

TRANSADVOCATE

WWTGSKWaHD? (What Would Tolstoy, Gandhi, Sakharov, King, Walesa, and Havel Do?)

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Abstract

I dread writing this post. Not because it is laborious, or taxing on my personal resources, but because my sensibilities are afflicted by the subject matter. It is neither my desire nor intent to further inflame an already hot topic. There are plenty willing and so capable of stoking that fire. It is my only [...]

Article

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It is neither my desire nor intent to further inflame an already hot topic. There are plenty willing and so capable of stoking that fire. It is my only desire to offer a consideration, a course of action which may or may not resolve the matter, but it will define us as a community and how others outside the community view us.

On July 1, 2011 the novice Managing Editor of a small Baltimore based LGBT biweekly newsletter granted a public forum to two radical feminist wishing to make the argument that “gender identity” is a concept, and that protections based upon gender identity will promote harm to “women born women”. The Baltimore based broadside followed this up with an additional elevation of hatred on July 29, 2011 in which one of the previous writers expanded her viewpoints on why gender identity protection through hate crime laws is unacceptable. This in direct response to the pending trial of Teonna Brown, the 18 year old woman accused of assaulting a transgender woman at a local McDonalds in April. It is not the purpose of this commentary to debate these issues. They are receiving enough of that already. Nor is it to challenge the blatant transphobia proffered by the authors’ assertions. Yet this topic has now been advance to the United Nations and has set the debate ablaze.

It is my firm belief that it matters not what befalls our community, however what is of significance is how we, as a community, respond which, in turn will define us.

Above all the transgender community is without question the most misunderstood and maligned minority group in our society. Much of this manifests itself in a state of ignorance, short of enlighten reasoning and latent hatred in respect both gender identity and gender expression. Every human being possesses a gender identity and expresses gender. For most their gender is consistent with the physicality and for some it is not. It is that simple and we are that some.

Tolstoy, Gandhi, Sakharov, King, Walesa, and Havel are mortals which have offered us pathways to non

violent actions that have liberated millions. Our deliverance may well follow in these models.

When an individual is protesting society's refusal to acknowledge his dignity as a human being, his very act of protest confers dignity on him. - Bayard Rustin

Many members of the transgender community have suffered long and enduring abuses to our persons, our dignity and to our loved ones. These hate filled essays are no different than the hate fill spats to the faces, the hate filled physical assaults with the genitalia of others thrust unto our faces, the hate filled degradation and humiliation of being told we were less than human. One might be considered justified to retaliate in like kind. But it is my firm belief that we lose if we do so. That in my eyes, our only solution is as the organizer of the 1963 March on Washington suggested, protest for dignity confers the very same dignity.

Non violent civil disobedience and direct action have proven to be the most successful tools to authoritarianism whether its from our government or members of the broader coalition communities. including TransTories. How that protest presents itself is for or community to decide. I pray the spirit of nonviolence prevails

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