

The State – useful quotes

In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no instruments of moving, and removing of things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short.

Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651)

The philosophers, who have inquired into the foundations of society, have all felt the necessity of going back to a state of nature, but not one of them has got there...Every one of them, in short, constantly dwelling on wants, avidity, oppression, desires, and pride, has transferred to the state of nature ideas which were acquired in society; so that, in speaking of the savage, they described the social man

Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1754)

It is this compassion that hurries us without reflection to the relief of those who are in distress: it is this which in a state of nature supplies the place of laws, morals and virtues, with the advantage that none are tempted to disobey its gentlest voice. It is this which will always prevent a sturdy savage from robbing a weak child or a feeble old man of the sustenance they may have with pain and difficulty acquired, if he sees a possibility of providing for himself by other means.

Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1754)

To be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied upon, directed, legislated, regimented, closed in, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, assessed, evaluated, censored, commanded, all by creatures that have neither the right nor wisdom nor virtue.... To be governed means that at every move, operation, or transaction, one is noted, registered, entered in a census, taxed, stamped, priced, assessed, patented, licensed, authorized, recommended, admonished, prevented, reformed, set right, corrected. Government means to be subjected to tribute, trained, ransomed, exploited, monopolized, extorted, pressured, mystified, robbed, all in the name of public utility and the general good. Then at the first sign of resistance or word of complaint, one is repressed, despised, vexed, pursued, hustled, beaten up, garroted, imprisoned, shot, machine gunned, judged, sentenced, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed, and to cap it all, ridiculed, mocked, outraged, and dishonoured. That is government, this is its justice and morality!

Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* (1851)