

Why Would We Consult Legislators to Know When Aggression is Justified?

How many anarchists believe that, in order to know the proper, moral way to treat another human being, you have to search through many pages of “legislation” passed by politicians? I’m guessing ... none. Morality does not depend upon, and is not altered by, bureaucrats writing crap down.

Likewise, I think it’s silly to think that in any situation I need to consult some central committee in order to know if it’s justified to use physical force against a certain person. Yes, I might need to know what the person has done, or has threatened to do, and I might have to go to someone else to get such information. If someone has proof that some guy has murdered a bunch of people, that is relevant to whether it would be justifiable for me to forcibly capture the guy. But of course, the non-aggression principle dictates that the default has to be assuming that violence is NOT okay, unless and until there is specific evidence of threats or aggression committed by the person.

So when someone suggests that the morality or immorality of the use of force against a certain individual depends upon looking up some central registry’s documents about the person’s citizenship, his tax returns, whether he has a written invitation to be in the country, or whether someone has paid liability insurance on him, etc., that just strikes me as obviously bogus and obviously statist. If I need to consult some politburo to know how I should behave, something is horribly wrong. And if other people think I’m obligated to do so, something is horribly wrong with their view of reality.