



# Citizens Dissent: Security, Morality, and Leadership in an Age of Terror

*Wendell Berry , David James Duncan*

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**Citizens Dissent: Security, Morality, and Leadership in an Age of Terror** Wendell Berry , David James Duncan

Wendell Berry and David James Duncan present a haunting call to the collective conscience of the citizenry, and an urgent challenge to the meaning and workings of a true democracy. Their patriotic dissents expand the context for questions of terror and security, and present an enlightened understanding of the threats to -- and responsibilities of -- freedom.

## Citizens Dissent: Security, Morality, and Leadership in an Age of Terror Details

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## From Reader Review Citizens Dissent: Security, Morality, and Leadership in an Age of Terror for online ebook

### Amy says

Wendell Berry and David James Duncan in the same book. It's bound to be wonderful. And it is. Full of sobering statistics and realities and yet somehow inspiring and hopeful.

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### E. says

In the midst of this new year of dissent, I finally read this small 2003 book by the poet and essayist Wendell Berry and the novelist David James Duncan opposing the Iraq War and the moral decay of our nation. As imperative as all of this felt in 2003, it seems quaint now. Yet, I do believe that the immoral decisions of our government and society at that time have contributed to the rise in immorality of the Trump Era. So sad that the Obama's years, which were originally conceived as an age of redemption and healing for the immorality of the Bush years, did not live up to expectations.

I left the Republican party in 2003 over the Iraq War and the reality that the party I had once admired was now governed by Neoconservatives and Christian fundamentalists. In subsequent years they devolved even further and now are governed by a nativist populist who is a moral reprobate.

So, the great worries that many of us expressed in 2003 are now coming to fruition. May God have mercy upon us and save us.

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### Wrdwrrrior says

consummate arguments for civil disobedience and patriotism and stupidity of Bush administration's actions

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### Matt says

I guess overall I would say that these two essays are nothing special. There are a few insights, and I firmly believe that Berry and Duncan are right, but most of the criticisms of U.S. government policy circa 2001 have been captured better by others.

Also, Duncan's essay is better than Berry's, in my opinion.

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### Scott says

This short book is comprised of two essays written in 2003 in response to the National Security Strategy of the U.S. They are profound and disturbing, if not prophetic. Their sensitivity and fairness is matched with compassion in a way that engenders hope.

## Amber says

when compassion becomes dissent...

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## Mark Lacy says

A moving book. Makes me want to do \*something\* about the sad state that the world is in, but what can I do? How can I apply my particular talents and skills for the good of society?

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## Bob Nichols says

Both essays in this book surround the decision of Bush II to go to invade Iraq. I've heard many good things about Wendell Berry but his essay was disappointing. Peace and war is a contradiction, he says. Opt for peace not war. Invading Iraq was a huge mistake for a variety of reasons, but not for Berry's formulaic "peace not war" approach. In the second essay, Duncan wraps the flag of universal peace and brotherhood around himself with a martyr-like tone that is off-putting.

"Love thy neighbor as thyself," Duncan tells us, "orders me, as I look at you, to imagine that I'm seeing not you, but me, and then to treat this imaginative me, alias you, as if you are me. And for how long? Till the day I die! Christ orders anyone who's serious about him to commit the 'Neighbor = Me' fiction until they forget for good which of the two of themselves to cheat in a business deal or abandon in a crisis or smart-bomb in a war – at which point their imaginative act, their fiction-making, will have turned Christ's bizarre words into a reality and they'll be saying with Mother Teresa, 'I see Christ in every woman and man.'" The golden rule, seen in cultures throughout the world, is the only principle that works in a world where the pursuit of self-interest is largely dominant. If our freedom is going to be compatible with that of the other, it's in our mutual self-interest to limit self-pursuit. But this principle works as a two-way street. The golden rule requires that others look at us in a similarly respectful way. This raises a question in connection with Duncan's essay: if they don't look at us in the same way, what is to be done about that? Obviously, there's an obligation to look at ourselves and what we have created, which is Duncan's point, but it's complicated and Duncan's essay is simplistic.

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## Brian says

"It is useless to try to adjudicate a long-standing animosity by asking who started it or who is the most wrong. The only sufficient answer is to give up the animosity and try forgiveness, to try to love our enemies and to talk to them and (if we pray) to pray for them. If we can't do any of that, then we must begin again by trying to imagine our enemies' children who, like our children, are in mortal danger because of enmity that they did not cause.

"We can no longer afford to confuse peaceability with passivity. Authentic peace is no more passive than war. Like war, it calls for discipline and intelligence and strength of character, though it calls also for higher principles and aims. If we are serious about peace, then we must work for it as ardently, seriously,

continuously, carefully, and bravely as we have ever prepared for war." - Wendell Berry

"American TV news is our contemporary palantir [one of the magical orbs in Lord of the Rings that selectively reveal distant events drawing Saruman to corruption and Denethor to despair:]...Corporate TVs skewed accounts of 'reality' invade and shrivel our imaginations daily. Many suspect this, yet too often accept it, indulge in it, sink into it. Corporate-owned network news is systematically *disheartening*, its influence insidious" -David James Duncan

"We can do no great things--only small things, with great love." -Mother Theresa

"Don't let the tings you can't do interfere with the things you can do." -Johnny Wooden, legendary UCLA basketball coach

Duncan's essay especially is convicting, heartbreaking, and inspiring in ways a quotation or summary cannot convey. Let me know if you'd like to borrow the book. I'd be happy to lend.

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## Sean says

Two short essay. One by David James Duncan and one by Wendell Berry. The essays are a response to the rhetoric in the United States pre-Iraq war. The themes could not be more similar to the current dialogue in the public sphere. Berry opens his ideas of conservation as a national security measure. Challenging the idea of consumption and economics that then drive the value of war. Duncan emphasizes that compassion and empathy begin with imagination and fiction. Our ability to see the other and put on their shoes helps us learn compassion and fiction opens those doors for us. Great short read. Still relevant even though rooted in the early 2000s.

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