Lysander Spooner quotes

“***Those who are capable of tyranny are capable of perjury to sustain it***.”

― Lysander Spooner

“***A man is no less a slave because he is allowed to choose a new master once in a term of years***.”

― LYSANDER SPOONER

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“***But whether the Constitution really be one thing, or another, this much is certain - that it has either authorized such a government as we have had, or has been powerless to prevent it. In either case it is unfit to exist***.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

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“And yet we have what purports, or professes, or is claimed, to be a contract—the Constitution—made eighty years ago, by men who are now all dead, and who never had any power to bind us, but which (it is claimed) has nevertheless bound three generations of men, consisting of many millions, and which (it is claimed) will be binding upon all the millions that are to come; but which nobody ever signed, sealed, delivered, witnessed, or acknowledged; and which few persons, compared with the whole number that are claimed to be bound by it, have ever read, or even seen, or ever will read, or see.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

“***If taxation without consent is not robbery, then any band of robbers have only to declare themselves a government, and all their robberies are legalized***.”

― Lysander Spooner

tags: anarchy, freedom, libertarian, liberty, philosophy, statism, theft, voluntaryism47 likesLike

“A man's natural rights are his own, against the whole world; and any infringement of them is equally a crime; whether committed by one man, or by millions; whether committed by one man, calling himself a robber, or by millions calling themselves a government.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

tags: crime, government, natural-rights, no-treason, robery35 likesLike

“***The fact is that the government, like a highwayman, says to a man: Your money, or your life...The government does not, indeed, waylay a man in a lonely place, spring upon him from the road side and, holding a pistol to his head, proceed to rifle his pockets. But the robbery is none the less a robbery on that account; and it is far more dastardly and shameful. The highwayman takes solely upon himself the responsibility, danger, and crime of his own act. He does not pretend that he has any rightful claim to your money, or that he intends to use it for your own benefit***. He does not pretend to be anything but a robber...Furthermore, having taken your money, he leaves you as you wish him to do. He does not persist in following you on the road, against your will; assuming to be your rightful 'sovereign,' on account of the 'protection' he affords you.”

― Lysander Spooner

tags: anarchy, freedom, liberty, state, statism, taxes, voluntaryism28 likesLike

“That no government, so called, can reasonably be trusted, or reasonably be supposed to have honest purposes in view, any longer than it depends wholly upon voluntary support.”

― LYSANDER SPOONER

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“***If any man's money can be taken by a so-called government, without his own personal consent, all his other rights are taken with it; for with his money the government can, and will, hire soldiers to stand over him, compel him to submit to its arbitrary will, and kill him if he resists***.”

― Lysander Spooner

tags: aggression, anarcho-capitalism, anarchy, ancap, austrian-school-of-economics, coercion, collectivism, communism, force, free-market, freedom, gang, government, initiation-of-force, laissez-faire, libertarian, liberty, mafia, non-aggression-principle, socialism, statism, theft, violence, voluntaryism, welfare-state24 likesLike

“***If the jury have no right to judge of the justice of a law of the government, they plainly can do nothing to protect the people against the oppressions of the government; for there are no oppressions which the government may not authorize by law***.”

― Lysander Spooner

tags: anarchism, lysander-spooner, oppression24 likesLike

“No man can rightfully be required to join, or support, an association whose protection he does not desire.”

― Lysander Spooner

tags: anarcho-capitalism, anarchy, ancap, austrian-economics, austrian-school-of-economics, coercion, collectivism, free-market, freedom, government, libertarian, liberty, statism, voluntary, voluntaryism20 likesLike

“The Constitution says: "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." The meaning of this is simply We, the people of the United States, acting freely and voluntarily as individuals, consent and agree that we will cooperate with each other in sustaining such a government as is provided for in this Constitution. The necessity for the consent of "the people" is implied in this declaration. The whole authority of the Constitution rests upon it. If they did not consent, it was of no validity. Of course it had no validity, except as between those who actually consented. No one's consent could be presumed against him, without his actual consent being given, any more than in the case of any other contract to pay money, or render service. And to make it binding upon any one, his signature, or other positive evidence of consent, was as necessary as in the case of any other-contract. If the instrument meant to say that any of "the people of the United States" would be bound by it, who did not consent, it was a usurpation and a lie. The most that can be inferred from the form, "We, the people," is, that the instrument offered membership to all "the people of the United States;" leaving it for them to accept or refuse it, at their pleasure.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

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“***The only idea they have ever manifested as to what is a government of consent, is this--that it is one to which everybody must consent, or be shot***.”

― Lysander Spooner

tags: anarchy, brutality, coercion, force, free-society, freedom, government, libertarian, liberty, social-contract, statism, violence, voluntaryism17 likesLike

“...only those who have the will and the power to shoot down their fellow men, are the real rulers in this, as in all other (so-called) civilized countries; for by no others will civilized men be robbed, or enslaved.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

13 likesLike

“***A man is none the less a slave because he is allowed to choose a new master once in a term of years. Neither are a people any the less slaves because permitted periodically to choose new masters. What makes them slaves is the fact that they now are, and are always hereafter to be, in the hands of men whose power over them is, and always is to be, absolute and irresponsible***.6”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

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“Vices are those acts by which a man harms himself or his property. Crimes are those acts by which one man harms the person or property of another. Vices are simply the errors which a man makes in his search after his own happiness. Unlike crimes, they imply no malice toward others, and no interference with their persons or property.”

― Lysander Spooner, Vices Are Not Crimes

11 likesLike

“To say that majorities, as such, have a right to rule minorities, is equivalent to saying that minorities have, and ought to have, no rights, except such as majorities please to allow them.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

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“One essential of a free government is that it rest wholly on voluntary support. And one certain proof that a government is not free, is that it coerces more or less persons to support it, against their will. All governments, the worst on earth, and the most tyrannical on earth, are free governments to that portion of the people who voluntarily support them. And all governments—though the best on earth in other respects—are nevertheless tyrannies to that portion of the people—whether few or many—who are compelled to support them against their will. A government is like a church, or any other institution, in these respects. There is no other criterion whatever, by which to determine whether a government is a free one, or not, than the single one of its depending, or not depending, solely on voluntary support.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

10 likesLike

“So these villains, who call themselves governments, well understand that their power rests primarily upon money. With money they can hire soldiers, and with soldiers extort money. And, when their authority is denied, the first use they always make of money, is to hire soldiers to kill or subdue all who refuse them more money.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

9 likesLike

“***No middle ground is possible on this subject. Either "taxation without consent is robbery," or it is not. If it is not, then any number of men, who choose, may at any time associate; call themselves a government; assume absolute authority over all weaker than themselves; plunder them at will; and kill them if they resist***.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

9 likesLike

“If there be such a principle as justice, or natural law, it is the principle, or law, that tells us what rights were given to every human being at his birth; what rights are, therefore, inherent in him as a human being, necessarily remain with him during life; and, however capable of being trampled upon, are incapable of being blotted out, extinguished, annihilated, or separated or eliminated from his nature as a human being, or deprived of their inherent authority or obligation.”

― Lysander Spooner

tags: anarchy, ancap, first-principles, freedom, libertarian, liberty, philosophy, principles, society, voluntaryism9 likesLike

“***The pretense that the "abolition of slavery" was either a motive or justification for the war, is a fraud of the same character with that of "maintaining the national honor." Who, but such usurpers, robbers, and murderers as they, ever established slavery? Or what government, except one resting upon the sword, like the one we now have, was ever capable of maintaining slavery? And why did these men abolish slavery? Not from any love of liberty in general—not as an act of justice to the black man himself, but only "as a war measure," and because they wanted his assistance, and that of his friends, in carrying on the war they had undertaken for maintaining and intensifying that political, commercial, and industrial slavery, to which they have subjected the great body of the people, both black and white***.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

8 likesLike

“A government that can at pleasure accuse, shoot, and hang men, as traitors, for the one general offence of refusing to surrender themselves and their property unreservedly to its arbitrary will, can practice any and all special and particular oppressions it pleases.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

7 likesLike

“And the whole power of the government must be limited to the maintenance of that single principle. And that one principle is justice. There is no other principle that any man can rightfully enforce upon others, or ought to consent to have enforced against himself. Every man claims the protection of this principle for himself, whether he is willing to accord it to others, or not. Yet such is the inconsistency of human nature, that some men—in fact, many men—who will risk their lives for this principle, when their own liberty or property is at stake, will violate it in the most flagrant manner, if they can thereby obtain arbitrary power over the persons or property of others.

***We have seen this fact illustrated in this country, through its whole history—especially during the last hundred years—and in the case of many of the most conspicuous persons. And their example and influence have been employed to pervert the whole character of the government. It is against such men, that all others, who desire nothing but justice for themselves, and are willing to unite to secure it for all others, must combine, if we are ever to have justice established for any***.”

― Lysander Spooner, A Letter to Grover Cleveland On His False Inaugural Address, The Usurpations and Crimes of Lawmakers and Judges, and the Consequent Poverty, Ignorance, and Servitude Of The People

tags: justice-for-all6 likesLike

“***Still another reason why the payment of taxes implies no consent, or pledge, to support the government, is that the taxpayer does not know, and has no means of knowing, who the particular individuals are who compose "the government***." To him "the government" is a myth, an abstraction, an incorporeality, with which he can make no contract, and to which he can give no consent, and make no pledge. He knows it only through its pretended agents. "The government" itself he never sees.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

5 likesLike

“Not knowing who the particular individuals are, who call themselves "the government," the taxpayer does not know whom he pays his taxes to. All he knows is that a man comes to him, representing himself to be the agent of "the government"—***that is, the agent of a secret band of robbers and murderers, who have taken to themselves the title of "the government," and have determined to kill everybody who refuses to give them whatever money they demand***.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

4 likesLike

“Still another and all-sufficient answer to the argument that the use of spirituous liquors tends to poverty, is that, as a general rule, it puts the effect before the cause. It assumes that it is the use of the liquors that causes the poverty, instead of its being the poverty that causes the use of the liquors.”

― Lysander Spooner, Vices Are Not Crimes: A Vindication

tags: addiction, alcoholism, anarcho-capitalism, anarchy, drug-use, poverty4 likesLike

“***A man's natural rights are his own, against the whole world; and any infringement of them is equally a crime, whether committed by one man, or by millions; whether committed by one man, calling himself a robber, (or by any other name indicating his true character,) or by millions, calling themselves a government***.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

4 likesLike

“***Let me then remind you that justice is an immutable, natural principle; and not anything that can be made, unmade, or altered by any human power. It is also a subject of science, and is to be learned, like mathematics, or any other science. It does not derive its authority from the commands, will, pleasure, or discretion of any possible combination of men, whether calling themselves a government, or by any other name***.

It is also, at all times, and in all places, the supreme law. And being everywhere and always the supreme law, it is necessarily everywhere and always the only law.”

― Lysander Spooner, ***A Letter to Grover Cleveland On His False Inaugural Address***, The Usurpations and Crimes of Lawmakers and Judges, and the Consequent Poverty, Ignorance, and Servitude Of The People

tags: inalienable-rights4 likesLike

“***It is with government, as Caesar said it was in war, that money and soldiers mutually supported each other; that with money he could hire soldiers, and with soldiers extort money***.”

― Lysander Spooner, No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority.