

Anti-Tyranny Quotes for These Times Historical

Quotes of Wisdom - Compiled by Gary G. Kohls, MD

Gary G. Kohls, MD : 12-15 minutes

I recently came upon a quote from Henry David Thoreau, who many regard as the father of nonviolent civil disobedience. Thoreau's writings on the subject of active, nonviolent resistance to authority inspired Leo Tolstoy, Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King and innumerable other proponents of non-violent resistance to tyranny, including today's Occupy Wall Street movement. If Thoreau had been writing and living his truth 2000 years earlier, he would probably have been in league with Jesus of Nazareth, who also qualifies as a major advocate and model for living an ethical, fearless life of civil disobedience to the greedy and violent powers-that-be.

In a time (the middle of the 19th century) when the US military was committing another criminal act (one that, a century later, would meet the definition of an international war crime and crime against the peace) Thoreau objected to the armed invasion, illegal occupation and bald-faced theft of that part of Mexico north of the Rio Grande River, and he responded by speaking out against it.

And, not surprisingly, in a country that has a long habit of silencing, persecuting and imprisoning its most altruistic and peace-loving citizens, he wound up in jail for his resistance. Noting that the Mexican War represented another act of homicidal violence by America's military he wrote, "Thank God men cannot fly, and lay waste the sky as well as the earth."

Of course, Thoreau was living in another, perhaps more innocent time. He was commenting in an era long before there was any inkling of a German Luftwaffe, a British Royal Air Force, a United States Air Force, the American development, testing and deployment of nuclear weapons, guided missile technology, the perpetual war predictions of the Cheney/Bush/Rumsfeld/Rice/Rove administration, the criminal drone wars of Bush and Obama and the Pentagon's stated aim of "full-spectrum" global domination of sea, land and space.

Thoreau lived in a time before there were so many warmongering militarists [and their obedient and often misled warrior class], so many ChickenHawk politicians [and their dumbed-down pseudo-patriotic voter-supporters], so many war-profiteering corporations and so many billionaire financiers [and their blindered, amoral investor class wanna-bees that had hopes of becoming one of them]. Thoreau's America in the 1840s "only" ruled over the earth and the sea - and not the air.

I have collected a number of wise sayings from a number of other historical figures that were fulfilling their duties to warn about tyrants and tyranny. I call the list below "Anti-tyranny Quotes for These Times." Let the reader apply these lessons from history to effectively resist the tyranny and the tyrants who are surrounding us now and threatening the planet and its creatures, whether the tyranny is coming from corporations, the billionaires, the banksters, Wall Street, the ruling elite, the secret services, the military, the police, religious leaders or local thugs. As Jesus said, "he who has ears to hear, let him hear."

"As nightfall does not come all at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there is a twilight when everything remains seemingly unchanged. And it is in such twilight that we all

must be most aware of change in the air – however slight – lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness.” -- Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas

“The things that will destroy us are: politics without principle; pleasure without conscience; wealth without work; knowledge without character; business without morality; science without humanity; and worship without sacrifice.” -- Mohandas Gandhi

“You assist an evil system most effectively by obeying its orders and decrees. An evil system never deserves such allegiance. Allegiance to it means partaking of the evil. A good person will resist an evil system with his or her whole soul.” -- Gandhi

“Cowardice asks the question - is it safe? Expediency asks the question - is it politic? Vanity asks the question - is it popular? But conscience asks the question - is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular; but one must take it because it is right.” -- Martin Luther King, Jr.

“If you see injustice and say nothing, you have taken the side of the oppressor.” -- Desmond Tutu, South African Anglican Archbishop

“When a well-packaged web of lies has been sold gradually to the masses ... the (actual) truth will seem utterly preposterous and the speaker (of the actual truth), a raving lunatic.” -- Dresden James

“Those who take oaths to politically powerful secret societies cannot be depended on for loyalty to a democratic republic.” -- President John Quincy Adams

“Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.”
-- Voltaire

“Anyone who has proclaimed violence his method inexorably must choose lying as his principle.” -- Mikhail Gorbachev

“If Tyranny and Oppression come to this land, it will be in the guise of fighting a foreign enemy. Of all the enemies to public liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded because it comprises and develops the germ of every other... No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.” -- James Madison, Chief Architect of the Constitution

“I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.” -- Thomas Jefferson, September 23, 1800, as inscribed on the Jefferson Memorial

“The greatest tyrannies are always perpetrated in the name of the noblest causes.”
-- Thomas Paine

“Of all the tyrannies that affect mankind, tyranny in religion is the worst.” -- Tom Paine

“Knowledge makes a man unfit to be a slave.” -- Frederick Douglass

“Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle! Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did, and it never will. Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found out the exact amount of injustice and wrong that will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both.

The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.” -- Frederick Douglas

“He that would make his own liberty secure, must guard even his enemy from oppression; for if he violates this duty, he establishes a precedent that will reach to himself.” -- Tom Paine

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing”
-- Edmund Burke (British Statesman and Philosopher, 1729-1797)

”A patriot must always be ready to defend his country against his government.”
-- Edward Abbey (1927-1989)

“The most important topic on earth: peace. What kind of peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children — not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women — not merely peace in our time but peace for all time.”
-- US President John F. Kennedy, speaking at the American University commencement address, June 1963. (Five months later Kennedy was assassinated by assassins other than the patsie Lee Harvey Oswald.)

“Wars throughout history have been waged for conquest and plunder and it is the working class who fights all the battles, the working class who makes the supreme sacrifices, the working class who freely sheds their blood and furnishes their corpses, and it is they who have never yet had a voice - in either declaring war or making peace. It is the ruling class that invariably does both. They alone declare war and they alone make peace. They are continually talking about their patriotic duty. It is not their duty but your patriotic duty that they are concerned about. There is a decided difference. Their patriotic duty never takes them to the firing line or chucks them into the trenches.” -- Eugene V. Debs

“War is the terrorism of the rich. Terrorism is the war of the poor!” -- Peter Ustinov

“When you let people do whatever they want, you get Woodstock. When you let governments do whatever they want, you get Auschwitz.” -- Doug Newman
[From The Fountain of Truth: HYPERLINK “<http://www.thefot.us>” <http://www.thefot.us>]

“There is no scientific evidence . . . “ is supposed to mean, “They have looked for it and it has not been found,” instead of, “They have not looked for it and, therefore, it has not been found.”
-- Dr. Hans Moolenburgh from: “Fluoride: The Freedom Fight” (pp. 157)

“A tyrant must put on the appearance of uncommon devotion to religion. Subjects are less apprehensive of illegal treatment from a ruler whom they consider god-fearing and pious. On the other hand, they do less easily move against him, believing that he has the gods on his side.” -- Aristotle

“Military power is as corrupting to the man who possesses it as it is pitiless to its victims. Violence is just as devastating to the soul of the perpetrator as it is to the body and souls of those who are victims of it.” -- American Friends (Quakers) Service Committee

Following are some anti-tyranny quotes from antifascist author George Orwell (1903 – 1950). Orwell is most famous for Animal Farm (1945) and Nineteen Eighty Four (1949), in which he is warning his readers about Fascism.

”In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act.” -- George Orwell

"When the white man turns tyrant, it is his own freedom that he destroys. " -- George Orwell - 1936

We are living in a world in which nobody is free, in which hardly anybody is secure, in which it is almost impossible to be honest and to remain alive." -- George Orwell – 1937

"It is not possible for any thinking person to live in such a society as our own without wanting to change it." -- George Orwell – 1938

"It's frightful that people who are so ignorant have so much influence." -- George Orwell – 1940

"If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear." -- George Orwell – 1945 (in one of Orwell's introductions to *Animal Farm* that was not published until 1970, 20 years after his death)

"A society becomes totalitarian when its structure becomes flagrantly artificial: that is, when its ruling class has lost its function but succeeds in clinging to power by force or fraud." -- George Orwell – 1946

Power-worship blurs political judgment because it leads almost unavoidably, to the belief that present trends will continue. Whoever is winning at the moment will always seem invincible." -- George Orwell – 1946

Below are Seven Quotes from Nineteen Eighty-Four, which is about a conscienceless state/corporate tyranny (whose laws are ruthlessly enforced by obedient police/military goon squads).

"WAR IS PEACE; FREEDOM IS SLAVERY; IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH. (the Party's slogans inscribed on the Ministry of Truth building)."

"Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious."

"War hysteria increases in intensity as one rises in the social scale. Those whose attitude toward the war is most nearly rational are the subject peoples of the disputed territories. To these people the war is simply a continuous calamity which sweeps to and fro over their bodies like a tidal wave."

"Will you understand, Winston, that no one whom we bring to this place ever leaves our hands uncured? We are not interested in those stupid crimes that you have committed. The Party is not interested in the overt act: the thought is all we care about. We do not merely destroy our enemies; we change them."

"We shall crush you down to the point from which there is no coming back. Things will happen to you from which you could not recover if you lived a thousand years. Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves."

"There will be no loyalty, except loyalty toward the Party. There will be no love, except the love of Big Brother. There will be no laughter, except the laugh of triumph over a defeated enemy.... Always, at every moment, there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling on an enemy who is helpless. If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face — forever."