

Real World Graduation: Question 93: Actors and Dictators

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Question 93

A wealthy American-born celebrity Hollywood actor routinely visits a nation that is ruled by a ruthless dictator. Although the dictator uses populist rhetoric, the economy and political system is actually run as a closely-held corrupt oligarchy, and the poor continue to be worse off each year. Also, the people have no civil liberties to speak of (and in fact are prohibited from immigrating out of the nation). However, the actor consistently praises the dictator as a man of the people, a champion of the poor, a defender of the rights of the common man, and as a model of what every government leader should be. The actor and dictator are not related by blood or marriage, nor does the actor have business or family ties to this nation. Why would a famous American actor bother to make any comments about the internal politics and economics of a nation run by a dictator?

- a) The actor recognizes that poverty can only be alleviated if the government steps in and guides each persons work, ensuring that each person is assigned the work for which he is best suited.
- b) The actor thinks it important to give dictators some positive publicity in the interest of fairness; the actor knows how it feels to be rejected since he had many unsuccessful auditions early in his career
- c) The actor wants to help the poor people of the foreign nation by giving the dictator sufficient publicity so that the people can understand why the dictator's programs are good for them
- d) The actor admires the orderliness of the dictator's nation, in contrast to the usual chaos on a movie set
- e) Some combination of the above

Answer to Question 93

This is a trick question. None of the answers are correct.

Answer a) is incorrect because no actor could be dumb enough to believe that his success was outside of government influence, yet other people require the government to control their lives. There are a total of zero actors who became wealthy celebrities acting in government-produced movies.

Answer b) is incorrect because dictators have no use for fairness (otherwise they would not be holding power), and have no fear of rejection (since the people have been deprived of any means to reject him). Actors know full well that the amount of publicity given is unrelated to talent.

Answer c) is incorrect because dictators do not have any problems getting their propaganda distributed to the people; in fact, it is likely the only thing the people ever hear. Actors do not like competition from other actors or other movie productions, just like dictators.

Answer d) is incorrect because it is the actors themselves that cause most of the chaos on movie sets.

The reason wealthy Hollywood actors support dictators is because they believe that artists like themselves have suffered greatly for their art and for the sake of humanity. Artists always have and always will live in poverty for the sake of their art and the advancement of society. Hence, they favor any dictator who claims to support the poor and downtrodden in the hopes that the same kind of government will come to exist in America, so that the actor can finally be lifted out of his destitution and misery and get the recognition he deserves. In other words, the typical Hollywood actor is so divorced from reality that he actually believes: a) actors and movies are indispensable to society; and b) it is people like him that the dictators refer to in their phony populist rhetoric.