



# A Power Governments Cannot Suppress

*Howard Zinn*

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## **A Power Governments Cannot Suppress** Howard Zinn

"Thank you, Howard Zinn. Thank you for telling us what none of our leaders are willing to: The truth. And you tell it with such brilliance, such humanity. It is a personal honor to be able to say I am a better citizen because of you."--Michael Moore, director of the film *Fahrenheit 9/11*, and author of the New York Times bestseller, *Stupid White Men ...and Other Sorry Excuses for the State of the Nation!*

"Find here the voice of the well-educated and honorable and capable and human United States of America, which might have existed if only absolute power had not corrupted its third-rate leaders so absolutely."--Kurt Vonnegut, author of *A Man Without a Country*

*A Power Governments Cannot Suppress*, is a major new collection of essays on American history, class, immigration, justice, and ordinary citizens who have made a difference. Zinn addresses America's current political/ethical crisis using lessons learned from our nation's history. Zinn brings a profoundly human, yet uniquely American perspective to each subject he writes about, whether it's the abolition of war, terrorism, the Founding Fathers, the Holocaust, defending the rights of immigrants, or personal liberties. Written in an accessible, personal tone, Zinn approaches the telling of U.S. history from an active, engaged point of view. "America's future is linked to how we understand our past," writes Zinn; "For this reason, writing about history, for me, is never a neutral act."

Zinn frames the book with an opening essay titled "If History is to be Creative," a reflection on the role and responsibility of the historian. "To think that history-writing must aim simply to recapitulate the failures that dominate the past," writes Zinn, "is to make historians collaborators in an endless cycle of defeat." "If history is to be creative, to anticipate a possible future without denying the past, it should, I believe, emphasize new possibilities by disclosing those hidden episodes of the past when, even if in brief flashes, people showed their ability to resist, to join together, and occasionally win. 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."

Buzzing with stories and ideas, Zinn draws upon fascinating, little-known historical anecdotes spanning from the Declaration of Independence to the USA PATRIOT Act to comment on the most controversial issues facing us today: government dishonesty, how to respond to terrorism, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the loss of our liberties, immigration, and the responsibility of the citizen to confront power for the common good.

Considered a "modern-day Thoreau" by Jonathon Kozol, Zinn's inspired writings address the reader as an active participant in history making. "We live in a beautiful country," writes Zinn, in the book's opening chapter. "But people who have no respect for human life, freedom, or justice have taken it over. It is now up to all of us to take it back."

Featuring essays penned over an eight-year period, *A Power Governments Cannot Suppress* is Howard Zinn's first writerly work in several years, an invaluable post-9/11-era addition to the themes that run through his bestselling classic, *A People's History Of the United States*.

Howard Zinn is a veteran of World War II and author of many books and plays, including the million-selling

classic, A People's History of the United States.

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