

Guilty Statists?

How much guilt does the “average statist” have for their beliefs, and how much slack should we cut them?

I’ve been having an interesting discussion with Jim Henshaw, the former Chair of the Hawaiian LP, recently of regions closer.

He says I “*come across as a bit unforgiving at times*”. And, I can see that. I’m pretty sure this has caused me to lose followers and financial supporters. So, I asked his advice.

“...it throws me a bit when people label [a standard leftist bleeding heart] as the enemy, or as evil, or whatnot. It doesn’t comport with my observed reality that someone can be loving and have wonderful intentions and be, from my standpoint, dead wrong. They’re not the enemy, they just haven’t had their noses rubbed in the consequences of government coercion enough to overcome the programming and cognitive dissonance.”

So, I wondered what level of guilt the teen anti-gun activists have. They aren’t lawmakers or enforcers, after all, and many people see them as having “wonderful intentions”.

His response:

“I’d say the teen anti-gun activists are arguably almost as culpable as the people making policy, since they are stridently expending enormous energy to try to change public opinion and policy.”

In his reply, he expressed that he considered there to be *degrees of statist guilt*. His rankings of statist actions is:

“...on a scale from making policy, to implementing policy, to huge expenditures on a mass scale urging changes in policy, to making contributions in time or money to statists when asked to do so, to voting, to trying to force one’s opinions upon individuals they meet in

ordinary life, to volunteering opinions only when asked, to quietly keeping one's thoughts to oneself, to thoughtfully considering the point of view of people urging one not to violate the NAP, to thinking the NAP is morally correct but in the action at hand an exception is warranted, to actually consistently living by the NAP to the best of one's abilities and trying to detect where one has a blind spot about the NAP that needs to be fixed ... to you."

It was funny, because after I sent him the question, I started thinking how I would answer if I had been asked the same, and that's similar to the conclusion I had reached.

Now, I wouldn't place myself at the end like that, even though that's where I strive to be. I have many flaws. But my whole life has been an attempt to think about the "blind spots" I had. And I've found plenty of them over the years. When I find them, I try to get rid of them, and by doing so, I move closer to the "anarchy" part of the map. That has been the *oneconstant*.

But, back on topic, he offered:

"I would distinguish between people who are unaware of the immorality of their actions versus people who are aware of the immorality but persist in doing evil acts."

I try to do this. It's why I insist that *people* aren't evil; *actions* are. But, of course, people who keep choosing to commit evil are going to appear evil. And once you've pointed out the evil they are supporting, if they refuse to listen, but continue to promote evil, does their opportunity to claim innocence end? I am not certain.

He shared a couple of specific examples from his own life.

Regarding "taxation":

"I've tried time and time again in political discussions with my GF to show that there is no distinction between taxation and theft, and she just keeps saying they just ARE different and then shutting down the topic when I ask in what way are they different. She can't defend it,

but the cognitive dissonance has not reached the point where she will change her mind.”

And “borders”:

“I’ve gone a bit out of our way to drive her to where she could see the border into Mexico, and she was horrified at the physical evidence that we live in an open air low security prison. I think I also sowed some seeds of doubt when we headed back to Austin, hit an immigration checkpoint around 100 miles from the border, and I pointed out that we got sent to the cursory single question lane to the left, but that anyone looking latino was almost certainly being sent to the much longer and nastier line to the right, that the federal government was stealing her money to implement racist discriminatory treatment, which I think resonated with her since she’s black and had ancestors who were owned by plantation owners.”

So she’s not ready to accept the reality of what she promotes, but she has been exposed to the horrors and did seem to feel something about them. That’s a start, at least.

I’m probably always going to seem unforgiving toward statists, or at least toward any of their acts or views that are statist. I’m much “nicer” in person than online. I have to be considering I’m surrounded by statists every day, as you probably are, too. I don’t think I’m obligated to excuse statism any more than I’m obligated to look the other way when someone is being bullied any other way, but... maybe I could be nicer to convince them to stop advocating government violence against non-violent people.

And, on any given topic a person can be either in favor of statism or liberty, with the vast majority of us holding an unexamined jumble of such views — being nicer might help in filling up each person’s “Bucket O’ Freedom™”, drop by drop.

On the other hand, some people aren’t going to respond to coddling and need a figurative slap in the face to snap them into the reality of what it is they promote. Maybe this blog isn’t the place for those who want to be coddled (despite their Bucket O’ Freedom™ being as shot full of holes as a beat-up rusty bucket in the desert that has been used for target practice with an unregistered machine gun).

What do you think?