

CHAPTER ONE

THE TYRANNY OF UTOPIA

TYRANNY, BROADLY DEFINED, IS the use of power to dehumanize the individual and delegitimize his nature. Political utopianism¹ is tyranny disguised as a desirable, workable, and even paradisiacal governing ideology. There are, of course, unlimited utopian constructs, for the mind is capable of infinite fantasies. But there are common themes. The fantasies take the form of grand social plans or experiments, the impracticability and impossibility of which, in small ways and large, lead to the individual's subjugation.

Karl Popper, a philosopher who eloquently deconstructed the false assumptions and scientific claims of utopianism, arguing it is totalitarian in form and substance, observed that “[a]ny social science which does not teach the impossibility of rational social

construction is entirely blind to the most important facts of social life, and must overlook the only social laws of real validity and of real importance. Social sciences seeking to provide a background for social engineering cannot, therefore, be true descriptions of social facts. They are impossible in themselves.”² Popper argued that unable to make detailed or precise sociological predictions, long-term forecasts of great sweep and significance not only are intended to compensate for utopianism’s shortcomings but are the only forecasts it considers worth pursuing.³ (Although Popper differentiated between “piecemeal social engineering” and “utopian social engineering,” it is ahistorical, or at least a leap of faith, to suggest that once unleashed, the social engineers will not become addicted to their power; and Popper never could enunciate a practical solution.)

Utopianism is irrational in theory and practice, for it ignores or attempts to control the planned and unplanned complexity of the individual, his nature, and mankind generally. It ignores, rejects, or perverts the teachings and knowledge that have come before—that is, man’s historical, cultural, and social experience and development. Indeed, utopianism seeks to break what the hugely influential eighteenth-century British statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke argued was the societal continuum “between those who are living and those who are dead and those who are to be born.”⁴ Eric Hoffer, a social thinker renowned for his observations about fanaticism and mass movements, commented that “[f]or men to plunge headlong into an undertaking of vast change, they must be intensely discontented yet not destitute, and they must have the feeling that by the possession of some potent doctrine, infallible leader or some new technique they have access to

a source of irresistible power. They must also have an extravagant conception of the prospects and potentialities of the future. . . . [T]hey must be wholly ignorant of the difficulties involved in their vast undertaking. Experience is a handicap.”⁵

Utopianism substitutes glorious predictions and unachievable promises for knowledge, science, and reason, while laying claim to them all. Yet there is nothing new in deception disguised as hope and nothing original in abstraction framed as progress. A heavenly society is said to be within reach if only the individual surrenders more of his liberty and being for the general good, meaning the good as prescribed by the state. If he refuses, he will be tormented and ultimately coerced into compliance, for conformity is essential. Indeed, nothing good can come of self-interest, which is condemned as morally indefensible and empty. Through persuasion, deceit, and coercion, the individual must be stripped of his identity and subordinated to the state. He must abandon his own ambitions for the ambitions of the state. He must become reliant on and fearful of the state. His first duty must be to the state—not family, community, and faith, all of which challenge the authority of the state. Once dispirited, the individual can be molded by the state with endless social experiments and lifestyle calibrations.⁶

Especially threatening, therefore, are the industrious, independent, and successful, for they demonstrate what is actually possible under current societal conditions—achievement, happiness, and fulfillment—thereby contradicting and endangering the utopian campaign against what was or is. They must be either co-opted and turned into useful contributors to or advocates for the state, or neutralized through sabotage or other means. Indeed, the individual’s contribution to society must be downplayed, dismissed,

or denounced, unless the contribution is directed by the state and involves self-sacrifice for the utopian cause.

In a somewhat different context, although relatable here, the extraordinary French historian and prescient political thinker Alexis de Tocqueville explained, “When the traces of individual action upon nations are lost, it often happens that you see the world move without the impelling force being evident. As it becomes extremely difficult to discern and analyze the reasons that, acting separately on the will of each member of the community, concur in the end to produce movement in the whole mass, men are led to believe that his movement is involuntary and that societies unconsciously obey some superior force ruling over them. But even when the general fact that governs the private volition of all individuals is supposed to be discovered upon the earth, the principle of human free-will is not made certain. A cause sufficiently extensive to affect millions of men at once and sufficiently strong to bend them all together in the same direction may well seem irresistible, having seen that mankind do yield to it, the mind is close upon the inference that mankind cannot resist it.”⁷ Tocqueville was writing of religion but his observation assuredly applies to utopian tyranny.

Utopianism also attempts to shape and dominate the individual by doing two things at once: it strips the individual of his uniqueness, making him indistinguishable from the multitudes that form what is commonly referred to as “the masses,” but it simultaneously assigns him a group identity based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, income, etc., to highlight differences within the masses. It then exacerbates old rivalries and disputes or it incites new ones. This way it can speak to the well-being of “the people”

as a whole while dividing them against themselves, thereby stampeding them in one direction or another as necessary to collapse the existing society or rule over the new one.

Where utopianism is advanced through gradualism rather than revolution, albeit steady and persistent as in democratic societies, it can deceive and disarm an unsuspecting population, which is largely content and passive. It is sold as reforming and improving the existing society's imperfections and weaknesses without imperiling its basic nature. Under these conditions, it is mostly ignored, dismissed, or tolerated by much of the citizenry and celebrated by some. Transformation is deemed innocuous, well-intentioned, and perhaps constructive but not a dangerous trespass on fundamental liberties. Tocqueville observed, "By this system the people shake off their state of dependence just long enough to select their master and then relapse into it again. A great many persons . . . are quite contented with this sort of compromise between administrative despotism and the sovereignty of the people; and they think they have done enough for the protection of individual freedom when they have surrendered it to the power of the nation at large . . ." (II, 319)

Utopianism also finds a receptive audience among the society's disenchanting, disaffected, dissatisfied, and maladjusted who are unwilling or unable to assume responsibility for their own real or perceived conditions but instead blame their surroundings, "the system," and others. They are lured by the false hopes and promises of utopian transformation and the criticisms of the existing society, to which their connection is tentative or nonexistent. Improving the malcontent's lot becomes linked to the utopian cause. Moreover, disparaging and diminishing the successful and

accomplished becomes an essential tactic. No one should be better than anyone else, regardless of the merits or value of his contributions. By exploiting human frailties, frustrations, jealousies, and inequities, a sense of meaning and self-worth is created in the malcontent's otherwise unhappy and directionless life. Simply put, equality in misery—that is, equality of result or conformity—is advanced as a just, fair, and virtuous undertaking. Liberty, therefore, is inherently immoral, except where it avails equality.

Equality, in this sense, is a form of radical egalitarianism that has long been the subject of grave concern by advocates of liberty. Tocqueville pointed out that in democracies, the dangers of misapplied equality are not perceived until it is too late. “The evils that extreme equality may produce are slowly disclosed; they creep gradually into the social frame; they are seen only at intervals; and at the moment at which they become most violent, habit already causes them to be no longer felt”⁸ (II, 319). Among the leading classical liberal philosophers and free-market economists, Friedrich Hayek wrote, “Equality of the general rules of law and conduct . . . is the only kind of equality conducive to liberty and the only equality which we can secure without destroying liberty. Not only has liberty nothing to do with any sort of equality, but it is even bound to produce inequality in many respects. This is the necessary result and part of the justification of individual liberty: if the result of individual liberty did not demonstrate that some manners of living are more successful than others, much of the case for it would vanish.”⁹ Thus, while radical egalitarianism encompasses economic equality, it more broadly involves prostrating the individual.

Equality, as understood by the American Founders, is the natu-

ral right of every individual to live freely under self-government, to acquire and retain the property he creates through his own labor, and to be treated impartially before a just law. Moreover, equality should not be confused with perfection, for man is also imperfect, making his application of equality, even in the most just society, imperfect. Otherwise, inequality is the natural state of man in the sense that each individual is born unique in all his human characteristics. Therefore, equality and inequality, properly comprehended, are both engines of liberty.¹⁰

Still, in democracies, the attraction of equality too often outweighs the appeal of liberty, even though individuals are able to flourish more in democracies than in other societies. Liberty's wonders and permanence can be subtle and ambiguous and, therefore, unnoticed and underappreciated. Despite its infinite benefits, for many liberty is elusive—for one must look below the surface to identify it. Conversely, equality can be more transparent at surface level. It is posited as a far-off concept of human perfectibility but is also delivered in bits and pieces, or at least appears to be, in daily life. It usually takes the form of material "rights" delivered to the individual by the state. Consequently, equality and liberty are both subjects of utopian demagoguery and manipulation. Liberty is encouraged if its end is equality. Liberty, by itself, is not.

Equality is also disguised as or confused with popular sovereignty—that is, the conflation of "the people's will" with egalitarian campaigns, such as "social justice," "environmental justice," "immigrant rights," "workers' rights," etc. In essence, then, true democracy cannot be achieved unless society is reorganized around the disparate and endless demands of disparate and endless claimants. In due course, such a society becomes chaotic

and balkanized. As it dissolves and crises build, the stage is set for escalating coercion or repression.

Utopianism's authority also knows no definable limits. How could it? If they exist, what are they? Radical egalitarianism or the perfectibility of mankind is an ongoing process of individual and societal transformation that must cast off the limits of history, tradition, and experience for that which is said to be necessary, novel, progressive, and inevitable. Ironically, inconvenient facts and evidence must be rejected or manipulated, as must the very nature of man, for utopianism is a fantasy that evolves into a dogmatic cause, which, in turn, manifests a holy truth for a false religion. There is little or no tolerance for the individual's deviation from orthodoxy lest it threaten the survival of the enterprise.

In truth, therefore, utopianism is regressive, irrational, and pre-Enlightenment. It robs society of opinions and ideas that may be beneficial to the human condition, now and in the future. It stymies human interaction, including economic activity, which progresses through a historical process of self-organization. Adam Smith, a towering philosopher and economist of the Scottish Enlightenment, referred to it as a harmony of interests creating a spontaneous order where rules of cooperation have developed through generations of human experience.¹¹ The utopian pursuit, however, commands the imposition of a purported design and structure atop society by a central authority to arrest the evolution of the individual and society.

As Popper noted, "[T]he power of the state is bound to increase until the State becomes nearly identical with society. . . . It is the totalitarian intuition. . . . The term 'society' embraces . . . all social relations, including all personal ones."¹² The power, according

to Tocqueville, is “immense and tutelary” and “takes upon itself alone to secure” the people’s “gratifications and watch over their fate.” “That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident, and mild.” “Thus it every day renders the exercise of the free agency of man less useful and less frequent; it circumscribes the will within a narrower range and gradually robs a man of all the uses of himself.” “It covers the surface of society with a network of small complicated rules, minute and uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd.” (II, 318)

Utopianism’s equality is intolerant of diversity, uniqueness, debate, etc., for utopianism’s purpose requires a singular focus. There can be no competing voices or causes slowing or obstructing society’s long and righteous march. Utopianism relies on deceit, propaganda, dependence, intimidation, and force. In its more aggressive state, as the malignancy of the enterprise becomes more painful and its impossibility more obvious, it incites violence inasmuch as avenues for free expression and civil dissent are cut off. Violence becomes the individual’s primary recourse and the state’s primary response. Ultimately, the only way out is the state’s termination.¹³

In utopia, rule by masterminds is both necessary and necessarily primitive, for it excludes so much that is known to man and about man. The mastermind is driven by his own boundless conceit and delusional aspirations, which he self-identifies as a noble calling. He alone is uniquely qualified to carry out this mission. He is, in his own mind, a savior of mankind, if only man will bend to his will. Such can be the addiction of power. It can be an irrationally egoistic and absurdly frivolous passion that engulfs even

sensible people. In this, the mastermind suffers from a psychosis of sorts and endeavors to substitute his own ambitions for the individual ambitions of millions of people.

Legislatures are capable of democratic tyranny by degenerating into a collection of masterminds, passing laws not because they are right or moral, but because they can. Writing of the French Legislative Assembly, Frédéric Bastiat, a statesman and pioneering advocate of classical liberalism, noted, “It is indeed fortunate that Heaven has bestowed upon certain men—governors and legislators—the exact opposite inclinations, not only for their own sake but also for the sake of the rest of the world! While mankind tends toward evil, the legislators yearn for good; while mankind advances toward darkness, the legislators aspire for enlightenment; while mankind is drawn toward vice, the legislators are attracted toward virtue. Since they have decided that this is the true state of affairs, they then demand the use of force in order to substitute their own inclinations for those of the human race.” He added that there “is this idea that mankind is merely inert matter, receiving life, organization, morality, and prosperity from the power of the state. And even worse, it will be stated that mankind tends toward degeneration, and is stopped from this downward course only by the mysterious hand of the legislator.”¹⁴ Thomas Jefferson put it this way: “All the powers of government, legislative, executive, and judiciary, result to the legislative body. The concentrating of these in the same hands is precisely the definition of despotic government. It will be no alleviation that these powers will be exercised by a plurality of hands, and not by a single one. One hundred and seventy-three despots would surely be as oppressive as one . . . As little will it avail us that they are cho-

sen by ourselves. An *elective despotism* was not the government we fought for. . . .”¹⁵

The mastermind is served by an enthusiastic intelligentsia or “experts” professionally engaged in developing and spreading utopian fantasies. Although there are conspicuous exceptions, longtime Harvard professor and political theoretician Harvey Mansfield explained that modern intellectuals have “monumental impatience . . . with human complexity and imperfection. . . . They believe that politics is a temporary necessity until the rational solution is put in place.”¹⁶ Of course, the rational solutions are not rational at all. While intellectuals are obviously smart, they are not smart enough to have conquered the social sciences and use them to rejigger society. They are posers to knowledge they do not and cannot possess. Meanwhile, intellectuals are immune from the impracticability and consequences of their blueprints for they rarely present themselves for public office. Instead, they seek to influence those who do. They legislate without accountability. Joseph Schumpeter, a prominent economics professor and political scientist, was a harsh critic of intellectuals. He wrote, “Intellectuals rarely enter professional politics and still more rarely conquer responsible office. But they staff political bureaus, write party pamphlets and speeches, act as secretaries and advisers, make the . . . politician’s . . . reputation. . . . In doing these things they . . . impress their mentality on almost everything that is being done.”¹⁷

For the rest, transforming society becomes a struggle between the utopia and self-determination and self-preservation, since the individual must acquiesce to centralized decision-making. Apart from brute force, the mastermind has in his arsenal a weapon that

provides him with a predominant advantage—the law. Bastiat explained that “when [the law] has exceeded its proper functions, it has not done so merely in some inconsequential and debatable matters. The law has gone further than this; it has acted in direct opposition to its own proper purpose. The law has been used to destroy its own objective: It has been applied to annihilating the justice that it was supposed to maintain; to limiting and destroying rights which its real appeal was to respect. The law has placed the collective force at the disposal of the unscrupulous who wish, without risk, to exploit the person, liberty, and property of others. It has converted plunder into a right, in order to protect plunder. And it has converted lawful defense into a crime, in order to punish lawful defense.”¹⁸ When the law is used in this way, the few plunder the many (e.g., public-sector unions), the many plunder the few (e.g., the progressive income tax), and everyone plunders everyone (e.g., universal health care), making utopia unsustainable and ultimately inhumane.

Centralizing and consolidating authority is required to replace dispersed decision-making with a command and control structure, the purpose of which is to coerce behavior in pursuit of a fantasy, a dogmatic cause, a false religion, etc. That is not to say that knowledge and information from outside the central authority go without notice. Rather, it is collected in a self-serving, haphazard, and incomplete way, to tinker and adjust, to torment and control, but never as a means to fundamentally challenge assumptions, reconsider policies, or disprove the utopian ends. How could it, since utopianism rejects rationality and empiricism from the outset? It repudiates experience. It is said to be new, different, better, and bigger.

Moreover, the reproduction of knowledge and information that exists outside the central authority would be not only pointless but impossible. Individuals are complicated, complex beings. No centralized authority can know what is in their minds or discern and assimilate the distinctiveness and assortment of their myriad daily activities, no matter how many academics or experts advise it. For example, respecting the social engineers and their distortion of economics to justify their manipulation of behavior and outcomes, Popper noted, “Economics . . . cannot give us any valuable information concerning social reforms. Only a pseudo-economics can seek to offer a background for rational understanding.”¹⁹

Consequently, the mastermind relies on uniform standards born of insufficient knowledge and information, which are crafted from his own predilections, values, stereotypes, experiences, idiosyncrasies, desires, prejudices and, of course, fantasy. The imposition of these standards may, in the short term, benefit some or perhaps many. But over time, the misery and corrosiveness from their full effects spread through the whole of society. Although the mastermind’s incompetence and vision plague the society, responsibility must be diverted elsewhere—to those assigned to carry them out, or to the people’s lack of sacrifice, or to the enemies of the state who have conspired to thwart the utopian cause—for the mastermind is inextricably linked to the fantasy. If he is fallible then who is to usher in paradise? If his judgment and wisdom are in doubt then the entire venture might invite scrutiny. This leads to grander and bolder social experiments, requiring further coercion. What went before is said to have been piecemeal and therefore inadequate. The steps necessary to achieve true utopianism have yet to be tried.

For the individual and the people generally, this is dispiriting, destabilizing, stagnating, and impoverishing. Although all state action is said to be taken in the people's interest, the heavy if not crippling burden they shoulder is the price they pay for an impossible cause—a cause greater than their lives, liberty, and happiness. The individual is inconsequential as a person and useful only as an insignificant part of an agglomeration of insignificant parts. He is a worker, part of a mass; nothing more, nothing less. His existence is soulless. Absolute obedience is the highest virtue. After all, only an army of drones is capable of building a rainbow to paradise.

The immorality of utopianism, albeit obvious to sober thinkers, requires explicit attention nonetheless for, perversely, too many remain enthusiastically committed to it. Utopianism is immoral *per se*. On what basis does utopianism make such a thorough claim on the individual's existence? On a mastermind's dogma? In criticizing socialism's immorality and its appeal to "dropouts" and "parasites," Hayek wrote, "Rights derive from systems of relations of which the claimant has become a part through helping to maintain them. If he ceases to do so, or has never done so (or nobody has done so for him) there exists no ground on which such claims could be forwarded. Relations between individuals can exist only as products of their wills, but the mere wish of a claimant can hardly create a duty for others. . . ." ²⁰ More broadly, the individual's right to live freely and safely and pursue happiness includes the right to benefit from the fruits of his own labor. As the individual's time on earth is finite, so, too, is his labor. The illegitimate denial or diminution of his labor—that is, the involuntary deprivation of the private property he accumulates from his intellectual and/or physical efforts—is a form of servitude and, hence, immoral. ²¹

There is also no morality in utopian deception and distortion to promote an abstraction, forcing the individual to behave in ways that are contrary to his best interests and destructive of his nature; attacking the civil society's ethical norms and social arrangements; and making commonplace dependency and coercion. Rather than cultivating a moral society and individual virtuousness, whether through faith, education, or sociability, and building on the accumulated experience and wisdom of earlier generations, utopianism breeds dishonesty not good character; it encourages ideology not reason; it rewards rashness not reflection; it attracts fanatics not statesmen; and it is transformative not reformative. As the world around him grows increasingly unpredictable and hostile, and the moral order of the civil society frays and then unravels, the individual may feel that his daily survival depends on abandoning his own moral nature and teaching, including prudence, self-restraint, and forethought. He may become radicalized and join the ranks of predators, or become isolated and conniving, hoping to avoid notice. He may become dispirited and detached, resigned to a life of misery. He may defiantly stand his moral ground, in which case he may become the predators' prey. In any event, the law of the jungle becomes the law of the land as the civil society disintegrates.

Clearly, utopianism is incompatible with constitutionalism. Utopianism requires power to be concentrated in a central authority with maximum latitude to transform and control. Oppositely, a constitution establishes parameters that define the form and the limits of government. For example, in the United States, the Constitution divides, disperses, and delineates governmental power. It grants the central government not plenary but enumerated pow-

ers. It further deconcentrates power through three branches of the central government, reserving the rest of governmental powers to the states and the people. The Constitution enshrines a governing framework intended to ensure the longevity of the existing society and stifle the potential for tyranny.

The Constitution reflects the Founders' repudiation of utopianism and any notion of omnipotent and omniscient masterminds. In *Federalist* 51, James Madison wrote, "But what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself."²² Madison argued that the draft constitution had achieved that end. In *Federalist* 45, he explained, "The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite. The former will be exercised principally on external objects, as war, peace, negotiation, and foreign commerce; with which last the power of taxation will, for the most part, be connected. The powers reserved to the several States will extend to all the objects which, in the ordinary course of affairs, concern the lives, liberties, and properties of the people, and the internal order, improvement, and prosperity of the State."²³

For the mastermind, where the Constitution is believed useful to utopian ends, it will be invoked. Where it is not, under the pretense of legitimate differences of interpretation it will be aban-

done outright or remade through various doctrinal schemes and administrative evasions. For the mastermind, the Constitution's words are as undeserving of respect as the rest of history. They will be used to muddle and disarrange, not inform and clarify. Moreover, the Constitution's authors, ratifiers, and present-day proponents will be dismissed as throwbacks. To follow them will be to renounce modernity and progress. And yet to follow the mastermind is to renounce the American founding and heritage.

The late associate Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall demonstrated the point in his repudiation of the Framers. "I do not believe that the meaning of the Constitution was forever 'fixed' at the Philadelphia Convention. . . . Nor do I find the wisdom, foresight and sense of justice exhibited by the framers particularly profound. To the contrary, the government they devised was defective from the start, requiring several amendments, a civil war and momentous social transformation to attain the system of constitutional government, and its respect for the individual freedoms and human rights, we hold as fundamental today. They could not have imagined, nor would they have accepted, that the document they were drafting would one day be construed by a Supreme Court to which had been appointed a woman and the descendant of an African slave. 'We the people' no longer enslave, but the credit does not belong to the framers. It belongs to those who refused to acquiesce in outdated notions of 'liberty,' 'justice' and 'equality,' and who strived to better them."²⁴

There is no denying that slavery blights the history of many societies, including American society. But the Constitution neither preserved nor promoted slavery. As I explained in my response to Marshall in *Men in Black*, "Discrimination, injustice, and inhu-

manity are not products of the Constitution. To the extent they exist, they result from man's imperfection. Consequently, slavery exists today not in the United States but in places like Sudan. Indeed, the evolution of American society has only been possible because of the covenant the framers adopted, and the values, ideals, and rules set forth in that document."²⁵ In fact, had there been no Constitution there would have been no United States. If there had been no United States there would have been no Civil War—no Union versus Confederacy. Slavery in the southern colonies and later the territories may well have lasted much longer. While the delegates to the Constitutional Convention were unable to abolish slavery, many tried. Moreover, their progeny did, and at great personal sacrifice.

The Constitution evinces the Founders' broader comprehension of human nature and natural rights, set forth most succinctly and prominently in the Declaration of Independence. To cast the Constitution off its mooring is to cast off its mooring as well. The Declaration provides, in part:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . .

President Abraham Lincoln, during his 1858 campaign for the U.S. Senate, explained: “In [the Founders’] enlightened belief, nothing stamped with the Divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on, and degraded, and imbruted by its fellows. They grasped not only the whole race of man then living, but they reached forward and seized upon the farthest posterity. They erected a beacon to guide their children and their children’s children, and the countless myriads who should inhabit the earth in other ages. Wise statesmen as they were, they knew the tendency of prosperity to breed tyrants, and so they established these great self-evident truths, that when in the distant future some man, some faction, some interest, should set up the doctrine that none but rich men, or none but white men, were entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, their posterity might look up again to the Declaration of Independence and take courage to renew the battle which their fathers began—so that truth, and justice, and mercy, and all the humane and Christian virtues might not be extinguished from the land; so that no man would hereafter dare to limit and circumscribe the great principles on which the temple of liberty was being built. . . .”²⁶

America’s founding documents set in place the philosophical and political foundation for a just and humane society—unlike any before it or since. Fidelity to these principles abolished slavery, just as they can ensure the civil society’s longevity. The mastermind and his followers mostly ignore the Declaration and pick

the Constitution like an old scab. As I wrote in *Liberty and Tyranny*, “The Modern Liberal believes in the supremacy of the state, thereby rejecting the principles of the Declaration and the order of the civil society, in whole or part. For the Modern Liberal, the individual’s imperfection and personal pursuits impede the objective of a utopian state. In this, Modern Liberalism promotes what . . . Tocqueville described as a soft tyranny, which becomes increasingly more oppressive, potentially leading to a hard tyranny (some form of totalitarianism). As the word ‘liberal’ is, in its classical meaning, the opposite of authoritarian, it is more accurate . . . to characterize the Modern Liberal as a *Statist*.”²⁷

Utopianism is not new. It has been repackaged countless times—since Plato and before. It is as old as tyranny itself. In democracies, its practitioners legislate without end. In America, law is piled upon law in contravention and contradiction of the governing law—the Constitution. But there are no *actual* masterminds who, upon election or appointment, are magically imbued with godlike qualities. There are pretenders with power, lots of power. When they are not rebelling they are dictating, but the ultimate objective is always the same—control over the individual in order to control society. They are adamantly committed to their abstraction and their accumulation of authority to pursue it, to devastating effect. Accordingly, its exploration in this book—from Plato’s *Republic* to what I term modern-day *Ameritopia*—is essential to understanding the nature and influence of this force on American society today.