

enamored of acting in unison that I am herded into acting inhumanly.

If those with opposing beliefs hold them so strongly, they have at least the same choice of throwing their whole weight into bringing about that state of affairs which they espouse—not by bringing me to heel, but by giving all they have to their own visions. I cannot think that the measure of one's belief is the extent to which he tries to coerce others into believing it or acting upon it, but the extent to which he is willing to sacrifice for it himself. If, for instance, I am, because of my well-intentioned but mistaken notions, depriving the Department of Defense of ten dollars per year for making a guided missile, why does not someone convinced of the necessity of the weapon come forward and voluntarily make up that ten dollars? Is it not mere pettiness to insist that I would stand to be "protected" by this sacrifice? (I would also stand to be annihilated by it.) The money spent trying to make me comply could be squandered, instead, on the purposes for which my tax money would be used.

But, no, this non-compliance constitutes an affront which cannot be ignored. It is no doubt the fear that even one insignificant defiance will produce a rent in the whole fabric, and that the cloth may some day be beyond repair. Perhaps we do not need the garment at all and should throw it into the rag bag before it is completely in tatters. If the idea I champion is worthless, not many will be impressed to follow suit and my intransigence can be regretted, deplored and suffered. If, on the other hand, only the law keeps most people from acting with me, then this must be the worst kind of despotism—it must be the minority who are keeping the majority in line with the whip of the law. Or perhaps everyone is being kept in

line with the whip, and no one dares look the thing in the face for what it is.

Most people who take any notice of my position are appalled by my lawbreaking and not at all about the reasons for my not paying taxes. Instead of trying to make me justify my civil disobedience, why do they not question themselves and the government about a course of action which makes billions available for weapons, but cannot provide decent housing and education for a large segment of the population? Actually, many people seem envious that I have for so long been able to "get away with it," with not paying taxes. I wonder what would happen if the income tax laws were repealed tomorrow. Let everyone be sent a statement of what his fair share would be, to be paid on a voluntary basis. How many of the people who bark at me, "Do you think you should use the highways if you won't pay taxes?" would send in their assessments?

Anyway, because I believe that it is more important to do what is right than what is lawful or expedient, I have declined to pay the tax. All right, then, having determined this course of action for yourself, should you not be willing to accept punishment for your defiance? Why should I? I have stated that 1) I believe this particular measure to be so intolerable that I cannot abide by it; 2) I believe that I have every right, nay, every responsibility, to act according to my best judgment, not waiting for one hundred and fifty million others to concur. This one act may not lead inevitably to a good end, but I do not see that it can lead to a bad one. Why should I expect or accept punishment for exercising my best judgment? I was not a whit more contrite when the marshals came to arrest me than when I first declined to pay the tax. Would I go peaceably in order to show my compatriots that I do not utterly despise them and their institutions? If I must go to jail in