

# Howard Zinn

## Quotes

*People, War, Government, Country, Thinking, Mean, Law, Believe, Justice,  
Military, Children, Ideas, Order, Past, Democracy, Lying, Class, United States,  
Long, Terrorism*

We don't have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.

~Howard Zinn

But remember, this power of the people on top depends on the obedience of the people below. When people stop obeying, they have no power.

~Howard Zinn

But I suppose the most revolutionary act one can engage in is... to tell the truth.

~Howard Zinn

Education can, and should be, dangerous.

~Howard Zinn

There is no flag large enough to cover the shame of killing innocent people.

~Howard Zinn

Protest beyond the law is not a departure from democracy; it is absolutely essential to it.

~Howard Zinn

Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.

~Howard Zinn

They have the guns, we have the poets. Therefore, we will win.

~Howard Zinn

The problem in this world is not civil disobedience...the problem in this world is civil obedience.

~Howard Zinn

Historically, the most terrible things - war, genocide, and slavery - have resulted not from disobedience, but from obedience.

~Howard Zinn

The memory of oppressed people is one thing that cannot be taken away, and for such people, with such memories, revolt is always an inch below the surface.

~Howard Zinn

George Orwell said, "Whoever controls the past controls the future," by which he meant that history is incredibly important in shaping the world view of the next generation of people.

~Howard Zinn

What matters most is not who is sitting in the White House, but "who is sitting in" - and who is marching outside the White House, pushing for change.

~Howard Zinn

In the United States today, the Declaration of Independence hangs on schoolroom walls, but foreign policy follows Machiavelli.

~Howard Zinn

Capitalism has always been a failure for the lower classes. It is now beginning to fail for the middle classes.

~Howard Zinn

Americans have been taught that their nation is civilized and humane. But, too often, U.S. actions have been uncivilized and inhumane.

~Howard Zinn

The challenge remains. On the other side are formidable forces:

money, political power, the major media. On our side are the people of the world and a power greater than money or weapons: the truth.

~Howard Zinn

How can you have a war on terrorism when war itself is terrorism?

~Howard Zinn

When we organize with one another, when we get involved, when we stand up and speak out together, we can create a power no government can suppress.

~Howard Zinn

The cry of the poor is is not always just, but if you don't listen to it, you will never know what justice is.

~Howard Zinn

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness.

~Howard Zinn

Since war itself is the most extreme form of terrorism, a war on terrorism is profoundly self-contradictory.

~Howard Zinn

Dissent is the highest form of patriotism.

~Howard Zinn

Voting is easy and marginally useful, but it is a poor substitute for democracy, which requires direct action by concerned citizens.

~Howard Zinn

War is terrorism, magnified a hundred times.

~Howard Zinn

Civil disobedience is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience.

~Howard Zinn

War is terrorism ... Terrorism is the willingness to kill large numbers of people for some presumably good cause. That's what terrorists are about.

~Howard Zinn

People should go where they are not supposed to go, say what they are not supposed to say, and stay when they are told to leave.

~Howard Zinn

We all have an enormous responsibility to bring to the attention of others information they do not have, which has the potential of causing them to rethink long-held ideas.

~Howard Zinn

What we have is a more sophisticated form of imperialism, which is economic. But lurking in the background, always ready to go, is an armed force.

~Howard Zinn

When the United States fought in Vietnam, it was organized modern technology versus organized human beings, and the human beings won.

~Howard Zinn

One certain effect of war is to diminish freedom of expression. Patriotism becomes the order of the day, and those who question the war are seen as traitors, to be silenced and imprisoned.

~Howard Zinn

When you fight a war against a tyrant, who do you kill? You kill the victims of the tyrant.

~Howard Zinn

The fact that war belongs to the past, does not mean it has to be part of the future.

~Howard Zinn

You can't be neutral on a moving train.

~Howard Zinn

The power of a bold idea uttered publicly in defiance of dominant opinion cannot be easily measured.

~Howard Zinn

To ward off alienation and gloom, it is only necessary to remember the unremembered heroes of the past, and to look around us for the unnoticed heroes of the present.

~Howard Zinn

The strike, the boycott, the refusal to serve, the ability to paralyze the functioning of a complex social structure-these remain potent weapons against the most fearsome state or corporate power.

~Howard Zinn

The Roman Empire came to an end, but the Roman people didn't come to an end, so I see the American Empire coming to an end just as other empires have come to an end.

~Howard Zinn

But by this time I was acutely conscious of the gap between law and justice. I knew that the letter of the law was not as important as who held the power in any real-life situation.

~Howard Zinn

The term 'just war' is an internal contradiction. War is inherently unjust,

and the great challenge of our time is how to deal with evil, tyranny and oppression without killing huge numbers of people.

~Howard Zinn

The violence of our time is caused by obedience.

~Howard Zinn

I wonder how the foreign policies of the United States would look if we wiped out the national boundaries of the world, at least in our minds, and thought of all children everywhere as our own.

~Howard Zinn

If you join a fight for social justice you may win or lose, but just by being part of the struggle, you win, and your life will be better for it.

~Howard Zinn

If you want to end terrorism, you have to stop being terrorists

~Howard Zinn

It must surely be a tribute to the resilience of the human spirit that even a small number of those men and women in the hell of the prison system survive it and hold on to their humanity.

~Howard Zinn

The chief problem in historical honesty is not outright lying. It is omission or de-emphasis of important data. The definition of 'important', of course, depends on one's values.

~Howard Zinn

It's a strange thing, we think that law brings order. Law doesn't. How do we know that law does not bring order? Look around us. We live under the rule of law. Notice how much order we have?

~Howard Zinn

If there is going to be change, real change, it will have to work its way from the bottom up, from the people themselves. That's how change happens.

~Howard Zinn

Pessimism becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy; it reproduces itself by crippling our willingness to act.

~Howard Zinn

One certain effect of war is to diminish freedom of expression.

~Howard Zinn

I am supposing, or perhaps only hoping, that our future may be found in the past's fugitive moments of compassion rather than in its solid centuries of warfare.

~Howard Zinn

The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.

~Howard Zinn

Civil disobedience is not something outside the realm of democracy. Democracy requires civil disobedience. Without civil disobedience democracy does not exist.

~Howard Zinn

I do take the threat of terrorism seriously. You cannot eliminate that threat or diminish that threat by bombing a country.

~Howard Zinn

People who have no respect for human life or for freedom or justice have taken over this beautiful country of ours. It will be up to the American people to take it back.



~Howard Zinn

Education becomes most rich and alive when it confronts the reality of moral conflict in the world.

~Howard Zinn

The future is an infinite succession of presents.

~Howard Zinn

Diverse audiences can be just as misled as homogenous audiences.

~Howard Zinn

Sometimes it's a short step from banning to burning.

~Howard Zinn

Meditation is simply about being yourself and knowing about who that is. It is about coming to realize that you are on a path whether you like it or not, namely the path that is your life. - Jon Kabat

~Howard Zinn

War itself is the enemy of the human race.

~Howard Zinn

Most wars, after all, present themselves as humanitarian endeavors to help people.

~Howard Zinn

[W]e're taught that if one person kills another person, that is murder; but if a government kills a hundred thousand persons, that is patriotism.

~Howard Zinn

And in such a world of conflict, a world of victims and executioners, it is the job of thinking people, as Albert Camus suggested, not to be on the

side of the executioners.

~Howard Zinn

If what your country is doing seems to you practically and morally wrong, is dissent the highest form of patriotism?

~Howard Zinn

Terrorism and war have something in common. They both involve the killing of innocent people to achieve what the killers believe is a good end.

~Howard Zinn

When [Ralph Waldo] Emerson visited Thoreau in jail and asked, 'What are you doing in there?' it was reported that Thoreau replied, 'What are you doing out there?'

~Howard Zinn

That's generally true of people who drop bombs from high altitudes. You don't know what's going on below. You don't see the human consequences of what you're doing.

~Howard Zinn

I always emphasize the historic role of people of color in organizing and protesting to achieve justice.

~Howard Zinn

One of the problems with dealing with anarchism is that there are many people whose ideas are anarchist, but who do not necessarily call themselves anarchists.

~Howard Zinn

In a two-party system, if both parties ignore public opinion, there is no place voters can turn.

~Howard Zinn

I am an anarchist, and according to anarchist principles nation states become obstacles to a true humanistic globalization.

~Howard Zinn

...Surely, we must renounce nationalism and all its symbols: its flags, its pledges of allegiance, its anthems, its insistence in song that God must single out America to be blessed.

~Howard Zinn

In war, good guys always become bad guys.

~Howard Zinn

Any humane and reasonable person must conclude that if the ends, however desirable, are uncertain and the means are horrible and certain, these means must not be employed.

~Howard Zinn

The establishment, whatever rewards it gives us, will also, if necessary to maintain its control, kill us

~Howard Zinn

They were not mentioned in the Declaration of Independence, they were absent in the Constitution and they were invisible in the new political democracy. They were the women of early America.

~Howard Zinn

War in our time is always indiscriminate, a war against innocents, a war against children.

~Howard Zinn

Yes, we're dreamers. We want it all. We want a peaceful world. We want an egalitarian world. We don't want war. We don't want capitalism. We want a decent society.

~Howard Zinn

Use the Day of Atonement not to pray for the dead but to act for the living, to rescue those about to die.

~Howard Zinn

I didn't want to spend a lot of close time with someone who believed that fun is a bourgeois indulgence.

~Howard Zinn

It was an old lesson learned by governments: that war solves problems of control.

~Howard Zinn

The resources of a university, of a college, should not be wasted in merely academic pursuits.

~Howard Zinn

There has always been, and there is now, a profound conflict of interest between the people and the government of the United States.

~Howard Zinn

They didn't give their lives for their country! their lives were taken from them by their government.

~Howard Zinn

I try to tell each group that it is not alone, and that the very people who are disheartened by the absence of a national movement are themselves proof of the potential for such a movement.

~Howard Zinn

Being fired has some of the advantages of dying without its supreme disadvantages. People say extra-nice things about you, and you get to hear them.

~Howard Zinn

Will Iraq be a democracy? The question is, 'Will America be a democracy?'

~Howard Zinn

Again and again, Americans have voted for a president to keep them out of a war, only to see the "peace" candidate elected who then brings the nation into war.

~Howard Zinn

Perhaps the most important thing I learned was about democracy, that democracy is not our government, our constitution, our legal structure. Too often they are enemies of democracy.

~Howard Zinn

In between war and passivity, there are a thousand possibilities.

~Howard Zinn

Democracy depends on people speaking out, and in times of great crisis, on people creating a commotion.

~Howard Zinn

Why do we have to be a military superpower? Why can't we be a humanitarian superpower?

~Howard Zinn

We need to assert our allegiance to the human race, and not to any one nation.

~Howard Zinn

If the gods had intended for people to vote, they would have given us candidates.

~Howard Zinn

The only hope lies in the fact that the American people - like people

everywhere - are basically decent people with common sense.

~Howard Zinn

I had volunteered for the Air Force and was an enthusiastic bombardier. While dropping bombs on Europe, I generally didn't understand what I was doing.

~Howard Zinn

Right is not only to act within the law. It's to also act according to the conscience.

~Howard Zinn

Strike is always a form of direct action. With the strike, too, you are not asking government to make things easier for you by passing legislation, you are taking a direct action against the employer.

~Howard Zinn

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