



## Statism and Anarchy (Texts in the History of Political Thought)

*Mikhail Bakunin , Marshall S. Shatz (Editor) , Raymond Geuss (Editor)*

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Written in the 1873 aftermath of the rise of the German Empire and the clash with Karl Marx in the first International, the great Russian anarchist's last work had an immediate influence on the to the people movement of Russian populism.

## Statism and Anarchy (Texts in the History of Political Thought) Details

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## From Reader Review Statism and Anarchy (Texts in the History of Political Thought) for online ebook

### Craig Bolton says

Bakunin: Statism and Anarchy (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought) by Michael Bakunin (1990)

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### Zander says

The first section, *Critique of the Marxist Theory of the State*, articulates many of the same thoughts I had when I read the Communist Manifesto (though probably more eloquently than I could have done myself). If you're as much of a nerd as I am, you can almost find Bakunin's takedown of Marx funny. It's sort of like the political philosophy equivalent of a diss track.

The second and third sections of the work are more difficult for a twenty-first century reader to relate to as they serve primarily to analyze the social and economic situations in nineteenth century Italy and Russia, but some of the ideas could still be applied to an analysis of many modern countries.

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### Gary Gautier says

Statism and Anarchy offers a collectivist anarchy, an anti-capitalist communal vision that emerges within the Marxist/socialist orbit but pitted against Marx's reliance on a statist transitional period. Bakunin sees an "anarchist social revolution" as "an elemental force sweeping away all obstacles. Later, from the depths of the popular soul, there will spontaneously emerge the new creative forms of social life." This sounds a little like the 1960s Age of Aquarius, but Bakunin remains, like Marx, economics-centric and reliant on violent upheaval over pacifist incrementalism. He is still in the age of homo economicus, which began perhaps with Adam Smith and which I suspect the hippies were trying to see past.

The attacks on Marx's "statist" phase for its inherent contradictions ring true. The so called proletarian elite, "the Communist party, meaning Mr. Marx and his friends," will be just like old elite statist. This is well-argued, borne out by history, and most coolly captured by The Who in the 1971 song, "We Don't Get Fooled Again."

But Bakunin seems to have his own contradictions to wrestle with. Unlike the Marxists on one side or capitalists on the other, Bakunin does not want to "thrust upon our own or any other people any scheme of social organization." And yet he needs some kind of general superstructure. He even admits that "the principal evil which paralyzes the Russian people, and has up till now made a general uprising impossible, is the closed rural community, its isolation and disunity." On the one hand, he seems in principle committed to total local autonomy, and yet without some larger superstructure, the local unit gets wiped out, as Bakunin himself complains in regard to experimental pacifist communes like New Icaria. As much as he reviles any stage of statist superstructure, it's not clear to me that he has figured out a way around it, at least during some revolutionary transition phase, and then in perpetuity if his collectivist anarchy is not global and thereby free from external threats.

Now, 150 years after Marx and Bakunin, it might also seem like overthrowing a government is easy compared to dismantling the powerful multinational formations of capitalism. Autonomous anarchist collectives sound great, but how can they overcome these gigantic formations of wealth and power without aggregating themselves into something like a statist block with enough concentrated power to rattle those formations? The hippies perhaps struggled with this and lost. But might the grass-roots collectivist anarchy of the hippies, refueled by the decentralized energies of social media, come back again with greater force next time? May the Age of Aquarius be rising still?

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### **Loránd says**

A poignant critique of the state, and of the marxists movement that sought to bring about the economic emancipation of the working people by first acquiring state power. Bakunin argued that said emancipation cannot happen without also abolishing state power. He fervently insisted that any measure, in lieu of contesting all structures of power, would lead to a crippling state bureaucracy, and inevitable dictatorship over the working class, not by the working class.

This prediction has certainly been proven to be as such.

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### **Nicholas Bobbitt says**

The editor does an excellent job of prefacing the book, explaining that it was unfinished and giving context to Bakunin.

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### **Miguel says**

<http://mglmoreno.com/2013/08/28/estat...>

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### **Dario Varese says**

“Stato e Anarchia”, di Michail Bakunin, titolo originale:”???????????????? ? ??????” (wikipedia), traduzione di Nicole Vincileoni e Giovanni Corradini, edizioni Feltrinelli, ISBN 978-88-07-88229-6.

Si tratta di un classico della letteratura politica, scritto nella seconda metà del 1800 (venne pubblicato per la prima volta in forma anonima nel 1873); in esso l’Autore propone la sua visione rivoluzionaria che auspica e promuove una società totalmente destrutturata, supportata dalla spinta aggregativa dal basso e sorretta da una forte volontà federativa. Queste “società”, per Bakunin devono essere al di fuori del controllo degli stati che, possibilmente, devono essere aboliti, come deve essere eliminata ogni forma di gerarchia di sangue o di classe. Si tratta quindi di applicare l’“anarchica” (anarchia = priva di leader/governante), in esplicita contrapposizione con le organizzazioni statali e sociali costruite su strutture gerarchiche e verticistiche e in antitesi ideologica rispetto al clima dell’epoca che vedeva prevalere l’ideale nazionale e nazionalista rispetto a posizioni maggiormente universaliste.

Un'opera che giudico molto interessante, anche se, ammetto, mi aspettavo qualcosa di molto diverso. In effetti l'Autore, in fondo, non si sofferma molto a spiegare nei dettagli la sua idea. Ciò probabilmente è dovuto al fatto che l'ideale anarchico, per quanto accattivante, risulta per definizione un po' vago e caratterizzato da molteplici interpretazioni e applicazioni che, tra l'altro, risultano difficili da mettere in pratica.

La parte preponderante del saggio è invece dedicata ad una pignola analisi della situazione europea del tardo periodo ottocentesco. Insieme ad essa viene fornita, non solo una chiave di lettura per spiegare le ragioni di successo o di insuccesso dei molti moti insurrezionali che caratterizzarono il diciannovesimo secolo, ma anche una serie di previsioni riguardo al futuro che, bisogna ammettere, si riveleranno ex-post abbastanza azzeccate.

Nel saggio viene infatti prefigurata la lotta per l'egemonia fra Stati che vedrà contrapporre la nascente nazione tedesca alle altre potenze europee, Russia e Francia in testa.

Per l'Autore il protagonista assoluto di tale ascesa è il cancelliere Otto Von Bismark, per carattere e obiettivi, quasi l'opposto di Bakunin ma tuttavia da questi molto ammirato, non fosse per altro che in virtù della coerenza mostrata in relazione al conseguimento dei propri obiettivi politici. Bismark finirà per realizzare, come da suo programma, uno stato germanico forte e centralizzato sotto la guida della Prussia ... e ciò, in estrema sintesi, sarà uno dei fattori scatenanti di ben due conflitti mondiali!

Altro elemento interessante che emerge dal saggio è la consapevolezza della contrapposizione ideologica che esiste fra l'ideale anarchico e il marxismo allora nascente e che finirà per tradursi negli assetti politici e ideologici del "comunismo". Bakunin individua subito quello che per lui è il peccato originale di tale ideologia, cioè l'obiettivo di creare la "dittatura del proletariato" sulle basi di una forte gerarchia statale retta da una élite che si attribuisce il ruolo di decidere e governare per il bene del popolo.

Bakunin non crede a questa pretesa e la storia gli darà ragione.

Egli infatti, in estrema sintesi sostiene due cose:

- Solo il popolo sa qual è il proprio "bene" e solo la sua libera iniziativa dal basso può tradursi in realizzazioni pratiche finalizzate a conseguirlo.
- Nessun tipo di élite, per quanto ben intenzionata può sostituirsi al popolo al fine di governarlo senza che questo finisca per trasformarne i membri in una classe privilegiata e tirannica.

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## Mohammed says

Essential reading for any anarchist!

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## Ikiryō says

A wonderful insight in 19th century European politics, blended with a raging critique of Marxism.

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## Syd says

I read an abridged version and was left wanting more. This was the first time i read anything by Bakunin which is slightly embarrassing considering his place in history. Bakunin was Marx's greatest adversary within the International Workingman's Association. Eventually Marx had Bakunin kicked out of the International by popular vote. History they don't teach you in school!

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### **John Nada says**

Bakunin expresa su pensamiento acerca del porque es necesaria la abolición del Estado y de una manera que denota mucho la situación en la que se encontraba. El libro parece una recopilación de sus pensamientos volcados en 200/300 paginas, en las que a veces deambula por la política, por la historia, por la filosofía, etc. Pero eso no significa que no esté centrado, aunque de a ratos así parezca, al terminarlo nos damos cuenta de que entendimos totalmente lo que el quería demostrarnos y que toda la ida y vuelta, fue un camino necesario. La creación del Estado Pangermánico es uno de los temas centrales, y el principal ejemplo que utiliza para probar lo desastroso que es el poder estatista, ya sea enmascarado por la idea del proletariado tomando el poder de este para el "pueblo", o bajo cualquier otro disfraz de supuesta libertad, que lo único que logra es crear siempre una nueva burguesía, que una vez llegada al poder se corromperá como es común en el ser humano. Criticando entonces fuertemente no solo a los socialistas, sino a cualquier movimiento que se oponga contra los ideales anarquistas.

“Abolición de todos los Estados, destrucción de la civilización burguesa, libre organización de abajo a arriba por medio de las asociaciones libres, organización del lumpen proletariado, de toda la humanidad liberada, creación de un mundo humano. “

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### **Shayan says**

"If there is a State, there must be domination of one class by another and, as a result, slavery; the State without slavery is unthinkable — and this is why we are the enemies of the State."

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### **Simone says**

La dottrina marxista Ã - a dispetto dell'etichettatura di "materialismo storico" - pura teoria. Egregia critica economica, ma insensata proposta politica.

Bakunin delinea perfettamente i futuri fallimenti dello sviluppo del comunismo marxista, proprio a partire dalle sue contraddizioni mai sanate.

La storia (URSS, Cina, Cuba e tutti gli altri regimi comunisti) gli ha dato ragione. Pienamente. Sarebbe ora di riconoscerlo piÃ spesso, e di non dimenticare un'analisi che ancora oggi resta attuale, nella sua parte di concettualizzazione del conflitto sociale e dello statalismo. Fa rabbrivire vedere come i problemi di oggi siano conseguenza diretta di quelli mai risolti dei primi anni di vita dello stato-nazione.

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### **Said Agung says**

Terjemahannya sedikit sulit dipahami - penasaran sama yang edisi inggris. Tapi ide pemikiran Bakunin di sini sangat layak dan mencerahkan meskipun terengah-engah membacanya.

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## Mustafa Do?ruo?lu says

the book has a lot of nice agitation, and observation to mid 19th century. must read by any person who interested in theoretical anarchism, IWA and anarchism history.

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## Can Küçüky?lmaz says

Bakunin devleti analiz ederken, Alman devletini ve Alman halk?n? temel alm?? Bana kal?rsa, Hitler öncesi dönemde de Almanlar?n a??r? otoriterlik ve güçlü devlet yanl?l??? dü?ünülürse, Hitler bir istisna de?il aksine kaç?n?lmaz bir sonuç.

Bakunin'in devletçi sosyalizm ve Marksizm ile de aras? pek ho? de?il. Temel sav?, devlet sonunda y?k?lmas? gereken kötü bir ?eyse, neden bunu büyütmeyi amaçl?yorsunuz. ??çilerin iktidar? söyleminin de bo? oldu?unu, çünkü iktidara geldikten sonra bu insanlar i?çiler aras?ndan seçilmi? olsa bile, art?k i?çi de?il siyasetçi olaca??n? söylüyor ki bu da önemli bir nokta.

Bilimsellik iddas?ndaki sosyal teorilerinde bo? oldu?unu, teorinin hayat? de?il, hayat?n teoriyi üretmesi gerekti?i noktas?n? da gayet güzel aç?klam??.

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## Lee says

This is Bakunin's final work, and of course, it was supposed to be part of a much larger writing which isn't unusual considering his longwinded style, inconsistencies, and the hectic era of time he was agitating in. He goes into detail about why the Pan-german campaign was such a bad thing providing much historical information that led up to it. Also, he outlines a project for a pan-slavic campaign as well. Much of the book focuses on the conflict with socialist democracy and anarchism within the first international. On a side note, and very irrelevant, Bakunin's anti-semitism comes out in this book. Other than that, Bakunin is not my favorite of theorists, but the book is still a must read.

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## Aron Kerpel-Fronius says

I find Bakunin's thoughts very thought provoking as he stands just as opposed to Marxism as to bourgeois capitalism. According to his philosophy, any form of state interference will inevitably result in an authoritarian regime, oppression and inequality. Based on some empirical evidence just looking around, we can find some truth in his words I guess.

On another hand, however, he could have just summarized his thesis on around 30 pages, as the rest 270 of this book was a very detailed XIX. century history lesson - I understand that you need some perspective and real life examples, but Bakunin was clearly overdoing it here.

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## Laurent says

I'm going to start by being brutally honest: this book is almost no fun at all, but then it isn't supposed to be. It's one of the founding texts of an almost lost political movement, namely anarchism. Anarchism has a bad name now and is usually equated to chaos and social breakdown, but this was never the intention. Until the end of the Spanish Civil War, it was a serious alternative to Marxist thought, one of the key differences being that Bakunin recognised that "the dictatorship of the proletariat" was still dictatorship. And dictatorship being what it is, it couldn't be good. With hindsight, one can regret that the authoritarian "statist" faction prevailed.

The one piece of unintentional light relief in this work is that Bakunin keeps losing his objectivity whenever he mentions the Germans, but again, he doesn't seem to have been particularly wrong in thinking them prone to support authoritarian regimes (at the time)...

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