

Revolution Handbook for Americans

By [Joel S. Hirschhorn](#)

Global Research, February 20, 2011

20 February 2011

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

As recently [presented](#), there is global respect for and use of the classic and brilliant work by Gene Sharp "[From Dictatorship to Democracy](#)." It is credited for empowering many actions around the world to overthrow dictatorships, including recent actions in the Mideast . My thesis is that his ideas, strategies and tactics, a handbook for revolution, can and should be applied to the US where there is a form of corporate dictatorship operating.

American dictatorship and tyranny is masked by an electoral system that no longer functions with integrity, fairness or efficiency and, therefore, acts to sustain the more hidden and ignored corporate dictatorship inflicting enormous harm on vast numbers of Americans. In many ways the uniquely American form of dictatorship is far more sinister, indiscernible and powerful than classic dictatorships where one recognized person, military junta or family rules ruthlessly.

The corporate ruling class has often been exposed but still maintains its power. The recent excellent article "[Why Isn't Wall Street in Jail?](#)" presents yet another fine analysis, for example, of how corporate rulers have escaped prosecution and punishment. It showed that "a veritable mountain of evidence indicates that when it comes to Wall Street, the justice system not only sucks at punishing financial criminals, it has actually evolved into a highly effective mechanism for *protecting* financial criminals. This institutional reality has absolutely nothing to do with politics or ideology — it takes place no matter who's in office or which party's in power."

[Another article](#) exposed the plutonomy and noted that the top 20 percent received nearly half of all income generated in the US — 49.4 percent — and the ratio of the income of the top 10 percent of Americans to the poor has risen from 7.69-to-1 in 1968 to 14.5-to-1 in 2010. Just as conventional dictators steal from their nations, America 's corporate rulers rob US wealth and get away with it because they have succeeded in controlling government and public policy. This explains why a noted [New York Times columnist discussed](#) the "corporate stranglehold on American democracy." A dictatorship is all about control.

To say this differently, a sophisticated and powerful plutocracy has hijacked an electoral democracy and behaves just like a dictatorship in critical ways, despite a citizenry that believes it has freedom and liberty secured through the US Constitution. The middle class is being destroyed and the general population no longer has any realistic expectations of rising affluence. Economic oppression should be the chief driver of revolution.

In other words, just as in many dictatorships, like the Mubarak regime in Egypt , there can be elections, various freedoms, and many media enterprises. But the American plutocracy hides in plain sight a false or phantom democracy based on the widespread delusional belief

that reforms of government and politics can still be achieved through elections and the equally delusional belief that there is legitimate representative democracy serving public interests. In sum, Americans have a [delusional democracy](#). Various corporate interests, especially banks and other financial entities control and manipulate the American system, especially the economy, making its dictatorship far more difficult to discern, oppose and overturn. Most Americans seem to want to cling to the fiction that they still have a great democracy, which only reveals their stupidity and inability to think critically. Only continuing widespread economic hardship is likely to pierce the psychological defenses against seeing the ugly truth of American tyranny.

The path to achieving true and deep reforms of the US political and government system must be reframed in terms of Sharp's methodology rather than through pursuing different candidates and platforms within the two-party plutocracy, where each major party is controlled by corporate and other special interests that make voting and elections the means by which the corporate dictatorship is sustained.

Presidents, administrations and Congresses change, but the mostly invisible elite, corporate powers through smart use of money maintain control to serve their own economic interests. Power stability is maintained even though there is the appearance of political change. Unlike places like Egypt and Libya where there are highly visible dictators, in the US there is no such glaringly visible target for revolutions to overthrow. This makes dissidents and dissatisfied citizens stuck victims that keep trying fruitlessly to get reforms through the dysfunctional political system even when they wage reform campaigns such as the Tea Party movement. The other tool of the dictatorship is massive distraction perpetrated through myriad entertainment, sports and gambling options, as well as political campaigns, for example.

All this means that nonviolent revolution in the US is probably even more difficult than in traditional dictatorships. But that does not mean impossible. It is instructive, however, to keep in mind that during the still painful Great Recession probably a third of the US population has suffered incredibly as indicated by huge numbers of unemployed, underemployed, hungry, foreclosed, homeless, working poor and people without decent health insurance. Meanwhile, as in countries with traditional dictatorships, in the US there is an upper class that does not suffer. Corporate elites, in fact, have continued their successful rape of the US economy. What is different is that even though most of this large wealthy upper class, probably 50 million or more Americans, does not directly participate in the corporate dictatorship, it benefits from it. Note that just 5 percent of earners account for 35 percent of all consumer spending. Another large fraction of the population works in all levels of government and also benefits from the corrupt status quo political system. Both groups stabilize the corporate dictatorship and the two-party plutocracy it uses to maintain the illusion of a functioning democracy.

What all this means is that Sharp's tools for overthrowing a dictatorship has a small fraction of the population that might use them to achieve success through nonviolent revolution. But generally those active in overthrowing a dictatorship are a small fraction of the population. This means there are more than enough Americans to overturn the corpocracy.

In other words, what starkly differentiates the US from traditional dictatorships is that the fraction of the population most impacted by a corrupt system does not even think or dream in terms of revolution or rebellion. While suffering people in a number of Mideast countries clearly are ready for revolution, Americans have been unready for revolution despite being

citizens of a country founded on revolution.

What is most ironic about this American shame is the incredibly high level of gun ownership among Americans, including those most victimized by the corrupt system. They seem to be mentally prepared for a more open form of tyranny against which they would use their guns, but are unready to mount a revolt without guns within the current system. Of course, as Sharp says: "If you fight with violence, you are fighting with your enemy's best weapon, and you may be a brave but dead hero." Gun ownership in a perverse way makes nonviolent revolution which Sharp correctly concludes is the best route to successful revolution even more difficult in the US . That is, widespread gun ownership is itself a form of distraction and delusion that perversely sustains the corporate dictatorship. Americans can keep their guns, while the rich elites keep most of the money and wealth of the nation. Greed outsmarts guns.

Those Americans who like me thirst for reforms that restore American democracy should download the free Sharp handbook and study its findings. Sharp has said "If people are not afraid of the dictatorship, that dictatorship is in big trouble." Add this: If people are not aware of the dictatorship, that dictatorship is in great shape.

[Contact Joel S. Hirschhorn at delusionaldemocracy.com.]

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © Joel S. Hirschhorn, Global Research, 2011

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Joel S. Hirschhorn](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca