

As a nation, we began by declaring that “all men are created equal.” We now practically read it “all men are created equal, except negroes.” When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read “all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners, and Catholics.” When it comes to this, I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty – to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy.

— Abraham Lincoln, Lincoln Letters

Timid men prefer the calm of despotism to the tempestuous sea of Liberty.

— Thomas Jefferson

The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction and the distinction between true and false no longer exist.

— Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

Those who will not reason, are bigots, those who cannot, are fools, and those who dare not, are slaves.

— Lord Byron

When arguing that every age has its own Fascism, the Italian writer and Holocaust survivor Primo Levi added that the critical point can be reached “not just through the terror of police intimidation, but by denying and distorting information, by undermining systems of justice, by paralyzing the education system, and by spreading in a myriad subtle ways nostalgia for a world where order reigned.”

— Madeleine Albright, *Fascism: A Warning*

Before mass leaders seize the power to fit reality to their lies, their propaganda is marked by its extreme contempt for facts as such, for in their opinion fact depends entirely on the power of man who can fabricate it.

— Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

I really am a pessimist. I've always felt that fascism is a more natural governmental condition than democracy. Democracy is a grace. It's something essentially splendid because it's not at all routine or automatic. Fascism goes back to our infancy and childhood, where we were always told how to live. We were told, Yes, you may do this; no, you may not do that. So the secret of fascism is that it has this appeal to people whose later lives are not satisfactory.

— Norman Mailer

What happened was the gradual habituation of the people, little by little, to be governed by surprise, to receiving decisions deliberated in secret; to believe that the situation was so complicated that the government had to act on information which the people could not understand, or so dangerous that, even if people could understand it, it could not be released because of national security. ~ The crises and reforms (real reforms too) so occupied the people that they did not see the slow motion underneath, of the whole process of government growing remoter and remoter. ~ To live in the process is absolutely not to notice it — please try to believe me — unless one has a much greater degree of political awareness, acuity, than most of us ever had occasion to develop. Each step was so small, so inconsequential, so well explained or, on occasion, 'regretted.' ~ Believe me this is true. Each act, each occasion is worse than the last, but only a little worse. You wait for the next and the next. You wait for one shocking occasion, thinking that others, when such a shock comes, will join you in resisting somehow. ~ Suddenly it all comes down, all at once. You see what you are, what you have done, or, more accurately, what you haven't done (for that was all that was required of most of us: that we did nothing) . . . You remember everything now, and your heart breaks. Too late. You are compromised beyond repair.

— A German professor describing the coming of fascism in *They Thought They Were Free* by Milton Mayer