Leo Tolstoy

Father of Christian Anarchism
(1828 - 1910)

Description: In 1861, during the second of his European tours, Tolstoy met with Proudhon, with whom he exchanged ideas. Inspired by the encounter, Tolstoy returned to Yasnaya Polyana to found thirteen schools that were the first attempt to implement a practical model of libertarian education. (From: Anarchy Archives)

Tags: anarchist, christian, christian anarchist, russian, novelist, writer, realist, philosopher, activist.

Quotes:

"...the dissemination of the truth in a society based on coercion was always hindered in one and the same manner, namely, those in power, feeling that the recognition of this truth would undermine their position, consciously or sometimes unconsciously perverted it by explanations and additions quite foreign to it, and also opposed it by open violence." (From: "A Letter to a Hindu: The Subjection of India- Its Cause and Cure," by Leo Tolstoy, With an Introduction by M. K. Gandhi, December 14th, 1908.)

"You are surprised that soldiers are taught that it is right to kill people in certain cases and in war, while in the books admitted to be holy by those who so teach, there is nothing like such a permission..."
"The Government and all those of the upper classes near the Government who live by other people's work, need some means of dominating the workers, and find this means in the control of the army. Defense against foreign enemies is only an excuse. The German Government frightens its subjects about the Russians and the French; the French Government, frightens its people about the Germans; the Russian Government frightens its people about the French and the Germans; and that is the way with all Governments. But neither Germans nor Russians nor Frenchmen desire to fight their neighbors or other people; but, living in peace, they dread war more than anything else in the world." (From : "Letter to a Non-Commissioned Officer," by Leo Tolstoy, 1898.)

"There are people (we ourselves are such) who realize that our Government is very bad, and who struggle against it." (From : "A Letter to Russian Liberals," by Leo Tolstoy, August 31, O.S., 1896.)

"People who take part in Government, or work under its direction, may deceive themselves or their sympathizers by making a show of struggling; but those against whom they struggle (the Government) know quite well, by the strength of the resistance experienced, that these people are
not really pulling, but are only pretending to." (From: "A Letter to Russian Liberals," by Leo Tolstoy, August 31, O.S., 1896.)

"It usually happens that when an idea which has been useful and even necessary in the past becomes superfluous, that idea, after a more or less prolonged struggle, yields its place to a new idea which was till then an ideal, but which thus becomes a present idea." (From: "Patriotism and Government," by Leo Tolstoy, May 10, o.s., 1900, part 2.)

"If, in former times, Governments were necessary to defend their people from other people's attacks, now, on the contrary, Governments artificially disturb the peace that exists between the nations, and provoke enmity among them." (From: "Patriotism and Government," by Leo Tolstoy, May 10, o.s., 1900, part 5.)

"It is necessary that men should understand things as they are, should call them by their right names, and should know that an army is an instrument for killing, and that the enrollment and management of an army -- the very things which Kings, Emperors, and Presidents occupy themselves with so self-confidently -- is a preparation for murder." (From: "Thou Shalt Not Kill'," by Leo Tolstoy, August 8, o.s., 1900.)

"...for no social system can be durable or stable,
under which the majority does not enjoy equal rights but is kept in a servile position, and is bound by exceptional laws. Only when the laboring majority have the same rights as other citizens, and are freed from shameful disabilities, is a firm order of society possible." (From: "To the Czar and His Assistants," by Leo Tolstoy, March 15, o.s., 1901.)

"Only by recognizing the land as just such an article of common possession as the sun and air will you be able, without bias and justly, to establish the ownership of land among all men, according to any of the existing projects or according to some new project composed or chosen by you in common." (From: "To the Working People," by Leo Tolstoy, Yasnaya Polyana, 1902.)

**Biography:**

Leo Tolstoy was born September 9, 1828 at Yasnaya Polyana in Tula, Russia. Fourth child of Countess Mariya Tolstaya, Tolstoy was born of old Russian nobility. As such, social pressures forced him to attend university and proceed on trek to becoming an upstanding member of upper-class Russian society.

In 1844, Tolstoy ceased his studies at Kazan University. He then spent a period of about seven years bouncing between his hometown and St. Petersburg accruing an impressive gambling debt.

In 1851, Tolstoy and his brother joined the army. Sometime around then, Tolstoy began writing.

In 1857, attempting to leave Russian high-society behind, Tolstoy took the first of his two tours through Europe. This act was an attempt to escape Russian political
oppression, and was also carried out by such anarchists as Kropotkin and Bakunin.

In 1861, during the second of his European tours, Tolstoy met with Proudhon, with whom he exchanged ideas. Inspired by the encounter, Tolstoy returned to Yasnaya Polyana to found thirteen schools that were the first attempt to implement a practical model of libertarian education.

In 1862, Tolstoy married Sophia Andreevna Bers. The early years of the marriage marked a period of great joy during Tolstoy's life and facilitated the composition of both *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*. Sadly, the marriage deteriorated into one of great unhappiness in later years, as Tolstoy's ideas grew more radical and his attempts to distance himself from his wealth (both earned and inherited) became more radical.

In 1910, Tolstoy died of pneumonia at Astapovo station after abandoning his family and wealth in the middle of winter to take up the path of wandering ascetic.

From: Anarchy Archives.

**Works:**

- Author of *War and Peace* (November 30, 1868)
- Author of *The End of the Age: An Essay on the Approaching Revolution* (November 30, 1904)
- Author of *On Anarchy* (November 30, 1899)
- Author of *Church and State* (November 30, 1890)
- Author of *A Letter to Russian Liberals* (August 31, 1896)
- Author of *Letter to A Non-Comissioned Officer* (November 30, 1897)
- Author of *Patriotism and Government* (May 10, 1900)
- Author of *Thou Shalt Not Kill* (August 08, 1900)
- Author of *To the Tsar and His Assistants* (March 15, 1901)
- Author of *Letter to a Hindu* (December 14, 1908)
- Author of *Gandhi Letters* (November 30, 1909)
- Author of *To The Working People* (November 30, 1901)
- Author of *A Confession* (November 30, 1881)
- Author of *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (November 30, 1893)
- Author of *The Awakening* (November 30, 1898)
- Author of *Anna Karenina* (November 30, 1876)
- Author of *The Kreutzer Sonata, And Other Stories* (November 30, 1888)
- Author of *Master and Man* (November 30, 1894)
- Author of *The Forged Coupon, And Other Stories* (November 30, 1911)
of Father Sergius (November 30, 1897)Author of Boyhood (November 30, 1853)Author of Childhood (November 30, 1851)Author of What to Do? Thoughts Evoked by the Census of Moscow (November 30, 1886)Author of Youth (November 30, 1856)Author of Tolstoy on Shakespeare (December 31, 1969)Author of What Men Live By (November 30, 1884)Author of The Cossacks (November 30, 1862)Author of Fables for Children, Stories for Children, Natural Science Stories, Popular Education, Decembrists (November 30, 1903)Author of Sevastopol (November 30, 1887)Author of A Russian Proprietor, and Other Stories (December 05, 1887)Author of My Religion (November 30, 1883)Author of What Shall We Do? (November 30, 1903)Author of The Journal of Leo Tolstoi, Volume 1 (November 30, 1916)Author of Bethink Yourselves! (November 30, 1903)Author of Fruits of Culture (November 30, 1888)Author of Three Days in the Village (November 30, 1908)

Chronology:

September 09, 1828: Leo Tolstoy's Birth Day.

November 20, 1910: Leo Tolstoy's Death Day.


Links:

• Anarchy Archives: Leo Tolstoy Archive http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bright/tolstoyp.html

• Anarchist Library: Leo Tolstoy https://theanarchistlibrary.org/category/author/leo-tolstoy

• Wikipedia: Leo Tolstoy