

You Can Fight City Hall, but You'll Almost Certainly Lose

One of the chief reasons why almost every regime in the world has converged to a system of participatory fascism is that this system creates or retains a great variety of institutionalized opportunities for the state's victims—who compose the great majority of the people—to challenge the state's exactions and to “make their voices heard,” thereby gaining the impression that the rulers are not simply oppressing and exploiting them unilaterally but involving them in an essential way in the making and enforcement of rules.

These opportunities help to allay public resentment and anger, assuring people that they have had “their day in court,” and thereby serve to prop up the regime and its ongoing exploitation. These official avenues of protest and resistance are, however, rarely of any real avail. The oppressed citizens and other residents are protesting the actions of legislatures, government executives, bureaucracies, and courts run by the very people who are engaged in the oppression and plunder. The opportunities for voicing feedback are, in effect, ways in which people are allowed to request that the slave master stop beating them or reduce the severity of the beating. Rarely do the petitioners win, and even when they do, the costs of making their appeals, especially through the legal system, guarantee that they will be impoverished in the process.

Heads you lose, tails you lose. I promise you that in making the foregoing statements, I am speaking not only from my scholarly engagement with the matter but also from my personal experience, some of which grinds on seemingly endlessly even as I tap out this *cri de coeur*.