

# Authoritarian Sociopathy

*Editor's Pick. Written by Davi Barker.*

Many anarchists and libertarians eagerly study the psychology of tyrants in an effort to know their enemy in the battlefield of politics. Getting into the minds of our enemy is regarded as a strategy, a means to our political ends... which is an end to political means. However, I would suggest that the mind of our enemy is the battlefield itself, and politics is merely one of many strategies. We cannot fight the State with votes, or with cameras, or even with rifles, because factually the State only exists in the mind.

Our common definition for the State is a “monopoly on violence.” This was originally coined by German political philosopher Max Weber, affirmed by Austrian economist Murray Rothbard in his book *Anatomy of the State*, and even echoed by authoritarian sociopath Barack Obama while campaigning in 2007. This definition is seldom disputed, even by the agents of the State. However, as surely as a pickpocket can knife you in the ribs, the State does not factually enjoy a monopoly on violence. The missing component is an often overlooked, but all important adjective: *legitimate*. The State is a monopoly on *legitimate* violence, and *legitimacy* is the only thing distinguishing a tax collector from a pickpocket, a police officer from a vigilante, or a soldier from a paid murderer. *Legitimacy* is an illusion in the mind without which the State does not even exist.

This illusion not only exists in the minds of the authoritarians, it exists in the minds of every subject who accepts their oppression. And every place that this illusion finds safe harbor is a trench in the field of battle. If we want to attack the State, we must attack the mind of the Statists. For that reason, the psychology of obedience and authority is not merely a tool in the activists utility belt, it is a topographical map of the battle field itself. So let's take a look.

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