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I was raised in a conservative home, in a conservative town, with some libertarian leanings. I grew up thinking the good old U.S. of A. was the land of the free and the home of the brave, and that "our" Constitution made us fundamentally different from every other country. I was a big proponent of "limited government" – meaning police and military, and not much else.

Back then I considered myself quite adept at explaining and arguing why collectivism and communism are immoral and irrational, and why "government" should have only a very limited role in "society." Since almost everyone was more pro-"government" than I was, I was almost always arguing *against* "government" doing this or that. I had little practice in rationally justifying "government" doing what I *did* want it to do.

But there was a problem. My arguments for why "government" should *not* be taking care of the poor, controlling education, running the health care system, and so on, applied equally well to the things I thought "government" *should* be doing. For example, if individual liberty was the moral and practical choice when it came to food production, why was it not the moral and practical choice when it came to protection and defense? If a welfare state forcibly robbing people in the name of fighting poverty was immoral and counter-productive, why was forcibly robbing people in the name of protecting them from thieves and invaders any better? Arguing "it's for your own good," or "it's necessary," or "the collective need justifies it," made me sound exactly like the communists I routinely railed against. And saying "The Constitution says so" was a complete cop-out, as if my philosophical position didn't need a rational basis as long as it matched what a sacred

piece of paper said.

I've enjoyed arguing for as long as I can remember. And whenever one engages in intellectual battle, the chinks in his armor will always be his *own* inconsistencies. I had made a hobby out of aiming for the giant holes of inconsistency in the "armor" of collectivist ideas (socialism, communism, democracy, etc.). And I wanted my own philosophical armor to be invincible. To put it another way, because I considered *the truth* to be what matters above all, and because the truth can't be inconsistent with itself, I wanted to make sure there were no contradictions or inconsistencies in my own belief system, and in what I was advocating. So I spent lots of time looking at my own philosophical "armor," and saw that it had some gaping holes in it – in other words, I saw that my philosophy *contradicted itself*. And that wasn't okay with me.

So I set out to remove those inconsistencies, no matter what. If my reverence for the Constitution got in the way of being principled and philosophically consistent, then the Constitution had to go. If "limited government" didn't fit with a coherent, rational, consistent set of principles, then it had to go, too. In short, I had to back up, past all of the "civics" stuff we were all taught, and start from scratch. What I found was very freeing, and very disturbing. I found that the entire mythology about "government," "authority" and "law" was nonsensical garbage. Despite the fact that the mythology was being repeated just about everywhere, by just about everybody, it made no sense at all, for a dozen different reasons.

I should mention that a lot of this examination and reconsidering was the result of my wife and me throwing ideas at each other. She's another one of those wacky people who want to know the truth – whatever it is – and who don't want to believe in lies and contradictions. Having both been "limited government" believers, over time we basically "corrupted" each other into becoming anarchists, eventually giving up the mythology of "government" entirely. (Don't talk or think too much, or the same thing might happen to you!)

Now, most of the anarchists I know gave up statism because they decided that, as a practical matter, a completely free society would work better than any "government"-controlled society, and that "government" is not really necessary. But I arrived at anarchism/voluntaryism by a different route: I figured out, via simple logic, that "government" is impossible. I don't mean that *good* "government" is impossible (though it is); I mean that the entire concept of "government" is a self-contradictory myth. There's no such thing, and can be no such thing. There can *never* be a legitimate ruling class, so arguing about *what kind* of ruling class we should have, or what it should do, was a completely pointless discussion. If "government" isn't real, debating what it should be like is silly.

Of course, the gang of mercenaries is very real, as are the politicians, but it is the

supposed *legitmacy* of their rule that makes them "government," and makes their commands "law," and makes disobedience to such commands "crime," and so on. Without the *right* to do what they do – without the moral right to rule – the gang ceases to be "government," and becomes organized crime.

By trying to reconcile contradictions in my own political beliefs, I proved to myself that "government" can *never* be legitimate. It can never have "authority." However necessary it supposedly is, and however noble the stated goal might be, I eventually realized that it is utterly impossible for anyone to acquire the right to rule others, even in a limited, "constitutional" way.

There are several ways to prove this, and each of them is astonishingly simple. For example, if a person cannot delegate a right he doesn't have, then it is impossible for those in "government" to have any rights that I do not personally have. (Where and how would they have acquired such super-human rights?) Furthermore, unless human beings can actually *alter* morality by mere decree, then all "legislation" is pointless and illegitimate. If one accepts the principle of non-aggression, then "government" is logically impossible, because a "government" without the right to tax, regulate, or legislate (which are all threats of aggression) is no "government" at all. And just as no one can have the right to rule me, I can never have any obligation to obey anyone's command over my own "conscience," which rules out any possibility of any outside "authority."

In short, I came to the conclusion that "government" is one big lie. It is a mythical, super-human deity which people hope will save them from reality. It is a superstition no more rational than the belief in Santa Claus, and infinitely more destructive. "Anarchy," meaning a lack of "government," isn't just what *should* be; it is what is, and what has always been. And by hallucinating an "authority" and a "government" that is not there, human beings have created an incomprehensible level of violence and oppression, covering the earth and stretching back to the beginning of recorded history.

So now I spend much of my time trying to persuade others to give up the cult of statism. I do not advocate abolishing "government" any more than I advocate abolishing Santa Claus. I just want people to stop letting their perceptions and actions be so profoundly warped and perverted by something that *does not exist*, and never did. That is why I refer to the belief in "government" and "authority" as "The Most Dangerous Superstition." If people could give up that superstition, even if they did not otherwise become any more wise or compassionate, the state of society would drastically improve. I don't pretend to have the ability to make anyone more virtuous, but by pointing out to them the contradictions in their own belief systems – the very same contradictions I struggled with for years – I hope to help some of them reclaim ownership of themselves, so they can start thinking and acting as rational, sentient beings, instead of as the well-trained livestock of malicious masters.