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Quotes about Despotism

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So long as war is the main business of nations, temporary despotism -- despotism during the campaign -- is indispensable.

- Bagehot, Walter

The arbitrary rule of a just and enlightened prince is always bad. His virtues are the most dangerous and the surest form of seduction: they lull a people imperceptibly into the habit of loving, respecting, and serving his successor, whoever that successor may be, no matter how wicked or stupid.

- Diderot, Denis

Despots play their part in the works of thinkers. Fettered words are terrible words. The writer doubles and trebles the power of his writing when a ruler imposes silence on the people. Something emerges from that enforced silence, a mysterious fullness which filters through and becomes steely in the thought. Repression in history leads to conciseness in the historian, and the rocklike hardness of much celebrated prose is due to the tempering of the tyrant.

- Hugo, Victor

Man is insatiable for power; he is infantile in his desires and, always discontented with what he has, loves only what he has not. People complain of the despotism of princes; they ought to complain of the despotism of man.

- Maistre, Joseph De

The real stumbling-block of totalitarian regimes is not the spiritual need of men for freedom of thought; it is men's inability to stand the physical and nervous strain of a permanent state of excitement, except during a few years of their youth.

- Weil, Simone

There are three kinds of despots. There is the despot who tyrannizes over the body. There is the despot who tyrannizes over the soul. There is the despot who tyrannizes over the soul and body alike. The first is called the Prince. The second is called the Pope. The third is called the People.

- Wilde, Oscar

Despotism is unjust to everybody, including the despot, who was probably made for better things.

- Wilde, Oscar



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