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Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?

Posted by [msgtpain](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 02:08:55 GMT

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This is getting lost in the Pledge thread, so I thought I would start a new one.. Here are the relevant posts so far.. Can anyone solve the mystery of the over used quote?

SEAL

I like how all you guys can really do is roll your eyes at SFE's dissent quote... You make an impressive argument.

All you guys keep rolling that off your fingertips like it's the end-all to any anti-Bush conversation.. But the question is, where does it come from? A quote isn't much of a quote without a source, is it?

I've watched you all use that quote for almost a year every time someone says your views are unpatriotic. So, put up or shut up.. Where can I find that quote from Mr Jefferson? Surely it must be in some text, somewhere, right?

Prove it.

SEAL

I have never used the quote. And it comes from Thomas Jefferson.

<http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=%22dissent+is+the+highest%22+jefferson&btnG=Google+Search>

msgtpain

That Google means nothing to me, I simply asked for proof that it came from Jefferson.. A thousand uses on Google doesn't mean that it's factually correct.. In fact, I can't seem to find that quote anywhere in the Jefferson digital archive <http://etext.virginia.edu/jefferson/quotations/foley/> can you?

It is my assumption that this quote was fictitiously fed to the public by some organization such as The American Patriot Friends Network, and it's been taken as fact ever since.

If you look at some of the things that Jefferson actually said, It would seem that he thought the exact opposite.

Quote:republican government required the losing side to support the nation's decision: That the aggressions and injuries of the belligerent nations have been the real obstructions which have interrupted our commerce, and now threaten our peace, and that the embargo laws were salutary and indispensably necessary to meet those obstructions, are truths as evident to every candid man, as it is worthy of every good citizen to declare his reprobation of that system of opposition

which goes to an avowed and practical resistance of these laws. To such a resistance I trust that the patriotism of our faithful citizens in no section of the Union will give any countenance. Where the law of majority ceases to be acknowledged, there government ends, the law of the strongest takes its place, and life and property are his who can take them. [Jefferson, letter to John Gassaway, February 17, 1809.]

Quote:

While the principles of our Constitution give just latitude to inquiry, every citizen faithful to it will, with you, deem embodied expressions of discontent, and open outrages of law and patriotism, as dishonorable as they are injurious; and there is reason to believe that had the efforts of the government against the innovations and tyranny of the belligerent powers been unopposed among ourselves, they would have been more effectual towards the establishment of our rights.[Jefferson, letter to "The Republican Mechanics Of The Town Of Leesburg And Its Vicinity," March 29, 1809.]

Quote:

Political dissension is doubtless a less evil than the lethargy of despotism, but still it is a great evil, and it would be as worthy the efforts of the patriot as of the philosopher, to exclude its influence, if possible, from social life. [Jefferson, letter to Thomas Pinckney, 1797.]

So I say again, if you would like to use this "quote" as some sort of affirmation that you should speak out against the government, and believe that one of our Founding Fathers explicitly gave you that duty, please show me where he said so..

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