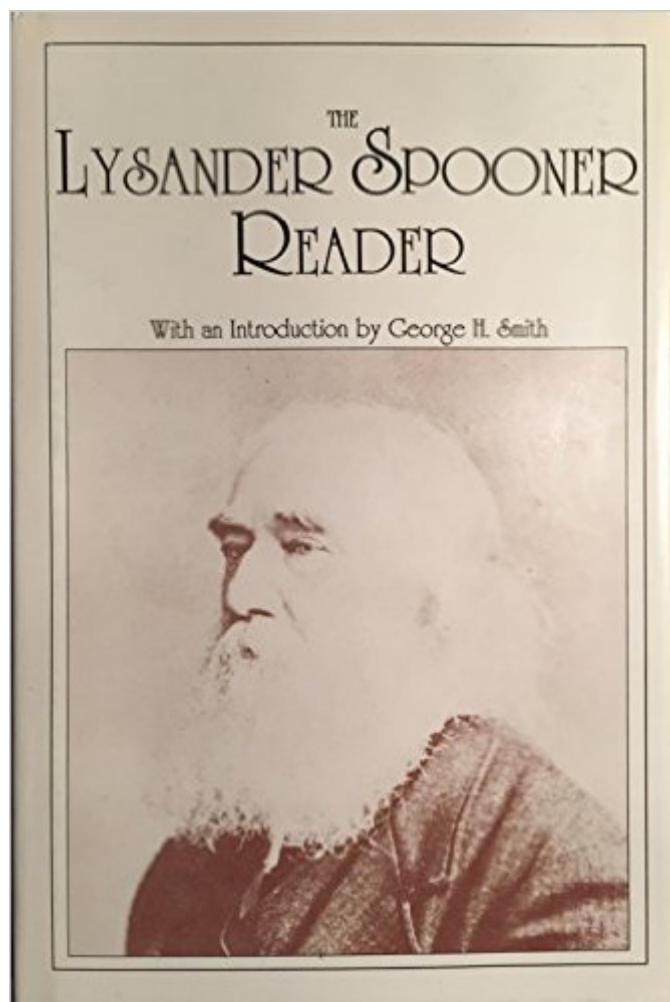


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The Lysander Spooner Reader



Synopsis

Lawyer, abolitionist, radical; Spooner was one of the most fascinating figures in American history and a champion of individualism. This selection includes "Vices Are Not Crimes," "Natural Law," "Trial by Jury," "No Treason, the Constitution of No Authority," "Letter to Thomas Bayard," and Benjamin Tucker's eulogy. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

This edition contains:1. A short introduction by George Smith that includes a thumbnail biographical sketch of Spooner's life. It's a good bio but a better one can be found in THE COLLECTED WORKS OF LYSANDER SPOONER, a more complete but hugely more expensive collection of Spooner's work.2. OUR NESTOR- Benjamin Tucker's eulogy for Spooner, written in 1887. A short, touching farewell to a friend and fellow anarchist.3. NATURAL LAW- Spooner says: "Natural Law [...] is naturally applicable and adequate to the rightful settlement of every possible controversy that can arise among men." Spooner envisions a stateless society built on natural law and voluntary associations. He has plenty of venom for 'legislators', calling all governments "a band of robbers who have associated for purposes of plunder, conquest, and the enslavement of their fellow men."4. VICES ARE NOT CRIMES: A VINDICATION OF MORAL LIBERTY- An amazingly forward looking critique of consensual or victimless crime laws(keep in mind this was written in 1875!). As Spooner says, "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."5. & 6. NO TREASON No. I & II- "No

Treason" is a series of pamphlets that Spooner published shortly after the Civil War. He was a staunch abolitionist but also believed that the south had the right to secede from the union and authored this series to prove that confederates were not traitors to the union because they never owed it any allegiance. Numbers 3, 4, and 5 were never published and the manuscripts(if they ever existed) were destroyed in a fire.7. NO TREASON No.

It just so happens that the day I write this review is not only Constitution Day (the anniversary of the US Constitution being sent to the states for ratification), but also primary election day here in Seattle. That means there's no better day to re-read the works of Lysander Spooner -- a writer who, perhaps more than any other, can single-handedly change the way you look at both the Constitution and voting. This collection is the place to do that, including as it does nearly all of Spooner's most important work: "No Treason" (with "The Constitution of No Authority"), "Vices are not Crimes," "Trial by Jury," and his "Letter to Thomas F. Bayard." Lysander Spooner was a fascinating man in his own right, as both the Introduction by editor George Smith and the first chapter, "Our Nestor Taken From Us," an obituary by Benjamin Tucker, make clear. Individualist anarchist, abolitionist, scholar, pamphleteer, radical -- it's a shame this Forgotten Hero is so obscure today. But given the skill and passion with which he slaughtered, barbecued, and served up America's most sacred cows, it's hardly surprising. It's a rare, almost forbidden, treat to find an original thinker any more. As Smith notes in his introduction, it's easy to envy someone reading Spooner for the first time the thought-provoking challenge she's about to experience. Doctrinaires of the left and the right will be horrified by what they read between these pages. And those who still parrot the Received Wisdom of their junior-high "social studies" teachers (it's your duty to vote ... if you don't vote, you can't complain ... in a democracy, the people govern themselves ... "taxes are the price we pay for a civilized society" ...

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