

Civic Religion Impedes Clear Thinking

Even I sometimes forget how thoroughly the religious belief in political “authority” mangles people’s ability to think. For example, a certain statist just expressed genuine confusion and bafflement when trying to comprehend this:

Sometimes I don’t want “A” to happen, and yet I don’t feel justified in using force (on my own or via “government”) to prevent “A” from happening.

To me, that’s a pretty simple concept. Yet statists often make arguments that show an inability to grasp the principle. For example:

- 1) “If you oppose the ‘war on drugs’ you must want everyone to be addicted!”
- 2) “If you oppose ‘gun control’ you must like people getting murdered!”
- 3) “If you oppose the welfare state you must want people to starve to death!”
- 4) “If you oppose public schools you must want everyone to be uneducated!”

Notice how neatly this one fits on the list, because it comes from a purely statist mindset and assumption:

- 5) “If you oppose closed borders, you must want a billion Muslims coming here!”

No, I don’t want everyone to be drug addicts, I don’t want more murder, I don’t want people starving, I don’t want everyone to be stupid, and I don’t want my neighborhood suddenly overrun with Muslims. *However*, I also know that initiating violence is wrong, and that force is only justified when used defensively against actual aggressors.

What’s somewhat surprising and discouraging is how many people can clearly grasp and express the concept when it comes to most things, but can suddenly abandon it when it comes to something *they* happen to be scared of.