

If you care about freedom, have an open mind, as this untold knowledge gets to the root cause.

What Anarchy Isn't ~ Larken Rose *Made Print-Ready by Cory Endrulat*

Definition: Many people, when they hear the word “anarchy,” think of chaos and mayhem. They therefore assume that anyone who calls himself an “anarchist” must be in favor of disorder and violence. But that is the complete opposite of the truth. Just as the word “monarchy” means “rule by one person,” the word “anarchy” literally just means, “rule by no one .” But even that idea—the idea of a society without a government —makes some people imagine a primitive, savage type of existence, full of violent conflict, and without compassion or organization. But that too is a completely inaccurate picture of what anarchism means. In fact, most complaints about anarchism are the result of people misunderstanding what the philosophy is all about. Most people who are scared of “anarchy” are scared of things that anarchists don't want and don't advocate. *(Book version has helpful images)*

How Would We Organize? One common misconception about anarchy is that it means “every man for himself” or “survival of the fittest,” where everyone has to be selfish and self-sufficient, where there is no real cooperation or organization, and where people all behave like violent, selfish animals. This comes from the false assumption that there can be no order or structure to society without government—that without some sort of governing political body, people couldn't and wouldn't find ways to get along, cooperate and organize. But in reality, government is never about true cooperation. Whether it is a republic, a democracy, a dictatorship, or some other form, government always constitutes a ruling class which gives commands called “laws,” and uses violence to punish anyone who disobeys. That is not cooperation. That is domination. It is one group forcing its will on everyone else, and making them obey. Government forces people to fund its ideas by way of “taxation,” and forces people to cooperate with its plans by way of “regulation” and “legislation.” Ultimately, both are enforced by men with guns. In contrast, true cooperation is about people voluntarily working together, of their own free will, without anyone else forcing them to. And people already do this, in thousands of different ways every day, without politicians or “law enforcers” making it happen. So no, obviously cooperation does not require the existence of political power. And while it is true that authoritarianism and government power can be used to force people into various forms of organization, that does not mean that people are incapable of organizing without being forced, which they obviously already do, in many different ways. In fact, the most productive examples of organization are already anarchistic in nature. Consider, for example, your favorite grocery store. Everyone involved in the hugely complex operation of growing, processing, transporting, displaying and selling food, participates voluntarily. Customers choose where to shop and what to buy, and all the other people involved—truck-drivers, stock boys, checkout clerks, administrators, etc.—do things in exchange for getting paid. This purely voluntary arrangement allows for an amazingly complex degree of organization and cooperation without anyone being forced to participate. This is literally anarchy in action. In contrast, whenever government does something, a very small group of people (politicians) comes up with an idea, and forces everyone else to go along with it. In the authoritarian version of a supermarket, the ruling class would tell people what to produce and how much, and would tell customers what they must buy and what they must pay for it. Anyone who did not comply would be punished in some way. That is always how government does things.

(Some anarchists prefer the term “voluntaryism” because the philosophy is based upon the idea that all human behavior should be based upon voluntary interaction, not violence.)

How Do We Defend? Another common but incorrect assumption is that if there were no government, people would have no way to defend against criminals or foreign invaders. But one does not need a badge or special “authority” to have the right to defend himself or others, against attackers and thieves. Everyone already has the right to use defensive force—on his own, or with others for mutual protection. Anarchy means no one has the right to rule (i.e., no one has special rights); it doesn’t mean people can’t get together to exercise rights that everyone already has. In a stateless society, even professional protectors would only have the same rights as everyone else. (*See Page 1*)

Wouldn’t Gangs Take Over? Another concern that some people have is that, if there was no government, then smaller, private gangs would spring up to rob, oppress and enslave people. There are a couple of reasons why this fear is misguided. First of all, even private street gangs and organized crime today exist mainly because of government, not in spite of it. Notice how many gangs today get their funding from trading in illegal “black markets”—drugs, gambling, prostitution, guns, etc—which were all created by government “laws.” In a free society, thugs and thieves—individually or in gangs— wouldn’t have any “black markets” to take over. More importantly, people who fear “warlords taking over” if there were no government are ignoring how much people’s perceptions matter. A criminal gang which everyone recognizes as illegitimate and immoral has far less power than a gang whose aggression is perceived to be legitimate and “legal”—its commands and demands being called “laws” and “taxes,” and any who disobey being seen as “criminals.” In other words, a population is far more likely to be oppressed by a gang which the people themselves imagine to have the right to rule, than by some gang that everyone knows is bad, and that everyone would feel perfectly justified in disobeying and resisting, even forcibly. Imagine a private gang trying to do what government now does—extorting and bossing everyone around—but imagine if they tried that without any aura of legal authority. Then imagine how a well-armed population would respond. The gang would fail, quickly and dramatically, and all those who resisted them would be viewed as righteous heroes. But when the people feel morally obligated to obey the politicians’ “laws,” any who resist are viewed as “criminals” or “tax-cheats,” even by their own friends and neighbors. Most people see government domination as necessary and valid, and so they cooperate with their own victimization. That is why government gets away with far more oppression and extortion than private gangs ever could: because most of the victims of “legal” thuggery and theft see it as necessary and legitimate. Millions of people tolerate the confiscation of a huge portion of their earnings, and tolerate having many of their choices and behaviors forcibly limited and controlled by way of “legislation,” as long as the people giving the orders are seen as a legitimate political authority.

Government Is MORE Crime, LESS Protection: But in a situation where the people don’t accept the idea that someone else has the moral right to rob them and rule them, the people stop cooperating, and start resisting. This is why the presence of government drastically increases the chances of people getting robbed—in fact, increases the chances to 100%, since every government “taxes” the people it pretends to “represent.” Meanwhile, the lack of an authoritarian ruling class makes the people far less susceptible to being extorted and dominated, and far more likely to disobey and resist any would-be thieves and thugs. To put it another way, warlords already did take over, called themselves “government,” and convinced their victims that it was righteous and necessary for the warlords to dominate and exploit everyone else, “for their own good.” Relying on government to prevent theft and oppression is completely ridiculous, since government is the biggest thug and thief there is, confiscating far more wealth than all other crooks and criminals combined. And government “protection” is always hypocritical. Government “law enforcers” may sometimes find and lock up some private thugs and thieves, but every government also commits “legalized” theft and extortion

itself and calls it “taxation,” while insisting that it needs to do that in order to protect the people from theft and extortion. As patently absurd as that is, most people still accept it without question.

What About The Psychopaths? When someone first considers the idea of a stateless society, he may also worry that the people who are truly malicious, destructive and sociopathic (and there are such people in the world) would be free to do anything they pleased, with no one to stop them. But this concern is again based on a basic misunderstanding of human nature. People who are willing to victimize others, by their very nature, don’t care about morality, or right and wrong. They don’t care if what they are doing is right, and they also don’t care if what they are doing is legal. They care only whether they can get away with harming others. In some instances, a would-be crook or thug might be deterred or stopped by force (or by the threat of force), whether by someone with a badge, or by someone without one. What makes this deterrence work is not the legislation or the official badges, but the simple threat of harm to the crook. A sociopath doesn’t care about laws or social rules; he cares only about avoiding pain and hardship for himself. And that is true regardless of whether government exists or not. It makes no difference whether the threat comes from the police, or another citizen, or even another criminal. Discouraging nasty people from hurting others does not require special “authority,” only the ability to use defensive force. If the intended target of a would-be car-jacker pulls out a gun, it doesn’t make any difference to the car-jacker whether that person has a badge or whether there’s a “law” against taking people’s cars. Without a ruling class, decent people would still have every incentive, ability and right to organize and cooperate to defend against thugs and thieves, and they wouldn’t need any badge or official title, any “legislation” or special rights to do so. And, as with any service, people can hire others to help protect them; every person doesn’t have to do it himself.

Organized Defense Is NOT Government: Now, some people might assume that if people organize for mutual protection and defense, then that is government. But that is not at all the case. Political authority is not about people coming together to do something that everyone already has the right to do; political authority is about one group of people claiming the right to do things which normal people do not have the right to do, such as taxing and controlling everyone else. Organized defense can be very effective without anyone claiming any special right to rule—in other words, without having any special “authority” and without being government. Even when there is government, there are still freelance thieves and thugs who are not deterred by the laws of the politicians anyway. But the ultimate irony is that, while so many people hope that government will protect them from common criminals, government itself always ends up being the biggest thug and thief around. To be blunt, creating a huge gang—one far too big and powerful for the average person to resist—and giving that gang societal permission to control and extort everyone else (by way of “law” and “taxes”), in the hopes that that gang will prevent theft and thuggery, is an absurd idea.

Will There Be Chaos? Another common objection to the idea of a stateless society (a world without government) is the notion that, if not for a group of law-makers telling the rest of us how to behave, we would all behave like stupid, irresponsible, violent animals. This claim implies one of two things: either we normal people have no idea what is right and wrong unless and until politicians tell us, or the only reason we want to do the right thing and co-exist peacefully is because politicians command us to. A quick examination of your own motivations and behaviors proves that neither of those things is actually true. To argue that only government can make people behave in a civilized manner is particularly odd in a society where politicians are voted into power. If the people themselves have no moral code and no conscience, and are just stupid, violent animals, why does almost everyone want

government to keep the peace and protect the innocent? Would a population of vicious, heartless, evil people try to elect good people to keep the evil people in line? Obviously not. Human goodness, and the desire for order and peace, already comes from the people, not from the “law-makers” they vote into office. The same holds true of everything government does. If people are so short-sighted and selfish that they can’t be trusted to voluntarily organize and fund whatever they deem important, then how can those same people be trusted to decide who should be in power? The implication is that the average person can’t be trusted to run his own life, but can be trusted to choose someone to run everyone else’s life. To argue that government is necessary for keeping society peaceful and civilized is to claim that normal people can’t wait to commit evil, but also can’t wait to vote for politicians who will forcibly stop them from committing evil. Contrary to what most of us were taught, government and politics are not a civilizing influence at all. Indeed, political authority is the arch enemy of peaceful coexistence. People who would never personally rob their neighbors themselves constantly vote for the government to do it for them. People who would never dream of trying to control every detail of their neighbors’ lives think it’s just fine to ask politicians to do exactly that. The game of politics constantly encourages people to use the violence of the state to rob and control other people, without any risk or feeling of guilt for the one who votes for that to happen. Government, rather than serving as a check against the imperfections of our nature, instead drastically amplifies our greed, resentment, irresponsibility and malice, by giving us a “legal,” risk-free way to forcibly interfere with the lives and choices of our fellow man. In short, politics brings out the bully and meddling busy-body in everyone. In contrast, without a ruling class, people wouldn’t be forever asking “law-makers” to interfere with their neighbors’ lives, and thugs and thieves wouldn’t be able to deny responsibility for their evil deeds by saying they were just following orders.

Democide, The Top Cause Of Death: Throughout history, far more theft, assault, oppression, even murder has been committed by those acting on behalf of “authority” than by anybody else. Even basically good people, when they believe in government, condone things which they know would be wrong if they did them on their own. Most people know that theft and assault are bad, but they imagine that controlling their neighbors and forcing them to pay for things they don’t want is perfectly fine when done by way of the political process. Wrong becomes right when it’s called “taxation,” “legislation,” “regulation” and “war.” Anarchists know better. They know that human society will never be perfect, but that it would be a whole lot better if evil deeds were committed only by genuinely nasty, sociopathic people, rather than being advocated and committed by many millions of basically good people who have been taught to believe that violent aggression is morally acceptable when it’s called “taxation,” “law enforcement” and “national defense.” Using yourself as an example, how many things have you voted to have government do to your neighbors, that you know you would have no moral right to do to them yourself?

Anarchy Is Reality: The fundamental principle of voluntaryism (a more specific term for anarchism) is very simple: it’s wrong to initiate violence against any other person, regardless of badges, laws or alleged authority. The only time the use of force is justified is to defend against aggression. The vast majority of people already understand this on a personal level, but they’ve been taught that this basic rule of social living does not apply when it comes to the game of politics and government. Without shame or guilt, everyone who votes asks the ruling class to do things to his neighbors which he knows would be wrong if he did them himself. Most people know how to get along, and want a peaceful and just society. Giving up the belief in government doesn’t suddenly turn someone into a violent animal, because our morality doesn’t come from legislation, and our ability to organize and cooperate doesn’t come from any ruling class. Our ability, right, and desire to be productive, to help

each other, to protect the innocent and to stop the wicked, does not come from government. In fact, it is threatened by government more than by anything else. Indeed, most injustice, oppression and strife—most of “man’s inhumanity to man”—is a direct result of authoritarian political power. Contrary to what politicians pretend, ruling classes do not produce peaceful co-existence. Instead, they intentionally cause perpetual conflict and violence, exploiting our compassion, virtue and good intentions, and turning them into wealth and power for the worst people in the world, while crushing the freedom and prosperity of everyone else. Of course, the people who benefit most from the political racket will do their best to convince you that it’s a social necessity. But ask yourself this: have the thousands of laws, regulations and taxes imposed upon you made you a better, more productive and more caring person? Is the world better off with the politicians taking your money and telling you how to live your life? Or would things be better if you were allowed to spend your own money and make your own decisions? Is society really best served by a small class of people forcibly imposing a centralized master plan on everyone else? Can the orders and threats of a ruling class make the world what it should be? Or would society be better served by freedom, a respect for individual rights, voluntary cooperation and peaceful organization? If this second option sounds better to you, maybe you should learn more about anarchism and voluntaryism. People are not perfect, and some are downright malicious and dangerous. And some people mistakenly view anarchism as a utopian idea that would only work if everyone were generous and compassionate. But if people are too stupid, greedy and malicious to be free, aren’t they also too stupid, greedy and malicious to be trusted with power? If you don’t trust some stranger to have control over his own life, why would you trust him to have control over yours? Whether people are inherently good, bad, or some of each, giving a small group of people power and control over everyone else is never the answer.

Can We Make Government Better? Many still insist, “We need government because people can’t be trusted!” as if government is anything other than people (some of the worst people around, in fact). And many still believe that obedience to authority is what makes us civilized, when in reality, it does the opposite. Far more evil has been committed in the name of “law” and “authority” than has been committed in spite of it. The ultimate irony is that most people are still desperately hoping to achieve a fair, just, free and prosperous society by way of the very institution that has been responsible for more theft, thuggery, extortion, terrorism, torture and murder than all others combined: “government.” Everyone knows that governments can be corrupt, abusive, inefficient, counter-productive, even tyrannical. But most people still assume that, if only the right people were in charge, that would fix the problem. But over and over again, regardless of who was in power, and regardless of the particular arrangement or structure of the political power—a democracy, a republic, a dictatorship, a collective, etc—history has demonstrated that power corrupts, and that freedom is far more conducive to peace and prosperity than any political solution ever has been, ever could be, or ever will be. People have spent centuries trying to create a good society using different kinds of ruling classes, different kinds of legal structures, different ways of choosing rulers, and so on. But without exception, every authoritarian governmental construction has resulted in freedom and riches for a small few, and oppression, violence and poverty for others. What if instead of deciding what the throne should look like, and who should sit on it, all people of good-will embraced the non-aggression principle? What if instead of looking to a ruling class to forcibly impose our values onto society, we embraced the concept of self-ownership?

Anarchy vs Government: In a nutshell, anarchists want you to have complete control over your choices, your money, and your life. As long as you are not using force or fraud to inflict harm onto others, they want you to have absolute freedom. All they ask is that you treat them the same way.

You own yourself. Your neighbor owns himself. Committing aggression is wrong. These principles are simple and obvious, to the point of being self-evident. And yet they are diametrically opposed to the authoritarian principles that most of us were taught. At the end of the day, you need to choose which you want: peaceful coexistence among equals (“anarchism”), or authoritarian domination, with some ruling over everyone else (“government”). The two are mutually exclusive. Despite what would-be rulers will always try to scare you into believing, anarchism does not mean chaos and violence, or every man for himself and having no government doesn’t mean having no morality, no organization and no cooperation. Simply put, anarchism means that no one is your master, and that no one is your slave. And that’s all it means. For a more thorough understanding of why a stateless society —based upon voluntary cooperation and organization rather than based upon government violence and authoritarian control—is the only moral or rational choice, read *The Most Dangerous Superstition*.

Notes from Cory Edmund Endrulat:

*From another perspective, slavery cannot be made better, it is wrong, and therefore, must be abolished (hence, the historic movement of “abolitionism” based on immediatism). It is a moral issue, and therefore writing it down and saying that it is “wrong” on a piece of paper and calling it “law” is not enough, it had to be known by the conscience of every human being. This means that instead of voting or changing laws, the only action necessary would be to educate or use what the “radical” Abolitionists called “moral suasion.” Abolitionists like Lysander Spooner recognized “political slavery” as being what ever created and maintained other forms of slavery to begin with, as correlated with the historical fact that the first form of “systemic” slavery was the first government, “Sumeria,” for which the rulers presumed the “divine right to rule.” Their rulership would begin by the use of capture in war, using physical violence (external, physical slavery) to demand compliance, and would more easily continue with the use of indoctrination for the belief in government (internal, mental slavery, ie. “statism” observed psychologically through the “Stanley Milgram experiments”) for obedience. The 19th Century Abolitionists recognized that the 18th Century American “founding fathers” embraced freedom from monarchy (kings and queens) after **thousands of years** but still upheld chattel slavery, therefore they took the next step in humanity’s evolution by ending chattel slavery after **thousands of years**, giving strong insights into the nature of continued political slavery within their writings. These events are rather recent in humanity’s modern history, and in following each other, especially with the advent of the printing press, media, technology and education at our fingertips. The history and operation of political slavery is also well detailed in “Discourse on Voluntary Servitude” by Etienne de la Boetie from the 16th century. It is evident that the next step for evolving humanity is to recognize the roots to all slavery and repeated tyranny, that is the belief in government (statism), to end “Democide,” and to embrace **true freedom** with voluntarism.*

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