

Flag-Burning Fallacies

by Tony Wirebach, August 2015

A young social justice crusader protests outside the capitol building ... He steps on the flag, as a symbolic gesture of defiance to all that is wrong with America today.

Before long, a veteran walks by. He sees the Occupy Wall Street sympathizer, quickly walks over and punches him in the face. Teary-eyed and bloody-nosed, the protester picks himself up off the ground, screaming in righteous indignation, and says:

*"You can't do that! **I have a right to Free Speech!**"*

"But you don't believe in Free Speech."

"Yes I do! I have a right to have my grievances heard."

"Based on what?"

"-- Based on the Constitution of the United States of America!"

"But you don't like the Constitution, or the United States."

*"You don't know that! **How can you know what I think?** You don't know me."*

The veteran says "I know you hate America, because you just spit in her face. I know you reject the Constitution, because you just stepped on the symbol of its value to the country and its people. I know you hate the United States, because you just said you do, by your very own words and actions. "

"-- That doesn't give you the Right to punch me in the face!"

"But -- you don't believe in 'Rights.'"

"That's not true! I have a right to be heard! I have the freedom to protest --"

"Says who? "

"It's the Law!"

"Which law?"

"Federal Law!"

"How do you know it's Federal Law?"

"The Constitution says so."

"But you reject the Constitution. You said this country is evil. You said that America is bad. You stand on the flag as a symbol of your hatred of America, the Constitution and the Rule of Law that comes with it. You use Free Speech to criticize the system that exists to protect your right, among others, to be heard. By rejecting the symbol of that system, you reject the system itself. The Flag stands for Natural Rights. Law and Order. Representational Government. Virtue. Since you disparage the Flag, you must reject virtue itself. Since virtue requires that I NOT punch you in the face for no good reason, then I can only assume you actually WANT me to punch you. I'm just giving you what you want."

*"But that's not **fair**!"*

"Says who?"

"Everyone!"

"Oh, so you think that there are certain, unspoken 'truths' that all people can agree on? And since you chose to use destruction of the American Flag as a symbol of your disenchantment, you ignore the fact that the flag is representative of virtue as exercised through limited, but forceful government action. That such "collective" values are consistent throughout the system that flag represents are -- in your own words -- "fair" and obviously universal. Sounds a lot like *Equality before the Law*, another thing for which the American Flag and the Constitution stand. Since you stomp on the flag, you must think that equality before the law is not important. If it's not important, then what is 'fair'?"

"I'll sue!"

"But you don't believe in civil courts."

"I oughta call the cops. I'll press charges!"

"But you think the police are fascists. You reject the Flag, which represents the Constitution, which is foundational law, fostering all other laws, *which are **useless** in the absence of a practical means of enforcing them*. You burned the flag and you spit on the cops, and you cheered for those who injured or even killed policemen in the course of them doing their jobs ... now you reach out to policemen to protect your safety, when you were just recently claiming that their authority to use force to protect rights was invalid? *Why call the cops if you hate them so much?*"

"Because -- America sucks, man!"

"As compared to what? Would you be more free in Russia? Mexico? Saudi Arabia?"

"In Europe they have Free Health Care, Free Education -- "

"No, they don't. Nothing is free. In Europe, their economic system is over-taxed and suffering under the same burdens of debt and over-regulation. The European social safety net is making the European Union collapse under the weight of its own empty promises. And, Europe is

largely protected from outside invasion by Russia and other hostile nations by American Military strength -- and American Military virtue; America has traditionally been powerful enough to invade countries and bend them to our will, but we use force to *protect* people, not to *conquer* them. Do people hide behind the French flag for protection? The Russian Flag? The Argentinian flag?"

"America is an Imperialist Nation!"

"No, it's not. America spends much, much more money protecting other countries than it takes from them in the spoils of war. There is no profit in it for the U.S., but when the U.S. fails to act against military aggression abroad, who else will step up in her place? No one. The more bad things happen, the more bad things will follow. Failing to respond to military threats abroad has led to much more tragedy overseas than not. "

"You're a fascist! You must be a Neo-Con... "

"No, I'm not, but what do you care? You hate the flag, therefore you hate America. American resists fascism, but you resist American values. I guess that makes YOU the fascist. "

"Nuh-Uh!!"

"Good point. I rest my case ... "