

Resistance to civil government by henry david thoreau

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For ages, HDT was labeled as an anarchist but to take it from his own words in his own essay, he wanted a government " but at once a better government. Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it."

With a personality that strongly opposes all that which he thinks is wrong, HDT is described as a naturalist or environmentalist, transcendentalist, a pacifist, and a tax resister (Wikipedia, 2006). It is particularly interesting to note his being a tax resister but not an evader for at length, he argued in his essay why he refused to become a part, to say the least, of a government which he dislikes, or abhor. He also narrated his imprisonment for resisting to pay his tax.

HDT proposes a government with conscience by allowing it, like a non-conscientious corporation to have men in it with a conscience. For conscience, as he described, is inherent to all individuals and that individuals must not " resign his conscience to the legislator." HDT bashes the government of his time for " It has not the vitality and force of a single living man; for a single man can bend it to will," meaning that only a handful from an overwhelming majority of citizens control the government like it was their own.

He proposes a government with officials or those beholden to it to follow a righteous conscience, of which when exposed to war, and the soldiers and all ranking officers do not will to go and kill or be killed, " peaceably inclined" as he wrote, must not engage in war. He also described that " legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers, and office-holders --- serve the state chiefly with their heads; and, as they rarely make any moral distinctions, they are

as likely to serve the devil, without intending it, as God."

HDT also underscored his right to revolution, to refuse allegiance and resist the government he does not believe in. He wants a government that allows for an active citizenry that does not only opine their opposing views to a wrong but that which acts to let this opinion be known and eventually stop that which is wrong, like slavery, war

He advocates that fence-sitting or waiting for someone to lead a reform or do what the majority of dissenters must do are but the own " conscientious supporters (to a wrong government), and so frequently, the most serious obstacles to reform." If one person believes otherwise than that which is being imposed by the government, he strongly proposes that the person must do his part too and not just " enjoy it. [] Is there any enjoyment in it, if his opinion is that he is aggrieved" he asks.

" The broadest and most prevalent error requires the most disinterested virtue to sustain it," he wrote. He advocates action, the least of which counts to a start by saying, " For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be: what is once well done is done forever." He added that " Action from principle, the perception and the performance of right, changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary and does not consist wholly with anything which was."

He recommends that people or the citizenry must amend unjust laws which he acknowledges exist in the government. He advocates direct transgression of that which is unjust. The government, he believes must be the first to support, anticipate and provide for reform by cherishing its wise minority and not " always crucify Christ and excommunicate Copernicus and Luther, and

pronounce Washington and Franklin rebels."

Conclusion:

It is therefore conciliatory to describe that in consideration of the essay as well as the personality of Henry David Thoreau, he advocates a government "acted up to more rapidly and systematically [] and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have,": a government that every citizen obeys and supports out of respect and truth, but not because of majority rule or minority's physical strength (or power).