

A Conversation With Andy, the Anarchist



Send him mail.

"Food for Thought" is an original column appearing every other Tuesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Norman Imberman. Norman is a retired podiatrist who loves playing piano, writing music, lawn bowling, bridge, reading, classical music, going to movies, plays, concerts and traveling. He is not a member of any social network, nor does he plan on becoming one. Archived columns can be found [here](#). FFT-only RSS feed available [here](#).

I am a libertarian anarchist. Three years ago I had a conversation with a guy named Andy, who proclaimed to be a libertarian anarchist too, while at the same time, stated that he believes in voting for the lesser of two evil politicians, especially if the lesser evil-one espouses small or limited government. As a result, he was embarking upon a course of promoting the Congressman, Gary Johnson to become President of the United States. Of course, I noticed the contradiction between the first part and the second part of his belief. It is obvious. So I asked to him to read Robert LeFevre's famous article "Abstain From Beans" and another article by Gary D. Barnett entitled "Voting: The God That Failed". Andy said he had read them a number of years ago. I brought the internal contradiction of his statement to his attention but he didn't care if it was a contradiction and came back with the following argument, and I quote Andy:

"Do you pay your property taxes? Do you have a driver's license? Do you have a US passport? If you answer yes to any of those (and my guess is you will to all three) then I would submit that you don't practice anarchy either. Why would you agree to such horrible things? Might it be because you are being coerced? Someone from the government will always be coercing us. That's a fact of life. Your choice is to live in an intellectual bubble, which is fine. I choose to work on having the least coercive person coercing us, and that process also helps to educate others about the benefits of a classical liberal society. I remain an Anarchist at heart, and always will be."

It seems to me that a) his response about paying property taxes, having a driver's license and having a passport is a *non sequitur*, and b) his response is without reason since the fact that I pay taxes, have a driver's license and have a US passport is no indication that it makes me a hypocrite. He seems to come to the conclusion that since I don't want to be harmed by the government by not paying taxes, etc, I am being just as untrue to my anarchistic beliefs as he is untrue to his. Such an argument is pure sophistry.

He went on to write: "I think I read those essays in my teens, and they continue to be sound in theory while having no real world application." Thus to him there is no correlation between principle and practice. In other words, he agrees with the true anarchist position in Principle but not in Practice. According to him, those who maintain a consistent anarchist position are "living in an intellectual bubble."

His reasoning is the same reasoning I have been hearing all of my anarchist life from Leftists, Rightists, Communists, Conservatives, Liberals, Democrats, Republicans, and other Statists and has been the excuse they have used to implement all of the governmental policies that have led us down the path to chaos and insecurity. So, my anarchist friend continues to support libertarian candidates and give very large donations to libertarian magazines and think tanks.

The only thing that I agree with is his belief that libertarians should try to educate the public about the benefits of a free society and how a free society would function if it came to fruition, but the argument does not follow that voting for the lesser of the evils will somehow enhance the libertarian educational process. There are better ways of educating the public without having to betray the anarchist ideology, such as through books, essays, articles, magazines, blogs, think tanks, lecture courses like V-50, live speeches and even anarchist-libertarian schools.

As an addendum to the views portrayed here, see the article by Skyler Collins, "The Law is Mere Risk", written last November.

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