

10 Steps to Tyranny

In [*The End of America: Letter of Warning to a Young Patriot*](#), published in 2007, Naomi Wolf takes a historical look at the rise of fascism, outlining 10 steps necessary for a fascist group (or government) to destroy the democratic character of a nation-state and subvert the social/political liberty previously exercised by its citizens:

1. Invoke a [terrifying internal and external enemy](#)
2. Create [secret prisons](#) where torture takes place
3. Develop a thug [caste](#) or [paramilitary force](#) not answerable to citizens
4. Set up an [internal surveillance](#) system
5. Harass [citizens' groups](#)

6. Engage in [arbitrary detention](#) and release
7. [Target key individuals](#)
8. [Control the press](#)
9. Treat all [political dissidents](#) as [traitors](#)
10. Suspend the [rule of law](#)

The book details how this pattern was implemented in [Nazi Germany](#), [Fascist Italy](#), and elsewhere, and analyzes its emergence and application of all the 10 steps in American political affairs since the [September 11 attacks](#).

Terms used for “non-democratic” governmental systems

- **Tyranny** = absolute rule wielded by a cruel, oppressive person who has *eliminated* legitimate or *constitutional law*, often by military & police force
- **Demagogue** = a political leader who gains support by making *false claims* and promises and appealing to the *emotions and prejudices* of the populace
- **Authoritarian/Autocrat/Dictator** = rule by 1 person or political entity in which virtually every aspect of public & private behavior of citizens is *regulated via propaganda and force*
- **Totalitarianism** = Political system that recognizes no limits on its power and *regulates* all aspects of public & private life
- **Fascism (fascismo)** = forcible, far-right authoritarianism in which a dictator *controls* both *government* and the *economy* to promote *nationalism & racism*
- **Nazism** – a form of Fascism that promotes *racial purity* & hierarchy, eg. Germany during WWII & splinter cults since then referred to as Neo-Nazis

Oligarchy (Kleptocracy/Plutocracy/Corporatocracy) = Government where all power is controlled by a *small, privileged group* (economic elites, multi-generational families, religious, military, or corporate leaders); historically tyrannical & relying on *public obedience or oppression* & where that power dominates economic policy & distribution of wealth for corrupt or selfish purposes. In a 2015 interview, former President [Jimmy Carter](#) stated that *the United States is now "an oligarchy with unlimited political bribery"*, due to the [Citizens United](#) ruling, which effectively removed limits on donations to political candidates.