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Historians
AND THE
Anarchism



Dennis Gould — "the Whisper and Shout"

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ANARCHIST IDEAS

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Resistance to civil government

Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for law is that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, ay against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart. They have no doubt that it is a damnable business in which they are concerned; they are all peaceably inclined. Now what are they—men at all? or small moveable forts and magazines at the service of some unscrupulous man in power? . . . The mass of men serve the State thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, gaolers, constables, etc. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt. They have the same sort of worth only as horses or dogs. Yet such as these even are commonly esteemed good citizens. Others—as most legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers and office-holders—serve the State chiefly with their heads; and as they serve the Devil, without intending it, as God. A very few—as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and men—serve the State with their consciences also and so necessarily resist it for the most part; and they are commonly treated as enemies by it.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

DISOBEDIENCE



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