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Quotes about Revolutions and Revolutionaries

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The Revolution was effected before the War commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people; a change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations. This radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people, was the real American Revolution.

- Adams, John

I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy.

- Adams, John

The most radical revolutionary will become a conservative the day after the revolution.

- Arendt, Hannah

In revolutions the occasions may be trifling but great interest are at stake.

- Aristotle

Inferiors revolt in order that they may be equal, and equals that they may be superior. Such is the state of mind which creates revolutions.

- Aristotle

Thinkers prepare the revolution and bandits carry it out.

- Azuela, Mariano

Revolution begins with the self, in the self.

- Bambara, Toni Cade

Revolution is an abrupt change in the form of misgovernment.

- Bierce, Ambrose

So they united, and the Communist revolution took the chain from their legs and wound it around their necks.

- Bonom, Samuel

I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with Blood.

- Brown, John Mason

Men are made uneasy; they flinch; they cannot bear the sudden light; a general restlessness supervenes; the face of society is disturbed, or perhaps convulsed; old interests and old beliefs have been destroyed before new ones have been created. These symptoms are the precursors of revolution; they have preceded all the great changes through which the world has passed.

- Buckle, Henry Thomas

I had such a wonderful feeling last night, walking beneath the dark sky while cannon boomed on my right and guns on my left the feeling that I could change the world only by being there.

- Butnariu, Viorica

The dead have been awakened -- shall I sleep? The world's at war with tyrants -- shall I crouch? the harvest's ripe -- and shall I pause to reap? I slumber not; the thorn is in my couch; Each day a trumpet soundeth in mine ear, its echo in my heart.

- Byron, Lord

Revolution, in order to be creative, cannot do without either a moral or metaphysical rule to balance the insanity of history.

- Camus, Albert

Every revolutionary ends up by becoming either an oppressor or a heretic.

- Camus, Albert

More and more, revolution has found itself delivered into the hands of its bureaucrats and doctrinaires on the one hand, and to the enfeebled and bewildered masses on the other.

- Camus, Albert

A revolution is not a bed of roses. A revolution is a struggle between the future and the

past.

- Castro, Fidel

I feel my belief in sacrifice and struggle getting stronger. I despise the kind of existence that clings to the miserly trifles of comfort and self-interest. I think that a man should not live beyond the age when he begins to deteriorate, when the flame that lighted the brightest moment of his life has weakened.

- Castro, Fidel

I began revolution with 82 men. If I had to do it again, I do it with 10 or 15 and absolute faith. It does not matter how small you are if you have faith and plan of action.

- Castro, Fidel

You can never have a revolution in order to establish a democracy. You must have a democracy in order to have a revolution.

- Chesterton, Gilbert K.

The scrupulous and the just, the noble, humane, and devoted natures; the unselfish and the intelligent may begin a movement -- but it passes away from them. They are not the leaders of a revolution. They are its victims.

- Conrad, Joseph

The revolutionary spirit is mighty convenient in this, that it frees one from all scruples as regards ideas. Its hard absolute optimism is repulsive to my mind by the menace of

fanaticism and intolerance it contains. No doubt one should smile at these things; but, imperfect Esthete, I am no better Philosopher. All claim to special righteousness awakens in me that scorn and anger from which a philosophical mind should be free.

- Conrad, Joseph

Clemency is also a revolutionary measure.

- Desmoulins, Camille

Our cause is just. Our union is perfect.

- Dickinson, John

Disturbances in society are never more fearful than when those who are stirring up the trouble can use the pretext of religion to mask their true designs.

- Diderot, Denis

I have been ever of opinion that revolutions are not to be evaded.

- Disraeli, Benjamin

Normal life cannot sustain revolutionary attitudes for long.

- Djilas, Milovan

Plots, true or false, are necessary things, to raise up commonwealths, and ruin kings.

- Dryden, John

Every revolution was first a thought in one man's mind.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

If there is any period one would desire to be born in, is it not the age of Revolution; when the old and the new stand side by side, and admit of being compared; when the energies of all men are searched by fear and by hope; when the historic glories of the old can be compensated by the rich possibilities of the new era?

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

To be a revolutionary you have to be human being. You have to care about people who have no power.

- Fonda, Jane

The worst of revolutions is a restoration.

- Fox, Charles James

The successful revolutionary is a statesman, the unsuccessful one a criminal.

- Fromm, Erich

All successful revolutions are the kicking in of a rotten door. The violence of revolutions is the violence of men who charge into a vacuum.

- Galbraith, John Kenneth

A revolution does not last more than fifteen years, the period which coincides with the flourishing of a generation.

- Gasset, Jose Ortega Y

The main object of a revolution is the liberation of man... not the interpretation and application of some transcendental ideology.

- Genet, Jean

A great revolution is never the fault of the people, but of the government.

- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang Von

The surest guide to the correctness of the path that women take is joy in the struggle.
Revolution is the festival of the oppressed.

- Greer, Germaine

The children of the revolution are always ungrateful, and the revolution must be grateful that it is so.

- Guin, Ursula K. Le

The spirit of revolution, the spirit of insurrection, is a spirit radically opposed to liberty.

- Guizot, Francois (Pierre Guillaume)

When people contend for their liberty they seldom get anything for their victory, but new masters.

- Halifax, Edward F.

True revolutionaries are like God -- they create the world in their own image. Our awesome responsibility to ourselves, to our children, and to the future is to create ourselves in the image of goodness, because the future depends on the nobility of our imaginings.

- Harrison, Barbara Grizzuti

Whether a revolutions succeeds or fails people of great hearts will always be sacrificed to it.

- Heine, Heinrich

We have wasted our spirit in the regions of the abstract and general just as the monks let it wither in the world of prayer and contemplation.

- Herzen, Alexander

The main effect of a real revolution is perhaps that it sweeps away those who do not know how to wish, and brings to the front men with insatiable appetites for action, power and all that the world has to offer.

- Hoffer, Eric

We used to think that revolutions are the cause of change. Actually it is the other way

around: change prepares the ground for revolution.

- Hoffer, Eric

I was probably the only revolutionary referred to as cute.

- Hoffman, Abbie

Revolutions are not made by men in spectacles.

- Holmes, Oliver Wendell

He that goeth about to persuade a multitude that they are not so well governed as they ought to be shall never want attentive and favorable hearers.

- Hooker, Richard

The brutalities of progress are called revolutions. When they are over we realize this: that the human race has been roughly handled, but that it has advanced.

- Hugo, Victor

If we glance at the most important revolutions in history, we see at once that the greatest number of these originated in the periodical revolutions of the human mind.

- Humboldt, Karl Wilhelm Von

History teaches us that the great revolutions aren't started by people who are utterly down and out, without hope and vision. They take place when people begin to live a little better

-- and when they see how much yet remains to be achieved.

- Humphrey, Hubert H.

Oh, my friend, it's not what they take away from you that counts -- it's what you do with what you have left.

- Humphrey, Hubert H.

Never wear your best trousers when you go out to fight for freedom and truth.

- Ibsen, Henrik

A man may build himself a throne of bayonets, but he can't sit on it.

- Inge, Dean William R.

Revolutions are notorious for allowing even non-participants -- even women! -- new scope for telling the truth since they are themselves such massive moments of truth, moments of such massive participation.

- James, Selma

The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.

- Jefferson, Thomas

And then, Sir, there is this consideration, that if the abuse be enormous, nature will rise

up, and claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system.

- Johnson, Samuel

Every revolution evaporates and leaves behind only the slime of a new bureaucracy.

- Kafka, Franz

Although a system may cease to exist in the legal sense or as a structure of power, its values (or anti-values), its philosophy, its teachings remain in us. They rule our thinking, our conduct, our attitude to others. The situation is a demonic paradox: we have toppled the system but we still carry its genes.

- Kapuscinski, Ryszard

Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.

- Kennedy, John F.

Revolutions are not made for export.

- Khrushchev, Nikita

The more there are riots, the more repressive actin will take place, and the more we face the danger of a right-wing takeover and eventually a fascist society.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Riots are the voices of the unheard.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

In this Revolution no plans have been written for retreat.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

You cannot make a revolution in white gloves.

- Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich

Revolutionary politics, revolutionary art, and oh, the revolutionary mind, is the dullest thing on earth. When we open a revolutionary review, or read a revolutionary speech, we yawn our heads off. It is true, there is nothing else. Everything is correctly, monotonously, dishearteningly revolutionary. What a stupid word! What a stale fuss!

- Lewis, Wyndham

Revolution today is taken for granted, and in consequence becomes rather dull.

- Lewis, Wyndham

At the crash of economic collapse of which the rumblings can already be heard, the sleeping soldiers of the proletariat will awake as at the fanfare of the Last Judgment and the corpses of the victims of the struggle will arise and demand an accounting from those who are loaded down with curses.

- Liebknecht, Karl

It is easier to run a revolution than a government.

- Marcos, Ferdinand E.

Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose, but their chains. .Workers of the world unite!

- Marx, Karl

In every revolution there intrude, at the side of its true agents, men of a different stamp; some of them survivors of and devotees to past revolutions, without insight into the present movement, but preserving popular influence by their known honesty and courage, or by the sheer force of tradition; others mere brawlers, who, by dint of repeating year after year the same set of stereotyped declamations against the government of the day, have sneaked into the reputation of revolutionists of the first water They are an unavoidable evil: with time they are shaken off.

- Marx, Karl

Revolutions are brought about by men, by men who think as men of action and act as men of thought.

- Nkrumah, Kwame

Most revolutionaries are potential Tories, because they imagine that everything can be put right by altering the shape of society; once that change is effected, as it sometimes is, they see no need for any other.

- Orwell, George

Revolutions are not made, they come.

- Phillips, Wendell

Revolutions never go backward.

- Phillips, Wendell

The excessive increase of anything causes a reaction in the opposite direction.

- Plato

The word revolution itself has become not only a dead relic of Leftism, but a key to the deadendedness of male politics: the revolution of a wheel which returns in the end to the same place; the revolving door of a politics which has liberated women only to use them, and only within the limits of male tolerance.

- Rich, Adrienne

One revolution is like one cocktail, it just gets you organized for the next.

- Rogers, Will

All revolutions devour their own children.

- Rohm, Ernst

The differences between revolution in art and revolution in politics are enormous.

Revolution in art lies not in the will to destroy but in the revelation of what has already been destroyed. Art kills only the dead.

- Rosenberg, Harold

No one makes a revolution by himself; and there are some revolutions which humanity accomplishes without quite knowing how, because it is everybody who takes them in hand.

- Sand, George

Revolutions have never lightened the burden of tyranny: they have only shifted it to another shoulder.

- Shaw, George Bernard

A nation grown free in a single day is a child born with the limbs and the vigor of a man, who would take a drawn sword for his rattle, and set the house in a blaze that he might chuckle over the splendor.

- Smith, Sydney

Revolution is a trivial shift in the emphasis of suffering.

- Stoppard, Tom

If you want a symbolic gesture, don't burn the flag, wash it.

- Thomas, Norman

In a revolution, as in a novel. the most difficult part to invent is the end.

- Tocqueville, Alexis De

It is almost never when a state of things is the most detestable that it is smashed, but when, beginning to improve, it permits men to breathe, to reflect, to communicate their thoughts with each other, and to gauge by what they already have the extent of their rights and their grievances. The weight, although less heavy, seems then all the more unbearable.

- Tocqueville, Alexis De

Revolutions are always verbose.

- Trotsky, Leon

Every successful revolution puts on in time the robes of the tyrant it has deposed.

- Tuchman, Barbara

On the first day of a revolution he is a treasure; on the second he ought to be shot.

- Unknown, Source

If not us, who? If not now, when?

- Unknown, Source

People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have a corpse in their mouth.

- Vaneigem, Raoul

Independence in the end is the fruit of injustice.

- Voltaire

All partisan movements add to the fullness of our understanding of society as a whole. They never detract; or, in any case, one must not allow them to do so. Experience adds to experience.

- Walker, Alice

You said, They're harmless dreamers and they're loved by the people. -- What, I asked you, is harmless about a dreamer, and what, I asked you, is harmless about the love of the people? Revolution only needs good dreamers who remember their dreams.

- Williams, Tennessee

A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.

- Zedong, Mao

Revolution is a tool of the past. A revolving door for corruption. The time has come for an Evolution for all humanity. Violence and hatred have no place in an Evolution.

- Parslow, Eric

Revolutions are the only way we can evolve coincidentally. Otherwise we'll be held back while the people we need to revolt against do.

- Dye, James



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