

Any Penalty Which is Not Restorative is Aggression

I oppose the death penalty. I oppose incarceration. I oppose involuntary commitment. I oppose fines paid to the state. The only “penalty” I support is making restitution to one’s victims in the case that they suffered real and articulable harm as a direct result of one’s actions.

Why do I hold these positions? Because any penalty which is not restorative in nature is itself aggression—a new crime—which is not negated or justified by the past bad acts of this aggressor’s victim. Violence is not made right by more violence. Victims are not made whole through the victimization of someone else.

It has been correctly observed that “an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind,” yet this is the basic philosophy of what passes for “justice” in most of the world. Humanity can do better. It can evolve beyond the base desire for revenge. Peace is an attainable goal, but the first step is forsaking the desire to inflict pain. Until we do, the violence and hostility will only continue to escalate.