

Voluntaryism – Don't Tread On Anyone



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If free people do nothing to fight for the freedom of everyone, then all will soon be enslaved. If those with even a modicum of freedom do not fight for every last inch they can gain back from the perilous grasp of tyranny, then tyranny will reign over all.

“Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph”

~ Thomas Paine, The American Crisis

Voluntaryists are those who are practicing the principles of non-aggression. [Voluntaryism](#) holds that all forms of human association should be voluntary.

Those practicing voluntaryism seek to interact with others only by mutual consent or not at all. Voluntaryism does not dictate specific actions to take, only that they are non-violent, non-coercive actions towards others.

It may be easier to define voluntaryist apophatically, by saying what they are not. They are not individuals who use or advocate the right to use violence against others. Meaning voluntaryist recognize that through your actions, you do not have the right to initiate force against another person or their property. Also, since one does not hold this right, they cannot delegate this right to any person or group of people properly. The initiation of force is always wrong, at all times and places everywhere in the universe.

This concept is known as the [Non-Aggression Principle](#) (NAP), considered to be a primary tenet of voluntaryism. The NAP is the concept that the use of force which brings harm to another person or their property is not a right that anyone holds.

Voluntaryists, however, are not pacifists. While they do respect the fact that you cannot rightfully initiate force, this does not mean that one does not hold the right to defend themselves. A person always has the right to self defense once aggression has been used against them. Once someone initiates aggression, whatever amount of force necessary to put down that aggression is within the victims right to use at that point.

“No one may threaten or commit violence (‘aggress’) against another man’s person or property. Violence may be employed only against the man who commits

such violence; that is, only defensively against the aggressive violence of another. In short, no violence may be employed against a nonaggressor. Here is the fundamental rule from which can be deduced the entire corpus of libertarian theory."

~Murray Rothbard. Cited from "War, Peace, and the State"

The use and initiation of force is always wrong, even though it occurs ubiquitously throughout governments and the institutions of control which are in place and have been in place for thousands of years. This form of violence is the most wide spread form of violence that exists in our world.

The wars, gang killings, terrorist bombings, mass shootings and so on do not account for the main sources of violence in our world. It is much more insidious than this. It is ignorance of the NAP by governments, mainly against their own citizens, which is the most prominent form of violence in our world. This tyranny of the mind, as well as the physical coercive aggression, amounts to a type of psychological aggression against one's whole being, which is being attacked on every level of the spectrum.

We only need to look at the [statistics of democide](#), the killing of people by their own governments, in the 20th century alone to see evidence of just some of the violence governments use on their own people.

"Human sickness is so severe that few can bear to look at it...but those who do will become well."

~Vernon Howard

Again, violation of the NAP does not only occur through murder, but is mainly done through the coercive force of the state on all citizens within their borders. In addition to this are the egregious foreign policy endeavors carried out on people all over the world by governments claiming to be conquering one evil or another, while leaving absolute destruction and chaos in their wake.

You cannot properly delegate the right to initiate force to a government, because you do not have this right to begin with. There is no possible way to grant a right that you don't have initially. You must have the right to initiate force in order to grant this right to governments, but you do not have this right. Therefore it is absolutely impossible to make the wrongness of initiating force into a right. Each and every person pretending they hold this right and then choose to act on this false belief can only manifest harm and chaos into reality.

"In debates between anarchists and statistis, the burden of proof clearly should rest on those who place their trust in the state. Anarchy's mayhem is wholly

conjectural; the state's mayhem is undeniably, factually horrendous."
~ Robert Higgs

When the majority of people are acting on a false belief system that does not align with reality, the overall conditions that will be present are those of pain and suffering. When people who do not understand the difference between right and wrong continue to remain in ignorance they can be controlled externally through their own imbalances being exploited.

Their fear and ignorance brings about the external forms of government that we see as the current condition of society. When a society is based in ignorance, fear, self-loathing, and internal imbalance, external government will reign in tyrannical fashion. There is an inescapable conclusion that can be drawn when one realizes what condition the current aggregate of humanity finds itself in.

[The Voluntaryist, a publication founded in 1982](#), promotes voluntaryism as nonviolent resistance and a method of civil disobedience:

"Voluntaryists are advocates of non-political, non-violent strategies to achieve a free society. We reject electoral politics, in theory and in practice, as incompatible with libertarian principles. Governments must cloak their actions in an aura of moral legitimacy in order to sustain their power, and political methods invariably strengthen that legitimacy. Voluntaryists seek instead to delegitimize the State through education, and we advocate withdrawal of the cooperation and tacit consent on which State power ultimately depends."

Voluntaryists are not just libertarians, they are libertarian anarchists. They do not support the existence of the state and do not hold that limited forms of government should exist because all forms of external governance are based in fear, control, ignorance and a violation of the NAP.



Let's look at the etymology of the word Voluntary:

From Middle English **voluntarie*, from Old French *volontaire*, from Latin *voluntārius* ("willing, of free will"), from *voluntās* ("will, choice, desire"), from *volēns*, present participle of *velle* ("to will").

Encompassed within the word voluntaryist is this concept of free will. The capacity to act on one's free will does not guarantee the agent of those actions will act in alignment with what is right. It does, however, recognize that the individual does maintain the right to act freely and can use their own will to take these actions.

Using the knowledge one gains from studying Libertarian philosophy, Natural Law, morality, and/or simply recognizing the basic underpinnings of nature itself, one can convert this knowledge into action voluntarily. Action based on knowledge gained is the synthesis of understanding and is what true wisdom is.

Dismantling the statist matrix is a project which can never rest in the presence of tyranny. Voluntaryist are the flaming torch of truth in the presence of lies. The agents of change have zero tolerance for the lie of the state. When we act in truth, virtue and principles, the alliance formed with the forces of nature cannot be discounted. The seeds of destruction are sown within the foundations of evil. Evil is the great opposer of reality, of truth - of that which is and that which cannot be destroyed.

A human being who understands their sovereignty and embodies this understanding by willfully deploying this knowledge through their actions cannot be enslaved.

The word **Sovereign** is derived from the Latin adverb *super* "above" And the Latin noun *regnum*: "rulership: control". Thus Sovereign means "one who is above the rulership or control of another". Sovereign means not a subject or a slave.



The one who understands they are sovereign, the one who is above the rulership or control of another, does not recognize using the political system as a vehicle for change because the political system operates through the control of people and their resources.

This external ruler always makes claims of ownership on "citizens" through mechanisms of taxation, regulation, and law enforcement of human "legislation". These are all false claims which violate the laws of nature and are only constructs in the human mind. They are not legitimate claims just because the vast majority of people believe them to be so.

Voluntaryist, through using concepts of non-violent action such as [Agorism](#), Counter-economics, political noncooperation, and methods of non-violent protest and persuasion are acting on the knowledge and understanding they have gained.

Again, acting on the knowledge we have acquired is what is known as **wisdom**. This is the process of consciously using will power to bring one's thoughts, emotions, and actions into alignment in an effort to make a positive change in one's own life and in the life of others.

"I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough. We must apply. Being willing is not enough. We must do."

~ Leonardo da Vinci

Using discernment on which actions to take and which fellow voluntaryist to network with is important. I do not discount the advantage of working alone as an anarchist. However,

systems of agorism through anarchists taking action which will likely involve other people is something we have to recognize as a powerful movement.

Where can we begin to act on our understanding, on the knowledge we have gained?

It's something that each person can take and ponder on as to where they can expand to incorporate more voluntaryism into their own lives. By practicing the principles of non-violence, peaceful parenting, the NAP, voluntaryism, and acting in freedom whenever and wherever we possibly can.

"I have often said that if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself. Non-violence is the means, the end for everyone is complete independence."
~ Mahatma Gandhi

The author and voluntaryist, Gene Sharp in his first book of the series, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, lays out six major nonviolent techniques which each have subcategories. I'll only list the main topic points here.

His major divisions are:

- 1) the methods of non-violent protest and persuasion
- 2) the methods of social non-cooperation; two methods of economic noncooperation
- 3) the economic boycott
- 4) the strike
- 5) the methods of political noncooperation
- 6) the methods of nonviolent intervention.

This list is obviously not all-inclusive. The possibilities for actions someone can take which are non-violent and help to promote the voluntaryist philosophy are endless. It is in our use of the word "NO" where we find the most power and can most clearly define what voluntaryism is. You can see in the above list that we can refuse to perform certain actions and thus take our power back and be very effective.

Most people already intend to practice voluntaryism in their relations with other people. However, the indoctrination of statism and the authoritarian model in general has skewed peoples understanding of their rights. We fail to see the cognitive dissonance and outright ignorance operating throughout societies and the majority of individuals within them.



In order to remain consistent, and in order to oppose the immorality of the state, the voluntaryist must stand in principles which have been discovered through the empirical evidence and knowledge gained through study.

Freedom can only exist when the people understand and live according to Natural Law

principles. True freedom cannot exist in a civilization that enshrines moral relativity.

If the pursuit of a free society is not based on the philosophical underpinnings of the universal principles of nature, the pursuit will fail. As this pursuit fails, the doorway to tyranny and more and more globalization of governance is left wide open.

If a person does not understand the objective difference between right and wrong, and thus chooses to act only for what is good for them in the moment, or what is “legal”, then that person will ultimately bring pain and suffering to themselves and others. Multiply these behaviors to extend to the majority of people living in a particular society, and you have a society which cannot be based in principles of freedom. It will ultimately descend into tyranny over the people in conditions of slavery.

That in our personal lives we respect the NAP, yet fail to extend this principle beyond our front door, is where we find the work to be done. To educate our fellow humans into understanding that they are bringing harm to themselves and others through their behavior.

Through the false belief system of statism, the person that does not realize their actions are causing harm is likely not intending to cause harm directly. However, good intentions are not enough and we all know which road those good intentions are paving a path to.

Voluntaryism seeks to dismantle the false belief system of the statist. The belief that some people have the right to use aggression against others. It is the belief that one can properly delegate a right that they do not have themselves, such as the right to enforce mandatory taxation. This is a right that no one person holds yet somehow they imagine they can delegate this right to a gang of people called “government”.

“If the natural tendencies of mankind are so bad that it is not safe to permit people to be free, how is it that the tendencies of these organizers are always good? Do not the legislators and their appointed agents also belong to the human race? Or do they believe that they themselves are made of a finer clay than the rest of mankind?”

- Frederic Bastiat