

The Civic Duty of an Anarchist

Ok, now I know what you're thinking. "The *civic* duty? Do you even anarchy, bro?" No, I get it. We're anarchists. We don't vote. We don't participate in elections. We think paying taxes is for schmucks, and actively look for ways to lessen how much we pay (if we pay at all *wink wink*), and generally, could not care less about the political process. It's corrupt, fake, and full of deception, pay-offs, theft, armed robbery, and murder. A wise philosopher once said "Government is the price we pay for being uncivilized." I get it. So how does an anarchist participate? *Should* an anarchist participate, even? Well, I think there are a number of ways that anarchists can engage the public, if we so choose (and we should).

Learn about policy watch groups, and/or interest groups. In the early part of 2015, I was an intern for one such group in Utah. This is a group where the president and founder is an Anarcho-Capitalist. But the group doesn't necessarily display that term. For some, the terms "anarchists" or "anarchy" conjure up Guy Fawkes masks, Molotov cocktail bombs, and rabble-rousers who really only want to install some form of communism. This founder is a smart person, and knowing this, decided that the best way for the organization to get their message out was to concentrate on the principles of liberty, private property, and self-governance. They hold workshops that inform the public on what they can do to make their community a better place, teach and apprise the public on what laws are going through the legislature - which ones are anti-liberty, which foster or sustain liberty, etc... - and generally work towards getting bills passed that, while allowing and protecting the freedom to choose to engage in a thing, also keep the government from banning it, or heavily regulating it. One such example was a bill the organization worked on that would've allowed for the consumption of raw milk in the state of Utah. The nanny state that Utah is decided that it was not in the best interest of regular Utahans to consume raw milk, and passed heavy regulations that all but eliminated it as natural competitor to store-bought, hormonally pumped faux-milk. But we were there, every step of the fight, trying to get these things shot down. And had many other successes along the way, and the group continues the fight now, on this, and other even more important issues.

Another way is to write. Write a book. A blog. At the moment, I write for two blogs. My own, and at everything-voluntary.com. I'm currently looking to be taken on by a third. Some people write books. The proprietor of Everything-Voluntary.com has written a number of books on Anarchy and Voluntarist related topics. The President of the aforementioned Policy Watch/Think-Tank I mentioned earlier has written extensively, both for adults and for children. Get in the habit of putting down your thoughts in journals, or posts on your computer. Even if you don't publish them right away, that's alright. But begin getting the creative juices flowing, and you may find that you're more persuasive than you originally thought. Also keep this in mind - for every Facebook argument you've involved yourself in,

is it possible to take the content and turn it into a blog post? Or a book chapter? How many of those arguments have you gotten into over the last couple of years? If it's more than 10, is your book finished yet? If not, get on it. If not a book, then do you have 10 blog posts up yet? If not, get on it. Another piece of advice I read once was that if you're going to have social media, and post updates, but not blog posts, you're wasting the potential. That Facebook or Twitter update should lead to a blog post. But if the status update is all you give, then you've wasted the opportunity to teach more in depth with a post. You may get that like or that thumbs up, but that's it. The goal is to change minds and win hearts. Not gain followers. This is how we engage. This is the "civic duty" of anarchists.

And this is, ultimately, the great myth of anarchy, at least according to the critics, and even some well-meaning, but ignorant proponents. Being an anarchist doesn't mean you cannot be involved in the political process. It just means that your focus is, generally, going to be on education, peaceful persuasion, ethical and truthful argumentation and refutation, and trying to create a society that values more freedom over more security. In whatever form that takes, self-aware anarchists have a duty to engage the public, at least if we want to get anywhere meaningful. Maybe not in the traditional "run for office" kind of way. But in owning a business. Writing a book. Learning about the true nature of politics and engaging politicians on a local level, where change is most felt, and more likely to occur positively. Or, even just writing a blog every now and then. This is the civic duty of an anarchist. Anarchists can no longer be content to just participate in meaningless Facebook arguments with statist. We have to get to a point where *action* is the primary focus, because the ultimate goal can only be reached if we're moving forward. Even incrementally. Although the context was slightly different, Heath Ledger's Joker character in the second Batman film said it best, in my opinion. (No, we aren't "agents of chaos." The government and its proponents are, however. I just want to highlight the idea. And the Joker makes a lot of great anarchy related points in this scene). We aren't looking to change the world via violent and immediate revolution. That's not feasible, nor is it necessary. We just want to "introduce a little anarchy." Help the public understand that politics is a game of "schemers," who want to keep you in shackles. To keep you slaves to their game. And they have the nerve to call it "civic duty." Let's do our part, and show them what the civic duty of an anarchist really is. Write your post, or your book. Start your business, or policy watch organization. Get on it.

Whatever it takes. Get on it.