A black and white photograph of the Statue of Liberty, showing the head, crown, and torch. The statue is positioned on the left side of the frame, looking towards the right. The background is a cloudy sky.

# TRUTH & LIBERTY

*33 ways to fight  
lies, propaganda  
& oppression*





## Note from the author

This handbook is meant to serve as  
a practical guide today or 50 years  
from now.

It will always be free.



---

## Chapter 1: Marching Toward Liberty

Step 1. Why tyrants fear protest marches  
Step 2. Non-violence is your greatest weapon  
Step 3. Publicize a protest long before it happens  
Step 4. Use the march to organize and message

Step 5. Don't just say you're peaceful—show it  
Step 6. Reach out to the local police  
Step 7. End with action

---

## Chapter 2: Dismantling a Wall of Lies

Step 8. Focus on deeds, not words  
Step 9. Let media and fact-checkers handle lies  
Step 10. Never play defense  
Step 11. Mock policies instead of personalities

Step 12. Turn the strength of tyrants into weakness  
Step 13. How stories can fight Fear of the Other  
Step 14. Build bridges

---

## Chapter 3: The Hidden Fight

Step 15. An honest look at the landscape  
Step 16. Identify your audiences, then listen  
Step 17. How persuasion works  
Step 18. Match your message to your audience

Step 19. Pick a simple symbol  
Step 20. Organize on multiple fronts  
Step 21. Force multipliers

---

## Chapter 4: Winning the War on Truth

Step 22. Support and protect the free press  
Step 23. Attack the heart of propaganda  
Step 24. Ignore fake news and faceless trolls

Step 25. Turn propaganda against itself  
Step 26. Match your messengers to your audiences  
Step 27. Weave stories into everything

---

## Chapter 5: Resisting Oppression

Step 28. Know their playbook  
Step 29. No singular leader or movement  
Step 30. Protect whistleblowers, journalists and protest leaders

Step 31. Use old-fashioned tools  
Step 32. Find safe harbors  
Step 33. Turn every target into a hero and symbol



# Chapter 1: Marching Toward Liberty

A march is the basic form of protest and has been for thousands of years.

Marches are still incredibly useful for any political movement, especially if you're resisting lies, propaganda and oppression.

A single march can do what tyrants fear most:

- ❖ Organize the people
- ❖ Spread a message of truth, equality and democracy
- ❖ End with an action, and
- ❖ Set the stage for bigger marches and events.

This chapter is about maximizing any march, because history shows even a single march can be the seed of a national movement.

## Step 1. Why tyrants fear protest marches

However invincible a regime appears, it will crumble without the compliance of average people. Even the harshest dictator doesn't patrol the streets and do his own dirty work.

Nation-states require police officers, judges, soldiers, administrators—and modern economies require truck drivers, nurses, engineers and construction workers

This is why authoritarian regimes do all they can to make you afraid, isolated, quiet and compliant.

Protests in the streets show that people are brave, unified, loud and resistant.

Riot police can handle a crowd of two hundred. They



can bring in trucks and arrest everyone. Police can't arrest a crowd of ten thousand protestors.

They have no way of dealing with 100,000 non-violent marchers. And there aren't enough police, courts and prison cells to arrest and lock up tens of millions of people peacefully marching.

Even if a regime tried to do this, they'd go bankrupt trying to build enough prisons and hire enough prison guards. The economy would sputter and die without all those workers, while the regime would look silly arresting peaceful grandmothers and kids.

This is why tyrants fear peaceful protests more than anything else.

So you march. Loudly and peacefully.

Together.

And you do not comply.



## Step 2. Non-violence is your greatest weapon

An opposition movement must embrace non-violence, not just in protest marches, but throughout every action it takes.

That's because the first instinct of a regime is to brutally crack down on any signs of rebellion while portraying protestors as paid, violent thugs.

Opposition groups, big or small, have to continually preach and practice non-violence, and renounce any violent protest as being outside the movement.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his fellow Freedom Marchers knew they'd be greeted with the blows of police batons, the spray of fire hoses and the bites of police dogs. They went out in the streets anyway to expose the ugly truth about Segregation.

Peaceful protest is also more effective than a violent uprising. Political scientist Erica Chenoweth studied

Researchers used to say that no government could survive if just 5 percent of the population rose up against it. Our data shows the number may be lower than that.

No single campaign in that period failed after they'd achieved the active and sustained participation of just 3.5 percent of the population. But get this: every single campaign that exceeded that 3.5 percent point was a nonviolent one. The nonviolent campaigns were on average four times larger than the average violent campaigns.

—Erica Chenoweth

major non-violent and violent uprisings since 1900. Violent uprisings succeeded 26 percent of the time and tended to lead to another tyrannical regime.

Chenoweth found that non-violent resistance succeeded 53 percent of the time and tended to lead to greater democracy.



### Step 3. Publicize a protest long before it happens

The more time you provide for logistics, publicity and planning, the better. Don't wait until the day before. Start weeks before—the longer, the better.

Many protests and marches are held on weekends, because that's when people have free time. The trouble with weekends is there aren't many reporters working Saturdays and Sundays..

Advance notice is therefore key, especially for TV crews. A newspaper reporter can grab a notebook and camera and head out. A TV reporter needs a camera person and a satellite van, so station producers plan in advance. And you want television coverage whenever possible.

To maximize press coverage before the march, gather a list of names, emails and phone numbers of your local media. Then write down the following in this format, which is the Five W's of journalism:

*WHO:* Who is expected to attend and speak at the march? Who is organizing it? And finally, who can the press contact for more information?

List multiple organizers, because you should reply right away to any press request. Reporters are always on deadline and will contact different people until they get what they need.

*WHAT:* What exactly is happening? Think like a reporter about events worth photos or coverage.

*WHEN:* Start time and end time.

*WHERE:* Starting point and ending point.

*WHY:* Why are you marching? This is best done through a quote from an organizer.



Use this raw material, those Five W's, to spread your message.

*Announce the event:* Send an email with those exact things, in that format, to the local press with the subject line of the email announcing the event.

*Share it on social media:* Post that same information on social media and ask people to share with their friends and RSVP so you can get a rough headcount.

Figure out a hashtag for the movement and event.

*Turn it into letters to the editor:* Get every organizer and ally who's coming to the march to rewrite those Five W's into letters to the editor.

Have them say, in their own words, why they're attending the peaceful march and why others should, too..

*Talk to the press:* Reporters doing announcement stories want more than the Five W's.

Ideally, journalists want a great personal story about one of the organizers or speakers at the march. The best stories are the ones that surprise and bring audiences on an emotional journey.

Find those stories and connect people with journalists before the event.



## Step 4. Use the march to organize and message

Now that every smart phone can take photos and video, then send those images around the world, a every march and event is an opportunity to spread your message on multiple platforms.

This is critical because regimes use lies and propaganda as part of a sophisticated, multi-media attack.

Combatting this assault on truth and liberty requires images, video, songs and stories.

Every step of the way, ask your fellow organizers and the crowd to post photos or video using the same hashtag.

*Photos of the growing crowd:* As the march starts, get people to take photos of the growing crowd. Post photos and video to social media to encourage those sitting on the fence to show up.

*Video of every speaker:* Shoot film—on smart phones, camcorders or better—during and after the march.

*Stories:* Set up stations, which can be as simple as a poster that says, "Tell Your Story Here," and send roving volunteers to do the same around the crowd. Stories about real people are the most powerful form of messaging and communication.

*Music and song:* It's not a party without music. Many people belonged to marching bands in school or college. Encourage people to bring their drums or guitars to entertain people. Shoot film of people dancing or singing protest songs.

*Turn the march into an organizing tool:* A simple clipboard can turn into an email list or phone tree.

On that same clipboard, ask people what skills they have and what issues they'd like to work on.

*Creative protest signs and costumes:* Take photos of the best and funniest ones. Give people credit.

*Announce the next event and other actions:* In the warm-up speeches before the march starts, announce the next march or event.

Tell people other actions they can take, like writing letters to the editor, showing up at a lawmaker's town hall meeting or emailing advertisers to boycott radio shows and blogs spewing fake news and hate.

Repeat these announcements at the end of the march, so you don't lose momentum by having to track down and inform people after it's over.

## Step 5. Don't just say you're peaceful—show it

If the regime can portray protesters as angry and violent, they win. Oppressive regimes want photos and film of protests turned ugly.

They want red-faced people spitting on police, college students wearing black trashing cars and protestors looting shops.





This is why protest marches should be peaceful and joyful, with music and laughter. You want it to be completely clear that the march is a peaceful, happy event. A party people want to join.

For safety reasons, don't block highways or do anything that could make a march dangerous to bystanders, drivers, police or fellow protestors.

Organize volunteers wearing something visible—hats or armbands—to keep the peace and offer bottles of water or first aid.

To emphasize how committed the opposition is to non-violence, put people who are obviously not threats in the front of any march:

- ❖ Religious leaders
- ❖ Grandmother and grandfathers
- ❖ Retired veterans wearing their uniforms

## Step 6. Reach out to the local police

No regime can survive without the support and obedience of local police.

Police have kids who go to the same schools as your kids or grandkids. They shop at the same grocery stores. These are your neighbors, whether you know their names or not.

So learn their names.

Before the march, reach out to the local police to make sure they know exactly what you're planning.

Ask them for their advice on making it peaceful and safe, because you don't plan on giving them any trouble whatsoever. And because they'll know the logistics of a march, big or small. Your local police will know the safest routes you should march.





As long as people use tactics to oppress or restrict other people from being free, there is work to be done.

— Rosa Parks

While the crowd gathers and organizers give speeches, tell the crowd that the local police aren't the enemy. Explain how the regime really wants to portray protestors as paid thugs who smash windows and throw rocks at the police.

Remind everyone that your movement embraces non-violence in the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

During the march, smile and reach out to the police. Call them by the names on their uniforms and ask where they're from.

Thank them for coming out to make the march safe. Give them flowers—or coffee and pastries.

If you see this happening, take a photo or video. Because news is the most interesting when it's a surprise. People expect protestors to treat the police as an enemy to be met with suspicion, fear and flying bottles. You'll make news by doing the opposite.

After the march, get to know the police in your neighborhood. Don't lecture them—listen. Having coffee and donuts with your local police may sound like a joke. But it's not.

Everyday police officers are a core pillar of any authoritarian regime.

Without their support, the regime crumbles.

## Step 7. End with action

If you end a march with nothing, that's anti-climactic. That's why most marches begin with warm-up speeches and end with their best speakers.

Surprise people by ending your march not just with a great speech, but with a non-violent action.

Sit-ins are effective, especially to publicize a lawmaker or elected official who refuses to meet with the people they're supposed to serve.

It's relatively easy for police to hustle off people who are standing up. It takes multiple police officers to pick up and carry each protestor staging a sit-in.

People around the world have also created variations on the protest march in response to regime tactics like refusing to issue protest permits or blocking protest routes.

A silent, standing protest doesn't have to march anywhere and is a powerful and unusual statement.

Street theater is a useful and creative outlet. Stage a short play or skit in a public place.

Picket lines, strikes and boycotts are effective in leveraging economic pressure for reform and justice.

Every oppressive regime is also a kleptocracy. Rulers, their families and cronies get rich through corruption, and major businesses must pay to play. Put pressure on key businesses that support the regime with picket lines, strikes and boycotts.

For a comprehensive list of 198 non-violent methods and actions, read Gene Sharp's *The Politics of Non-Violent Action*.

*Bring your brooms*



At the end of any protest march or event, leave the place cleaner than you found it.

Nothing steps on your message more than photos of piles of trash.

End every event by cleaning up not just the protest area itself, but nearby places, whether it's a shopping mall, a park or a neighborhood.

Brooms are also a potent symbol of cleanliness vs dirty corruption. This is a simple, strong way to show that your movement is positive and constructive instead of threatening.

It's hard to fight against this imagery .

A regime would look ridiculous if it tried to outlaw brooms or arrested groups of peaceful people

cleaning up public streets and parks.

Who doesn't like volunteers with brooms and trash bags, cleaning up local parks and streets?

This is also an opportunity for outreach. People will see you cleaning up outside their home or business and ask who you're with and why you're doing it.

This is far more effective as a conversation starter than knocking on their door and trying to talk to about your movement.

By cleaning up, you're showing people with deeds instead of words. You're also creating curiosity, which is the first step to engaging an audience.



## Chapter 2: Dismantling a Wall of Lies

Tyrants and would-be tyrants lure people into a debate about the past, which is politically weak.

Regimes use a wall of lies to generate Fear of the Other, then try to capitalize on that manufactured fear by portraying themselves as the only thing strong enough to fight those threats.

### Step 8. Focus on deeds, not words

Being caught in a brazen lie harms the reputation of a normal leader, so lies are mistakes to be avoided in modern democracies.

Authoritarian regimes don't see lies as mistakes. They use lies as weapons of mass distraction. Instead of avoiding lies and being ashamed when they're caught, tyrants create a Wall of Lies for use as a shield and a bludgeon.

The goal is to distract the press and opposition with lies as shiny objects while the regime is busy doing things they don't want you to notice.

This is why authoritarians deploy a stream of headline-grabbing smears, shocking statements and personal attacks against any who dare oppose them.

You can't keep up. Don't see the wall of lies as individual facts to verify or debunk. View each lie as a clue to a regime's intentions about who they're targeting next.

If they're lying about a religious minority, know they're trying to generate support to target that minority next. Never take the bait and get stuck in a debate about the past. Instead, focus on the damage the regime is doing to real people, to individual freedom and to the country itself.



### Three kinds of debates

1. *Debates about the past* deal in facts and assigning blame, often in a court of law.

Debates about the past aren't powerful in the political sense, because most people have a particular frame. If they hear new facts that are contrary to their frame, they don't reject their long-held beliefs—they reject those new facts.

2. *Debates about the present* are about values, decisions you can't make by weighing evidence or comparing numbers.

Debates about values are generally used when talking about social issues. Values are important, but values alone won't persuade.

3. *Debates about the future* are about risks versus reward, hopes versus fears.

These are the most powerful political debates and impossible to fact-check, because the future is always in the distance.



## Step 9. Let the media and fact-checkers handle lies

The natural reaction to outright lies is for the opposition to cry foul and correct the record.

Doing so, however, is shockingly ineffective. It takes a great deal of time and energy for the press or opposition to debunk a single lie. Meanwhile, it costs an undemocratic ruler mere seconds to generate a pile of new untruths.

Even if you "win" the debate about one of these lies, you haven't really won a thing except the chance to waste your time .

An opposition can't get trapped trying to debunk this sea of lies. Average people and the political opposition can't become consumed with this task.

Leave the job of correcting lies to those with the credibility and resources to do it: fact checkers and the free press, including media based outside the country where the regime has no leverage.

Instead of referring to individual lies, focus on the regime's credibility as a whole. Point to the long history of lie after lie as proof that you have no reason to believe the regime will tell the truth about anything at all. Ever.

While the press and fact-checkers do their job, do your job: spreading the message that it doesn't have to be this way. That instead of lies, propaganda and oppression, the people could be free..

That message should focus on the future, because a fight about the past—about facts—is inherently weak for political purposes.

A debate about the future is the political high ground. Stay there.



## Step 10. Never play defense

The targets of lies or a smear campaign shouldn't spend their energies debating the facts and defending themselves. Taking this bait means you accept the autocrat's preferred narrative: Are you guilty of these attacks or not?

A person or group defending itself does so from a weakened ethos—credibility—because they have a self-interest in that debate.

Anyone being attacked or smeared by the autocrat should let a third-party defend them. An independent source has a stronger ethos, since they don't have any self-interest in the matter. While others defend you or your group, stick to your message. Know you're only being attacked because your message is working.





## Step 11. Mock policies instead of personalities

The campaign of lies and propaganda meant to boost the image of the autocrat—to make him look strong—are often countered with mockery from the opposition and the media.

Autocrats tend to be bigger than life and easy to mock. Yet mockery is not a magic bullet.

Throughout history, authoritarian leaders were often seen as clowns or jokes who'd never had a chance of holding power. Mockery didn't stop them from gaining power, and attacks on their personality won't drive them from power.

Economics professor Luigi Zingales points to the example of billionaire and three-time prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, who won elections when opponents focused on his bombastic personality and many scandals. Trust me, you don't want to know what "bunga bunga" parties are.

It's only when opponents attacked Berlusconi on the issues—policies instead of personality—that they kicked him out of office.

Mocking policies instead of personalities is also smart as a long-term strategy, because every tyrant will eventually pass on and be replaced by a successor using the exact same power base, tactics and policies.



## Step 12. Turn the strength of tyrants into weakness

You have to do this literally. Relentlessly.

Without getting distracted by the stream of brazen lies, manufactured conflicts and distractions.

Authoritarians can win the message war by distracting and trap the opposition into debating about facts—a debate about the past— while they’re busy exploiting fear about the future and rigging the system to grab more power and wealth.

To win, you need to convert supporters of the regime into opponents.

When confronted by facts that don’t fit their narrative frame, they won’t reject the autocrat’s dominant frame and story—they’ll reject the facts.

The only way to win is to provide a different political narrative. A story that explains what causes problems and how you fix them.

No matter what issue is being debated, put it in the same frame: the ruler is a cheater who rigs the system because he’s too weak and cowardly to win a fair fight.

Instead of being the savior of the nation, the autocrat is the cause of problems.

The solution is to restore the rule of law and strong individual rights instead of a police state with all power resting in the hands of the few or the one.

Here are sample frames to change the narrative:

**THE WAR ON TRUTH**—The ruler rigs the system with lies, censorship and propaganda because he’s are too weak and cowardly to win a fair debate. Our country won’t be truly free until we have free

If you think the only way to beat these people is to make them admit their lies, you’re the one who will lose.

—William Saletan

speech, a free press and the right to protest without being arrested.

**ELECTIONS**— The ruler is a cheater who rigs elections because he’s too weak and cowardly to win a fair election. We won’t be a free country until we have free and fair elections.

**LAW AND ORDER**—The ruler cheats and rigs the police, intelligence agencies and courts because he’s too weak and cowardly to win according to our constitution.

It’s not about making us safe—it’s about making him safe.

Protecting the people will only happen with police and judges who obey the law instead of a single man who’s above the law.

**THE ECONOMY**—He’s a cheater who rigs the economy for himself and his cronies because he’d rather cheat and game the system than work hard for his money like you and I have to.

He’ll plunder the country until we restore fair competition and we reward hard work and merit, not corruption and kickbacks.

## Step 13. How stories can fight Fear of



## the Other

Autocrats use a twisted, extreme form of populism, giving angry masses a simple and powerful attack on the status quo.

That attack is a political narrative, a story that explains what causes problems and how you solve them. It's based on fear and lies yet quite effective.

In this false narrative, the source of all problems are traced back to the Other—typically immigrants, minorities, intellectuals and foreigners—and since the nation is under attack, the solution is a strong leader to protect the people.

An autocrat will continually refresh and expand the list of Others to keep the population sufficiently afraid and compliant.

The secondary targets of undemocratic rulers are any individual or institution who they see as a threat to absolute power. These targets include journalists, judges, lawmakers, opposition leaders and protestors.

If there is no real foreign threat, autocrats will often invent threats through lies and propaganda—or by ginning up conflicts with other countries, especially smaller, weaker nations they can bully.

Fear of the Other works because it's visceral, primal and a debate about the future. You can't fight this fear with facts, numbers or arguments.

The best way is through sharing stories about real people and building bridges, because Fear of the Other is really a fear of the unknown. In the end, the regime is trying to dehumanize classes of people while turning them into scapegoats.

Fight back with stories about real people.



Find and spread stories about real people from targeted groups who proudly serve as soldiers, police officers, teachers, doctors or nurses. Share photos or video of these people with their extended families—from infants to great-grandmothers—to dispel the lie that they're somehow inhuman or a threat to the nation.

The most powerful stories show people from completely different backgrounds, religions and ethnicities meeting and becoming friends.

The most effective responses to attacks on Muslim mosques and Jewish synagogues in North America have been leaders of other faiths rallying to help.



## Step 14. Build bridges

There are good lessons from the debate on marriage equality in the United States and other nations.

One of the most effective tools that changed minds wasn't a slick slogan or an advertising campaign.

What helped turn the tide were gay and lesbian people brave enough to come out to their friends, co-workers and family.

Because once most people had a aunt, son or neighbor who was gay or lesbian, Fear of the Other faded and attitudes quickly changed.

It's impossible to dehumanize entire groups of people when everybody knows members of that targeted group.

Another key message is the story of transformation,

with somebody who used to fear a persecuted group and believe the regime's lies sharing how they changed their mind. It's a story about building bridges, one person at a time.

The good news is this is something that every person can do.

Whatever group is being smeared and persecuted, the best way to resist is to reach out and build bridges.

Not with people who already agree with you, but with people who support the regime and may have never met people they're being asked to hate.

Those new friendships happen at the local level.

And there's nothing a regime can do to stop people from sharing coffee, chatting during their kids' soccer game or sharing a meal in their own home.





## Chapter 3: The Hidden Fight

There's a different battle happening behind the curtain. Oppressive regimes want the press and public to be distracted by manufactured fights, brazen lies and Fear of the Other while they wage a hidden war.

This chapter is about that hidden fight and how to organize against it.

### Step 15. An honest look at the landscape

It's a myth that nations of today are static and unchangeable. During times of economic upheaval and war, solid democracies have slid to authoritarianism, while tyrants who seemed like invincible monoliths have fallen to the power of average people fighting to govern their own fates.

There are three basic forms of government:

1. Rule of the Many
2. Rule of the Few
3. Rule of the One

For thousands of years, Rule of the One was the default. Whether you called them king, queen or warlord, the essential idea was the same: absolute power concentrated in the hands of a single person.

Lies, propaganda and oppression are the tools of tyrants. While the technology may be new, kings and dictators used these strategies and tactics for thousands of years. Because if you control what people hear and see, you can control what they do.

Rule of the Few isn't necessarily gentler, with modern autocracies often switching to this form long after kings and emperors fell out of fashion. Modern,



mixed system can be just as oppressive as the absolute monarchies of old.

There are still countries where insulting the ruler can mean a prison sentence, where journalists who write critical stories are harassed, jailed or assassinated. And where opposition leaders who dare to treat elections as real contests face sham trials and stuffed ballot boxes.

Look at the chart on the next page and assess of where your nation stands:

Is there free speech or censorship? Do you have independent media or state-owned propaganda?

Are elections fair or rigged? Is the economy based on merit and competition or connections and corruption?

Do people have legal rights and liberties along with the rule of law or is the legal system beholden to the regime and the Rule of Man?



<i>Basic structure</i>	<b>Rule of the Many</b> -Democracy -Republic -Constitutional monarchy (ceremonial role)	<b>Rule of the Few</b> -Oligarchy -Kleptocracy -Theocracy -One-Party Rule -Military junta	<b>Rule of the One</b> -Autocracy -Totalitarianism -Absolute monarchy -Dictator -Warlord
<b>TRUTH</b>			
<i>Free speech</i>	Strong protections for free speech	Wall of Lies War on Truth	Wall of Lies War on Truth
<i>Free press</i>	Free press	Journalists and protesters are attacked, threatened and arrested	State owns media outlets
<i>Freedom to protest</i>	Freedom to assemble and protest	Wealthy cronies of ruler buy media to squelch criticism	Violent crackdowns of mass protests; protest itself may be criminalized
<b>LIBERTY</b>			
<i>Checks and balances</i>	Rule of Law  Constitution, independent courts and checks on power of ruler	Checks and balances are subverted and weakened  Power of lawmakers is reduced  Courts, police and spy agents turned against opposition instead of criminals and foreign threats	Rule of Man instead of the Rule of Law  No checks and balances  Lawmakers don't make laws—they're a rubber stamp  Courts cater to ruler alone
<i>Freedom of religion</i>	Yes	Rulers may favor one faith while oppressing others	Total state control
<i>Economics</i>	Fair competition	System rigged to benefit rulers and cronies	Ruler controls and plunders treasury
<i>Elections and transfers of power</i>	Free and fair elections  Leaders serve limited terms for modest salaries  Peaceful transfer of power to winner of election	Rigged elections -gerrymandering -ballot stuffing -opponents kicked off ballot -threats, arrests and violence vs opposition leaders  Transfer of power may not be peaceful or smooth	No elections or completely rigged ones; a thin veneer of democracy  Rulers serve unlimited terms—"president for life"  If leader dies, power goes to family members or hand-picked successor



## Step 16. Identify your audiences, then listen

The first rule of rhetoric is, "Who's your audience?"

In democracies, it's typical to think you only need 50.1 percent of the population to win. That's only true when elections aren't rigged.

With an oppressive regime, you must reach out to every possible audience, to make a clean break between the rulers at the top, their cronies and the other 99 percent of the population.

That's because even if you're fighting for truth, liberty and democracy, saying those words won't truly resonate with a wide audience. Those ideas are lofty and don't immediately connect with everyday life.

Listen to a wide swath of people—not just those who already agree with you—to find out what bothers them, what they fear and what want.

By their nature, oppressive regimes create strict rules that annoy the people they rule. Try to identify small, everyday annoyances faced by each major audience. Organize actions that target those symbolic fights that annoy each audience.

*Blue-collar workers*—This is the base of most autocratic regimes. They work hard just to pay the bills. Is the regime following through with their promises? Have things gotten better or worse—and what kind of dreams do they have for their children?

*Business owners*—Corruption doesn't just happen at the highest levels. An oppressive government often requires average people and businesses pay extra to government officials every step of the process. Nobody enjoys being extorted like this.

Still another danger is represented by those who, paying lip service to democracy and the common welfare, in their insatiable greed for money and the power which money gives, do not hesitate surreptitiously to evade the laws designed to safeguard the public from monopolistic extortion.

Their final objective toward which all their deceit is directed is to capture political power so that, using the power of the state and the power of the market simultaneously, they may keep the common man in eternal subjection.

They claim to be super-patriots, but they would destroy every liberty guaranteed by the Constitution.

They are patriotic in time of war because it is to their interest to be so, but in time of peace they follow power and the dollar wherever they may lead.

—Vice President Henry A. Wallace (1941-45)

*Seniors*—Seniors may remember personal freedoms they enjoyed, and fought for, decades ago. They might fear having their pensions and health care being slashed. Finally, they may worry about their children and grandchildren being abused and oppressed by the regime.

*Kitchen table economics*—Oppressive regimes are willing to hurt the overall economy to enrich themselves and their cronies. They don't pay the price for this. You and your neighbors do. Corruption means artificially high prices and shortages of basic goods. It also means corporations with connections feel far more free to poison the environment or rip off their customers without fear of being held accountable.



*Well-educated professionals*—No modern society can function without engineers, professors, doctors, lawyers and other professionals. College students, professionals and skilled bureaucrats are likely to have travelled or studied abroad and tasted real freedom. Censorship, corruption and oppression will grate on them, no matter what their political views are.

*Targets of the regime*—Members of religious, ethnic or sexual minorities will face the worst smears and oppression.

*The general public*—Paranoia come with a price. Nobody likes the feeling that their email, phone calls and private conversations could be listened to by the secret police, or that they could be thrown in jail for something they said that offended rulers. And censorship is no fun. People today enjoy music, books, TV shows and movies from around the world, if not the internet itself.

Autocratic regimes will block or censor anything they see as a threat. Something as simple as leaving paperback copies of banned books in public places is a powerful symbol of rebellion and freedom.

Every day in countries unfortunate enough to be ruled by a lone dictator, people are constantly subjected to the Supreme Leader's presence. ...He begins to permeate your psyche and soul; he dominates every news cycle and issues pronouncements — each one shocking and destabilizing — round the clock.

He delights in constantly provoking and surprising you, so that his monstrous ego can be perennially fed. ... Somehow, he is never in control of himself and yet he is always in control of you.

—Andrew Sullivan

## Step 17. How persuasion works

Persuasion is tough and takes repeated personal contact.

You can get a message out with images, words or film. Truly changing somebody's opinion requires listening to their fears and dreams, their ideas and questions, and talking through things over time.

There are three types of audiences:

1. Hostile
2. Neutral
3. Friendly

And there are three stages to persuasion:

1. Change their mood
2. Change their mind
3. Get them to act

Use these concepts as tools for organizing and targeting your message.

*Neutral audiences:* This is the only situation where you go through all three steps of trying to change their mood, change their mind and get them to act.

*Hostile audiences:* It's a victory to simply change their mood, so throw away the last two parts of the standard speech or message and consider it a victory to simply change their attitude and mood.

Don't expect to flip audiences all the way from hostile to friendly. It's a victory to move any audience one step.

*Friendly audiences:* Throw out the first two thirds of your standard speech or outreach effort. They already agree with you. Focus all of your time on figuring out ways to partner up and get things done.





## Step 18. Match your message to your audience

*Friendly audiences* should be identified and recruited to get the work done.

*Neutral audiences* are people on the sidelines, not supporters of the regime but afraid of taking steps that might get them in trouble. Or they're simply busy trying to pay their bills and survive.

With a neutral audience, you're trying to move them to friendly.

They may not commit fully to the fight. Any sort of support, though, is better than sitting on the sidelines.

*Hostile audiences* include average who support the regime, police, soldiers, judges and bureaucrats carrying out the ruler's orders.

No regime can survive if their base of support among the working class turns against them.

And even the most repressive ruler is powerless if the opposition convinces local police, judges and soldiers—your neighbors and friends—not to obey unjust orders to attack or imprison peaceful civilians.

The most powerful messages won't come from friendly audiences, but from formerly neutral and hostile audiences who explained what changed their mind.

When you're targeting audiences, think of that journey and how you'd want to be approached and persuaded.

It's not with lectures or a flood of facts, but through listening first and using powerful narratives.



## Step 19. Pick a simple symbol

If you don't pick a symbol and do some branding work, the regime will brand you.

Successful political and opposition movements tend to pick a common object as a symbol that any person would grab from their home and use to show their support. In some countries, it's been a color.

Common objects that became symbols include:

- Brooms (India)
- Umbrellas (Hong Kong)
- Hats with cat ears (women's marches worldwide)

Keep the symbol of the opposition simple, non-threatening and easily available to anyone.



## Step 20. Organize on multiple fronts

Every oppressive regime has pillars of support that they rely upon, with some stronger than others.

Identify and organize on each of those fronts:

- ❖ Defending and supporting the free press
- ❖ Economic campaigns such as #grabyourwallet to put economic pressure on propaganda outlets, fake news and corrupt businesses supported by the regime
- ❖ Pressuring your local, regional and national political leaders and officials
- ❖ Supporting an independent court system with individual liberties and constitutional rights—the Rule of Law instead of the Rule of Man
- ❖ Pushing for free and fair elections



## Step 21. Force multipliers

You don't need to have a background in journalism or rhetoric to understand and use simple, fundamental concepts of message.

*Simple beats complicated*—The simplest narrative wins. If you're explaining, you're losing.

*Whoever attacks the status quo wins*—Oppressive regimes try to win this debate by generating Fear of the Other. Reframe the debate by attacking the status quo and all the ways the regime makes life hard on everyday people.

*Swing for the fences*—The animal rights group PETA relies entirely on earned media. They take wild risks knowing that most of their public relations efforts will fail. Because it doesn't matter. All it takes is one grand slam success to get massive media coverage.

Keep trying different things and don't fear failure.

*Repetition can create reality*—One person saying the same thing three times is just as effective as three different people saying that same thing once.

Repetition is also key to getting your message to cut through all the noise.

Keep repeating simple messages. Over and over.

*Be where your audience is*—Decades ago, there were only a few major TV stations and radio networks in most countries.

Today, audiences are fragmented. Some people get their news only from the internet on their phone.

Others listen to the radio, watch cable TV news, only read newspapers or get their news from social media.

Dominating your favorite platform won't win the day, no matter how skilled you are in that area.

To reach every audience, be where they are.



## Chapter 4: **Winning the War on Truth**

A regime uses lies and propaganda are used not only to generate fear and smear opponents of a regime, but to distract the press and public from their larger strategy: consolidating power and accumulating wealth.

The main front of the War on Truth is an attack on independent sources of information and truth, primarily the free press, to prevent that corruption from being uncovered.

A second front is propaganda, fake news and misinformation.

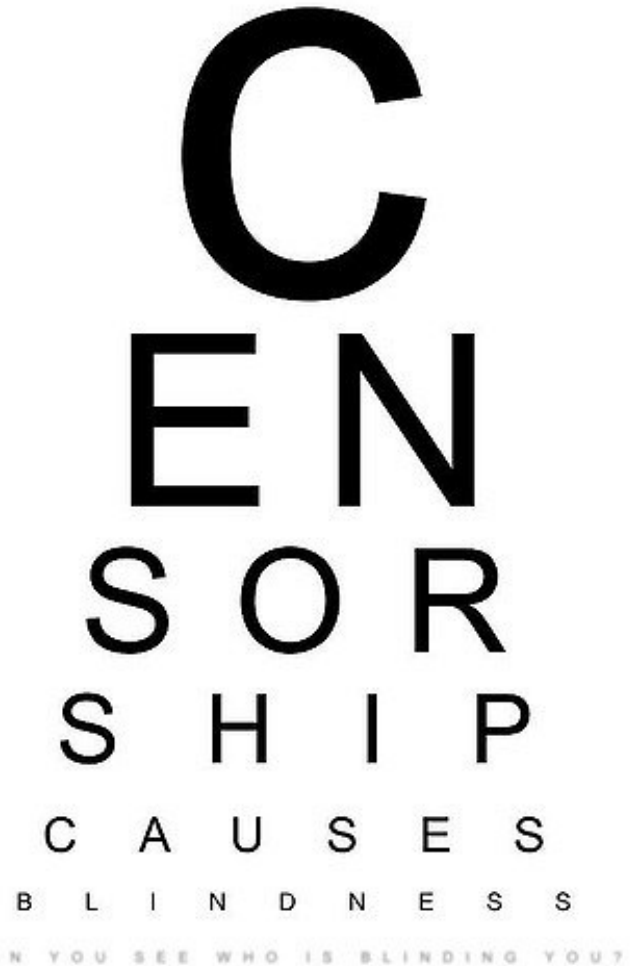
### **Step 22. Support and protect the free press**

A free, independent press is crucial to shining a light on corruption and oppression. Only the independent press has the credibility to perform this role.

If opposition lawmakers or protest groups discover corruption and try to inform the people about it, their ethos—their credibility—is weak, because they're obviously biased.

The free press is the only real institution with the credibility to shine a light on corruption, oppression and injustice. That's why authoritarian regimes relentlessly attack the press with smears, lawsuits and violence.

Fight back against any attempts to pass laws that crack down on freedom of the press and freedom of speech, including laws making it easier to sue the press for libel. Also watch for new laws that punish journalists for refusing to reveal sources, such as government whistleblowers.



Support independent newspapers acting as a check on the regime by subscribing to key newspapers and media outlets, advertising with them and getting friends and allies to do the same.

When individual reporters are attacked—in public, on social media or with lawsuits and arrests—rally to their defense.

Make smears backfire by treating every attacked reporter as a national hero. If a regime tries to stage police raids on newspapers or TV stations, blockade the entrances, hold sit-ins and do what you can to make those raids painful and publicized.



	<b><i>Goal</i></b>	<b><i>Real names and accountability?</i></b>	<b><i>Is the funding public or secret?</i></b>
<b><i>Journalism</i></b>	<p>Inform</p> <p>Seeks the truth to break news before the competition.</p>	<p>Yes. Journalists put their real names on each story.</p> <p>If they make errors, they run corrections—because they’re only as good as their reputations for accuracy.</p>	<p>Public.</p> <p>It’s easy to identify who’s paying the salary of real journalists. They don’t hide it and never would.</p>
<b><i>Rhetoric</i></b>	<p>Persuade</p> <p>Using stories, logic and facts to get you to do something in your mutual self-interest.</p>	<p>Yes. You can clearly identify the name and face of the speaker, oped writer, radio talk show host or TV pundit.</p> <p>Their reputation matters.</p>	<p>Public.</p> <p>Speeches, guest opeds and appearances on talk shows are typically free. Oped columnists and pundits are paid by newspapers and media companies.</p>
<b><i>Public relations</i></b>	<p>Inform and/or persuade</p> <p>The art of earning free media coverage.</p>	<p>Yes. Names and organizations are on each press release, oped or product.</p>	<p>Public.</p> <p>Companies and non-profits hire PR agencies or have in-house PR shops.</p>
<b><i>Advertising</i></b>	<p>Persuade</p> <p>Paid media campaigns to reach people directly and persuade them.</p>	<p>Yes. Most advertising is clearly identified with the brand of a company or non-profit.</p> <p>Ad agencies don’t hide which ads they create.</p>	<p>Public.</p> <p>Companies and non-profits hire advertising agencies or create their own ads.</p>
<b><i>Propaganda</i></b>	<p>Manipulate</p> <p>Lies, misinformation and fear to manipulate people into doing something that is not in their self interest.</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>Propagandists hide their real identities.</p> <p>They don’t print corrections when they’re caught lying—they double-down on the lie.</p>	<p>Secret.</p> <p>Propagandists try hard to hide who’s paying for their work, or will actively spread misinformation about who’s truly funding it.</p>





## Step 23. Attack the heart of propaganda outlets

Anonymity is the beating heart of propaganda.

Unlike journalism, propaganda hides both who's writing and producing their material and who's paying for it all.

Attack the heart of propaganda by depriving it of that shield of anonymity.

Unmask the writers and creators of propaganda. Shame is a powerful tool, and the last thing the people who make their living writing and producing this material is for their friends and neighbors to know what they really do for a living.

More importantly, find the funding sources. If the regime itself is entirely funding a propaganda operation, use that to discredit all that they say.

When propaganda is coming from a media outlet with any sort of advertising funding, start a #grabyourwallet campaign to boycott businesses that advertise on propaganda outlets until they remove their support.

## Step 24. Ignore fake news and faceless trolls

Kings, emperors and dictators used rumors and whisper campaigns against journalists, judges and the political opposition.

Modern technology has simply shifted those techniques to the digital realm.

Nation-states have the resources to design and deploy elaborate misinformation campaigns:

- ❖ Fake news stories and websites
- ❖ Doctored documents and photos
- ❖ Armies of faceless trolls on the internet
- ❖ Manipulated video and audio

Debunking this flood of fake news and smear attacks is a waste of time.

You can't refute lies and smears without repeating them in some fashion, spreading them wider.

The only real strategy to deal with trolls is to starve them of the attention they seek. Never engage, no matter how hard they try to provoke you.



## Step 25. Turn propaganda against itself

Instead of words, propaganda relies on images, photos, audio, posters film and music.

Propaganda tends to crop up during wartime, even in free democracies, then disappear in peacetime.

What authoritarians do is maintain a permanent campaign of propaganda during war or peace. If you glance at war propaganda posters, this becomes immediately clear: the enemy is depicted not as human beings, but as rats and monsters.

Propaganda is also used to boost the ruler's perceived strength. It's no accident authoritarian regimes puts portraits of the ruler everywhere you look, making them seem omnipresent.

A final role of propaganda is to rally the population behind the ruler while portraying any sort of opposition or protest as treasonous.

Don't give in to the notion that fighting back means using the same techniques as the regime. Spreading your own lies, propaganda and misinformation isn't smart because it undermines the credibility of the opposition. You'd sacrifice the moral high ground.

And you can't win by mirroring the regime's tactics, because this will never be a fair fight.

No opposition can ever match the money and resources of an entire nation-state. It's like a heavyweight boxer taking on random civilians on the street, including young children and grandmothers. While cheating.

Any battle against propaganda has to be fought with asymmetrical guerilla tactics. Turn the overwhelming presence of propaganda against itself.

**THERE IS  
NOTHING MORE  
URGENT  
THAN  
FREE  
DOM**

Take all the time, money and effort the regime spends on posters, slogans and messages and subvert them in creative ways.

Portraits of the ruler posted everywhere are targets for rebellion and mockery. All it takes is a marker and some creativity.

Videos and songs meant to rally the people behind manufactured enemies, and behind the ruler, are easy to satirize by anyone with a laptop and time. Even if the regime tries to censor such videos and songs on the internet, they can't stop marchers from singing the same words.

Finally, don't focus satire the subverts the regime's propaganda on the foibles of ruler, because rulers don't last forever, while their ideology and methods will continue unless they're stopped.

Aim mockery at the actual policies of the regime.



## Step 26. Send the right messengers

Talking, marching and organizing with people who already agree with you may feel good, and can help the opposition get organized. Staying in that bubble can't win the day.

Any successful fight against the War on Truth has to focus its persuasive efforts on reaching and persuading supporters of the regime.

Authoritarians gain and sustain power through extreme populism. They appeal to the working class while painting educated professionals as the enemy. By contrast, the natural base of any opposition movement is typically educated and urban.

The working class base of support for an authoritarian regime is typically afraid because they're struggling economically and desperately want change. They don't trust the educated elite to give them the change they want.

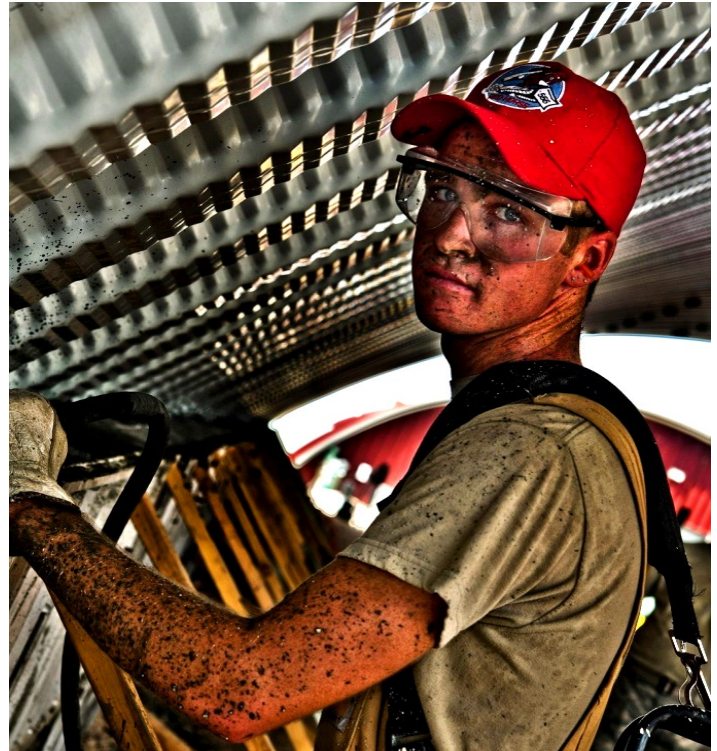
Listen to supporters of the regime first, and understand their fears, before trying to persuade them with the right message and local messengers.

*A powerful message*—The opposition's narrative has to be just as simple and emotional as the regime's story of a nation united against dangerous enemies.

A real political message is more than a slogan. It's a narrative that explains what causes problems in society, how you solve those problems and what an ideal society would look like.

Facts won't defeat the regime's powerful, fear-based message.

You need a counter-narrative that explains what causes problems in society (corruption, lies and oppression), how problems are solved (clean, honest



government, freedom of speech and fair elections)

and what an ideal society looks (a safe, open society where people can be free and prosperous).

*Local messengers*—Whoever shares the opposition

narrative should be from the same demographics and region as the audience you're trying to reach.

Don't send anyone who looks or sounds like a

member of the educated elite to working class neighborhoods, because they'll be seen a politician who can't understand their daily life.

Cultivate fresh voices who get their hands dirty

doing the same jobs, every day, as the people you're trying to reach.

Those new voices, no matter how effective,

shouldn't parachute in and out of places.

Opposition voices and leaders should be found and

supported locally, in the very places where the regime's support is the strongest.

## Step 27. Weave stories into



## Step 27. Weave stories into everything

Plato feared stories more than anything else.

More than logic. More than facts.

Stories are how we naturally process information.  
It's the most powerful form of communication.

Narratives come in many forms, and there's an art to doing them on a high level. But you're not trying to write novels or screenplays for a living.

You can, and should, structure whatever you do in terms of a simple, strong narrative.

The biggest difference between narrative stories and the stories you see in newspapers is structure.

Journalism typically uses the inverted pyramid, which is a fancy way of saying "put the exciting bit in the headline and first paragraph, then make it more boring until it peters out at the end."

There are good reasons for newspapers to use this structure, because it gives people the most important information first and lets editors cut the end of a story if they ran out of room on a page.

This journalistic style of writing is pretty typical for public relations, especially press releases.

Yet it's terrible for the purposes of persuasive writing and communication, which is what you're doing as an opposition movement.

Instead, use a narrative structure for everything you do. Everything: speeches, letters to the editor, videos, protest songs and even posters.

The basics of narrative are simple.

The rulers of backsliding democracies resent an independent press, but cannot extinguish it. They may curb the media's appetite for critical stories by intimidating unfriendly journalists, as President Jacob Zuma and members of his party have done in South Africa.

Mostly, however, modern strongmen seek merely to discredit journalism as an institution, by denying that such a thing as independent judgment can exist. All reporting serves an agenda.

There is no truth, only competing attempts to grab power.

By filling the media space with bizarre inventions and brazen denials, purveyors of fake news hope to mobilize potential supporters with righteous wrath—and to demoralize potential opponents by nurturing the idea that everybody lies and nothing matters.

— David Frum





*Villains, heroes and stakes:* Every story is a conflict between villains and heroes. The villains are the most important part of a story. What if the villain wins? Show what's at stake for the people in the story and for the greater public.

*Curiosity and surprise*—Narratives are strong because they're the opposite of the inverted pyramid. They make you curious, build up that tension and only reveal the answers at the absolute end of the piece.

*Maximum emotional distance*—The best stories, speeches, books and movies maximize the emotional distance the audience travels.

If the ending is up (happy, excited), the beginning should be down. If the ending is down (sad, upset), the beginning should be up.

Never write flat. If the story you tell is down the entire time, or up the entire time, there's no velocity to what you're doing. The audience is lost.

Think of a roller coaster. That's the kind of structure you want, with emotional velocity.

*Concrete imagery*—Don't tell people something is wrong or unjust. Talk about real people, about what they saw, touched and heard. Make it real.

*End with stories of action*—Subtext is more powerful than text. It's never persuasive to beat people over the head with your message. That's a lecture.

Instead of telling people to act, find ways to end every speech and message with an example of a person who stood up, spoke up and took action.





## Chapter 5: Resisting Oppression

Oppressive regimes react predictably to protests and opposition movements: they instinctively crack down on any dissent.

The methods used are brutal, but aren't that surprising or creative.

Non-violent resistance and smart messaging can make this instinct backfire on rulers.

### Step 28. Know their playbook

Protestors will be painted as paid thugs and traitors, with riot police blocking their movement. If protests continue, a regime may use tear gas, fire hoses and mass arrests—or simply outlaw mass protests altogether.

Judges and lawmakers who don't go along with oppression will get marginalized, replaced or charged with bogus crimes.

Whistleblowers who leak documents to the press or opposition will be tracked down, if possible, and arrested and jailed.

Journalists who reveal the truth about the regime will be threatened, attacked or arrested.

Opposition figures who try to run against the ruler may be disqualified from the ballot or charged with bogus crimes.

If there are local and state police operating with local control, the regime will try to nationalize all police and law enforcement under their direct control.

To combat the manufactured threats generated by constant lies and a sustained propaganda campaign,



The recipe for populism is universal. Find a wound common to many, find someone to blame for it, and make up a good story to tell. Mix it all together.

Tell the wounded you know how they feel. That you found the bad guys. Label them: the minorities, the politicians, the businessmen.

Caricature them. As vermin, evil masterminds, haters and losers, you name it. Then paint yourself as the savior.

Capture the people's imagination. Forget about policies and plans, just enrapture them with a tale. One that starts with anger and ends in vengeance. A vengeance they can participate in.

Populism can survive only amid polarization.

It works through the unending vilification of a cartoonish enemy.

—Andrés Miguel Rondón



the regime will seek greater powers, possibly via martial law or states of emergency, to combat these fake threats.

The true reason for this is to remove any checks and balances in the system, whether it's the courts or lawmakers.

Law enforcement that used to go after criminals and spy agencies that focused on foreign threats will be redirected against lawmakers, judges, journalists and opposition leaders.

Insulting the ruler may become grounds to be sued for defamation or charged with a crime.

Censorship of the media, radio, television and internet will be justified as necessary to safeguard the nation against terrorism and foreign threats.

## Step 29. No singular leader or movement

If the opposition is united under a single banner with a singular leader, that makes it easy for the regime to focus all its firepower on that one opposition group and leader.

A single leader can be smeared, compromised, arrested or imprisoned. A united, national opposition group can be infiltrated, attacked with police raids and depleted by lawsuits.

Let the opposition grow organically and be leaderless, so there's no one person or group as the regime's target. Making the opposition leaderless also allows for the most flexibility and local control.

Everyone can feel like they can make a difference rather than being a cog in a machine.



## Step 30. Protect whistleblowers, journalists and protest leaders

Peaceful protestors aren't doing anything unethical or wrong. That won't stop the regime from trying to use censorship and oppression.

*Protect whistleblowers and journalists:* Decades ago, authoritarian regimes kept tight control of copying machines because they knew a single copier could be used to spread the truth.

Today, it's much, much harder to prevent average citizens—or patriotic government officials—from leaking documents revealing how the regime is corrupt and undemocratic.

Anyone with access to such information should carefully leak it to the free press and make sure, once the story breaks, that other copies are safely out of the hands of the regime.

*Don't trust encryption.* Assume the regime can trace anything you do using a smart phone or computer. Instead, use couriers and dead drops.

*Use go-betweens.* Whistleblowers with access to information should not be one who leak that information directly to the press or opposition. Use a series of go-betweens to protect whistleblowers.

*Make copy after copy.* Regimes will try to censor or confiscate leaked material and anything embarrassing. Make multiple copies of important documents in different formats—digital, paper—and keep them safe in different locations.

*Dead drops* are a time-tested way to safely get documents and information to others.

Never have a face-to-face meeting to transfer sensitive information.



Power is not a means, it is an end.

One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship.

—George Orwell

Put the document or thumb drive in an innocent, waterproof container and hide it in a public place, such as taped beneath a parking garage stairwell or beneath a shelf in a public library. Don't tell anyone where the dead drop is until after the item is already there and the person who placed it is long gone.





## Step 31. Use old-fashioned tools

Regimes will put opposition leaders, journalists and whistleblowers under surveillance.

These are some simple precautions to protect against this and to make the regime waste time and resources.

*Don't make it easy.* If you suspect you're being watched, don't keep a regular schedule that lets a small team keep watch.

Keeping one person under surveillance takes a team. Doing work at odds hours of the evening means the regime has to add a night shift.

Meet with friends at restaurants or bars after midnight and they'll need another team to work the graveyard shift.

*No one-on-one meetings:* Don't meet one-on-one with important whistleblowers, journalists or opposition leaders. Talk with them, briefly, as part of a large group or event: a dinner party, a concert, a wedding or a soccer game.

*Mix your real message in a sea of fakes.* If something is truly important, send a flood of fake messages in different formats with different dates and details along with the one real message. Even if all these messages are in simple code, or no code at all, there's no way for the regime to know the fake from the real.

*Watch for infiltrators and instigators.* Regimes will send undercover agents to known meetings of the opposition, to gather intelligence and to instigate possible violence to discredit the opposition.

*Switch channels.* To communicate securely with journalists or other opposition leaders, don't use the



same channel every time. Switch whenever possible.

*Book codes.* Digital encryption can be broken. If you need to send encrypted messages, book codes are unbreakable, no matter how many supercomputers are thrown at the problem.

Instead of codes referring to letters, a book code refers to the specific page, line and word of widely-available books.

To make it even more secure, continually switch the book used as the key to the code.

*Adapt faster than the regime.* Above all, continually adapt and change. Use the vast size and strength of a nation-state against the regime, which can't innovate and adapt as fast as a loose collection of opposition groups.



## Step 32. Find safe harbors

Some regimes have massive operations to block media sources from overseas and censor the internet, while others use jamming signals to block radio and television broadcasts from outside their borders.

Modern technology change has made form of censorship this much, much harder. But it's not impossible. Some regimes employ a great number of people to censor the internet in their country, with various degrees of success.

What remains impossible for any regime, no matter how rich and powerful, is censoring censor newspapers and opposition leaders based entirely in

other countries.

Journalists, whistleblowers and opposition leaders should therefore find and establish places which they can use as a safe places in other countries.

Use safe harbors to:

- ❖ Talk to the media in countries where the regime has no leverage against the free press
- ❖ Keep vital information and secrets safe
- ❖ Spread leaks to the foreign press where the regime can't apply pressure
- ❖ Cultivate non-profits, friendly political leaders and ex-pats who can speak for the opposition





### Step 33. Turn every target into a hero and symbol

Successful non-violent oppositions can turn each act of brutality and oppression into a chance to create a new hero.

Rosa Parks became an American icon for the simple act of refusing to give up her seat to a white man on the bus in the segregated South.

Srdja Popovic's brilliant book, *Blueprint for Revolution*, describes how in Serbia during the protests against Slobodan Milosevic, getting arrested turned people into famous symbols.

Protestors sang songs outside jails and chanted the names of those arrested. When protestors got released, they got rock star receptions.

Only those who got arrested 10 times earned a black Optor! opposition T-shirt, which became a token of respect and status.

Share their story, and tie it back to tales of people like Cesar Chavez, Malala Yousafazia, Mahatma Gandhi, Guo Feixiong and Nelson Mandela.

Whoever the regime targets for threats, beatings or arrests, turn that person into a symbol of courage and resistance.



Regime tactics	How to fight back
<p><u>WALL OF LIES</u></p> <p>Generate Fear of the Other.</p> <p>Make ruler look strong to fight back vs threat of the Other.</p> <p>Distract the press and public with shiny objects, personal attacks.</p>	<p>Don't get distracted and trapped into a debate about the past. Let the press and fact-checkers debunk lies.</p> <p>Use personal stories to dispel Fear of the Other.</p> <p>Turn the ruler's strength into weakness—he's a cheater who rigs the system and because he's too weak and cowardly to compete fairly in elections, economics, the media and in courts of law.</p>
<p><u>WAR ON TRUTH</u></p> <p>Delegitimize the free press.</p> <p>A flood of propaganda.</p> <p>Fake news and trolls.</p>	<p>Support the free press by subscribing, advertising and taking action when the free press is targeted by the regime</p> <p>Attack the heart of propaganda removing their anonymity.</p> <p>Ignore fake news and trolls. Starve them of attention.</p> <p>Subvert the overwhelming presence of propaganda.</p> <p>Fight back with a counter-narrative that explain what causes problems and how you solve them, and use local messengers.</p> <p>Weave stories into everything you do. Stories have heroes, villains, private stakes and public stakes.</p>
<p><u>CENSORSHIP AND OPPRESSION</u></p> <p>Accuse protestors of being paid thugs bent on violence.</p> <p>Delegitimize judges and the Rule of Law.</p> <p>Censor media stories, books, plays and other information.</p> <p>Harass, threaten or arrest anyone seen as a threat: protestors, journalists, whistleblowers and opposition lawmakers.</p>	<p>Be relentlessly peaceful and reject any instigators who attempt to use violence against the regime. Show the opposition is non-violent, patriotic and a positive force by doing good works.</p> <p>Don't rely on any singular leader or movement.</p> <p>Assume anything done with phones or computers can be intercepted. Protect whistleblowers, journalists, judges and other targets with old-fashioned tools.</p> <p>Find safe harbors for information that may be censored or repressed and use the free press in other countries to get out an unfiltered message.</p> <p>Turn every targeted person into a hero and symbol.</p>

