people have lived under tyranny typically with little or no resistance... nor hope. By and large, they felt – and likely were – powerless to effect significant change in their living situations. Sadly, there are some among us who still have that tyrant/subject mindset. As an aside, here's just one example of this.

An aside...

When former vice president and current presidential candidate Joe Biden was asked about Americans' concerns that his being elected would damage the second amendment's role against government tyranny, his reply was telling. He said that standing up to the American government would require an F-16, not a handgun or rifle at home. What does that mean? Indeed, an F-16 would be required to stand up against a tyrant and all his forces. Is that how the former Vice President sees the American government, as a tyranny?
God forbid a soldier came to my door with some order that would violate my constitutional rights, I do not need an F-16 to resist him. A handgun would do the job. He doesn't want to die at the hands of a fellow American, nor is it likely that he wants to kill a fellow American. If however, Americans did not have handguns and/or rifles at home, by which they could resist someone at the door with illegal, unconstitutional orders, then indeed, they would need an F-16 to resist the American military.
The former Vice President was unwittingly betraying his "bent" regarding Americans' ownership of firearms. It is obvious by his remarks that in the back of his mind, he envisions an *individually*

powerless people, unable to resist at their individual level. That is the mindset of a tyrant. But back to history and powerless people...

The Responses to Tyranny

It *appears* as though there have been two major responses to tyranny throughout the history of humankind. We are the happy recipients of one of the successful ones, but there have been just a few. Most responses to tyranny have been within the context of being in the same geographic location as the tyrant him/herself. Therefore in "the East", where civilization as we know it began and from thence, spread, the response was usually "collectivism". That's the idea that if we stand together, we can resist the tyrant and overthrow him/her... if we stick together. Well really, what actually holds those in the collective, together, long term, once the tyrant is vanquished? Is it commitment to the cause? Is it shared responsibilities? Is it conscience demanding the sacrifices necessary to support the collective? All these things would be wonderful, were they resident at a wholesale level in the human heart. But they are not. Human nature is not quite as naturally good as the collectivists believed/hoped/trusted that it would be. The human is concerned largely for him/herself, and his/her own; not for the society, the state, or even those of the collective known to him/herself! History *proves* that that is what human nature *is*. To deny this is to deny history, yes, reality itself. But progressivism, working toward the cause of collectivism, claims that humankind has progressed beyond these primitive traits, and can *now* exist collectively. Sadly, their beliefs have succeeded in solving NONE of humankind's problems. You see, unless the human is "internally controlled" (by his/her religious beliefs, for example) to be loving, giving, concerned more with others than him/herself, he/she must be "externally controlled". Therefore, what happens in collectivism is that a tyrant arises... invariably. How else are people externally controlled? I mean think of it. Policing becomes necessary. The associated bureaucracies begin to arise. Taxation to support the bureaucracies arises. Distribution must be overseen and controlled. Domains and power structures (and power struggles!) arise. As Lord Acton said quite astutely, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely". This cogent statement depicts a linear relationship between power and corruption. The amount of corruption rises commensurately with the amount of power obtained. This has to do with and is directly owing to the basic, universal human nature about which we spoke, above! Therefore, one **must** ask the *obvious* question, once a collective is established, "How does it continue?". Will all the members thereof just do everything that is expected of them, or will some "policing" (and what naturally follows) be required in order to ensure that each one does his/her part to support the collective? Methinks the latter. You?

The Natural "Progression"

What arises then is a mandated conformity to some standard(s) designed ostensibly to support and foster the success of the collective. In other words, a bureaucracy. Sadly, the nature of bureaucracies is that they neither foster, nor further, nor stick to original goals. Rather, they grow

to sustain and perpetuate their own existence and continuance almost invariably *at the expense* of the organization that is supposed to be being sustained, and its charter goals. In other words, the bureaucracy becomes tyrant disguised as a bureaucracy. And this tyranny invariably comes to be in charge of resource distribution. Naturally, resources will be distributed in a manner that makes resistance futile, else the bureaucracy/tyrant runs the risk of resistance/coup d'etat/revolution, etc.

History's Lessons

Such were the outcomes of all of the Eastern collectivist attempts at rising up against tyranny. What comes to mind immediately are Communist China and the Soviet Union, tyrannies both. As we move even slightly westward, we see that after the inevitable collapse of the Soviet Union and the releases from tryanny of the Eastern Block nations, another collectivist attempt sprang up, namely, the European Union, a "voluntary" collective, falling apart before our very eyes, after less than three decades!

An Alternative to Collectivism

Such were the experiences of the Eastern World. In the West however, we had a rather different phenomenon. Some from European tyrannies chose to escape their bonds and come to a newly discovered land where there might be freedom from the Tyrant. What happened is historic, and in this history we have the second response to dealing with tyranny. Rather than the exultation of a collective and its needs, we had the exultation of the individual and his/her own needs. Now don't misunderstand. The settlers of the New World were not so ground breaking as to know intuitively that they ought to avoid a collectivist mentality when fleeing the tyrant. No. In fact, the first settlements in this New World were collectives! … and they failed... quickly. The solution at which they finally arrived, and which led to the Colonies' success were actually the concepts of individual freedom, personal liberty, and private property rights. [1]

Having begun in a collectivist fashion, it didn't take these Christian, Puritan "escapees" long to realize that human nature is natural (pun intended); indeed, their religious beliefs contributed to their *soon* understanding of the ways in which human nature would respond to collectivism. Food was raised collectively, and distributed in the same manner. But when people found out that within the collective, they could eat without working, guess what they did? You guessed it. It did not take those in charge long to see that were they to survive, they could not go on collectively. The realities of human nature would simply not allow it. A change was existentially *essential*, and one took place. Private property was allotted to families. Some degree of self-provision and self-sufficiency and self-success was expected. Still in keeping with human nature, the survival instincts kicked in. When humans think they can survive without work, they will. When humans think they must work in order to survive, they do. The Pilgrims' situation

1 https://www.hoover.org/research/how-private-property-saved-pilgrims

changed significantly when each family had its own plot, and its own responsibilities. Human nature did what human nature does.

Geographic Assistance, the Tyrant's Response, and the Rest is History

Largely owing to the benefit of geography – in other words being far enough away from the tyrant to try something other than collective strength in resisting him, our founders discovered that the best way for humans to live together was with individual property rights, and responsibility for their own success and/or failure, and the rule of law, to which all were accountable, even the "leaders".

To be sure, in this Christian community, there was not the wholesale ruthlessness of watching the weak fail and then taking their stuff. There was assistance provided where necessary. But there was also the expectation that these Christians would follow what they found in Scripture, "*For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread*." 2Thes 3:10-12 NKJV

When the King of England found out that those who'd escaped his tyranny and discovered personal property rights, enlightened self interest, the "invisible hand"[2] of a free market economy, in other words, individualism, he immediately attempted to re-establish his sovereign rule; his tyranny. Thanks be to God, the "colonies" had been apart from the tyrant long enough to have established the rule of law and the strength to resist the tyrant when he attempted to reassert his authority. Interestingly, what prevented the reassertion of his authority, was not F16s, nor even a standing army. Rather, it was a militia formed of armed individuals, with their own arms, working together to resist the tyrant's attempts at squashing revolution.

In terms of world history, it was a remarkably short time before this first ever *individualist* response to tyranny became the world's super power, and actually did so during the time when the collectivist response was being tried on the other side of the world (The French Revolution, for example). Several collectivist experiments have begun and ended, tried and failed since then. Indeed, even after the fall of perhaps the greatest collectivist endeavor, the Soviet Union, the New World's (America's) status as sole super power has remained.

Some erroneously believe that America's hegemony is the result of the American government's involvement and intervention. Others will actually look at history and understand that America's hegemony and status were the result of America's founding documents and constitution, which insured individual liberty and personal freedom *from* government and from any collective, **and**... the rule of law, to which (ostensibly) even the leaders are accountable. In terms of economic and military power, the only thing currently even close to America is

2 Adam Smith's description of the "governing principles" of a free market economy and a free society

China; a failed collective that has managed to amass vast supplies of working, invest-able capital by judiciously meting out individual liberties in a closely government controlled environment (the definition of fascism, by the way). But China still exists as a giant collective, one having a difficult time controlling its unrivaled population, which population has access to the World Wide Web, and can almost *taste* the freedoms it is being denied. The book is still out on China's rise, or fall.

The Importance of Teaching History

Today, much of our population, deliberately kept ignorant of our nation's founding and the principles thereof, is screaming for a new collective. American culture has moved from the concept of the rule of law implemented as *equal justice under the law*, to the concept of *social justice*, in which conception, all individuals are *entitled* to have equal amounts of the available resources in the society; in other words, collectivism. The "younger" generations, with support from those in the older generations whom are subject to collectivist group think, have been convinced that some members of our society who've become successful in a free market economy are the modern day tyrants because they are in possession of larger percentages of the nation's resources than are some of the less successful members. In this configuration, success has been equated with injustice, and the solution is a collectivist redistribution of wealth/resources. The reality that individual freedom, personal liberty, private property rights and equal justice under the law have actually facilitated the creation of the wealth/resources, has been systematically removed from our educational institutions. In its place, collectivism as a response to tyrants (the successful among us, and a government that recognized equal justice under the law rather than social justice), is offered as the *historic* solution. Indeed, as noted above, collectivism is the historic – **and universally failed** – solution!

That an attempt at collectivism is even able to exist unhindered and uncensored in our society is proof that its cultural and constitutional underpinnings are the world's only, ever successful ones. In spite of that historical reality, new collectivists attempt to empower themselves against those very institutions that made the collective able to even stand; free speech, the right to assemble, the right of dissent, etc, etc, etc.

This new collective is attempting to dismantle the system of government that has made America, America, and *re-create* it in the collectivist format which has historically, demonstrably, invariably, universally failed... and failed not only in every place it has ever been tried all over the world, but also failed even *here* in the early days of United States of America, where it can be read and recognized as a failure in our own history!

The Future

I know it's cliché, but it's true. Those who don't learn history are destined to repeat it. America's current crop of students, from the grade school level to the highest levels of our educational system, have been deliberately and systematically starved of proper US civics,

proper American history, proper history of Western Civilization, and proper World History. Therefore, when one comes along whom is in actuality "tilting at windmills", quixotically pointing his/her finger at a "tyrant" and offering the collectivist solution, these un(der)-educated "kids" follow after him/her like the Pied Piper he/she is.

You may have noticed – it was intended that you should – that while we began with the idea that there have been two "solutions" to tyranny, there is after all, just one. The collectivist "solution", one which fails to recognize and then make provision for actual, demonstrable human nature, is none at all. It is merely a way of changing tyrants while continuing to deny human beings of their God given rights; yes, God given; for in this idea that rights come from God, is the genius of the American founding.

Whether a straight up monarchy, a communist dictatorship, autocracy, empire, theocracy or even a socialist *Utopia*, any "rights" that are to be enjoyed by the population of those tyrannies – and they are tyrannies all – are deemed, granted, allowed by the tyrant, whichever form he/she takes. The United States of America had no such tyrant, and as articulated in our founding documents, the USA recognized a transcendent source of human rights, God Himself. And following in that same line of thinking that human rights *come from God* and not from any human nor human-made source, no human nor human-made source of government may have *authority to infringe* upon those rights. In fact, any limitation or law on any individual or group by any level of government, must require the consent of the governed; a principle actually hundreds of years old, finding itself in the second sentence of the first document ever representing the United States of America, our Declaration of Independence; independence from the then, tyrant, King of England.

In stark contrast to collectivist thinking, the documents that soon followed that Declaration, our Constitution and Bill of Rights, are designed specifically to prevent government from infringing upon the God given rights of individuals. In our form of government, the government is controlled by the people, not the people by the government. In the collectivist model, the people are controlled by the government controls, not the government by the people. In our system of government, properly administered, the people are the sovereign. In the collectivist system of government, the Collective... read that, the Tyrant, is the sovereign. (Notice any contemporary differences between the idea of Constitutional American and what our government is fast becoming?)
We must have our eyes open to these things, loved ones, else tyranny will rule the day as, until the United States of America, it always has.

Pastor