

FREEDOM PRESS PUBLICATIONS

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ANARCHISM *by Herbert Read*

"One of the best things Mr. Read has written . . . Lucid, easily understandable, it is an appeal to reason . . ."—*The Listener*.
32 pages 6th Imp. 1s. (postage 2d.)

A.B.C. OF ANARCHISM *by Alexander Berkman*

Though this book is written in simple language, the ideas expressed by the author go to the roots of the class struggle, which he knew so well from his own experience and the close contact he maintained with the American workers in workshop and factory, and through the fourteen long years he spent in American jails as the price of his militancy.
100 pages Demy 8vo. 1s. (postage 3d.)

ANARCHY OR CHAOS *by George Woodcock*

This book is a restatement in contemporary terms of the social philosophy of anarchism, and an advocacy of that philosophy as a solution of modern social problems and as the only real alternative to the totalitarian systems which dominate almost every country in the world to-day. This is the first comprehensive introduction to anarchism to be published in this country.
124 pages Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. (postage 3d.)

WORKERS IN STALIN'S RUSSIA *by M. L. Berneri*

Of this work one reviewer wrote: "It is a thoroughly conscientious piece of work, which deserves equally conscientious readers; for the questions which it poses to the reflecting mind are of first rate importance". It is in fact an attempt to examine the Russian system from the revolutionary workers point of view and the conclusions are of value to all serious thinking people.
88 pages with Index Demy 8vo. 1s. (postage 3d.)

THE STATE—ITS HISTORIC ROLE *by P. Kropotkin*

Kropotkin shows in this pamphlet how the State has always acted as a power for the maintenance of privilege; how it has always stifled the free initiative of individuals; how it represents a conception which is fundamentally opposed to revolutionary ideas. Drawing always on historical examples, he explains the functions which the State subserves and indicates why it is that the anarchists have always laid stress on the struggle against the State as the central issue of the revolutionary struggle.
44 pages Demy 8vo. 1s. (postage 2d.)

NEW LIFE TO THE LAND *by George Woodcock*

" . . . this is not just another pamphlet. Its information and arguments are of importance to all concerned with agriculture. This is a sincere job of work, approached scientifically; it will repay a careful study and then it should not be put too far away."—*The Tribunal*.
32 pages 2nd Imp. 6d. (postage 1d.)

A complete list of Freedom Press publications may be obtained on application to the publishers.

FREEDOM PRESS, 27 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.

2479
K
KROPOTKIN

REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT

FREEDOM
PRESS

3d.

REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT

by

Peter Kropotkin

FREEDOM PRESS

First Published - 1880
Sixth Edition Aug. 1945
Published by FREEDOM PRESS
27 Red Lion Street, W.C.1

Printed in Great Britain by The Express Printers, London.

1. Parliament

ANYONE WITH A mind or temperament in the least degree revolutionary must agree that all forms of government yet tried have only been so many forms of oppression, and should be replaced by new forms of social grouping. All governments at present existing should be abolished, so that the words Liberty, Equality and Fraternity should no longer sound empty, but should become living realities. Indeed, one does not need to be much of an innovator in order to arrive at this conclusion; the vices of the governments of to-day, and the impossibility of reforming them, are too evident to be hidden from the eyes of any reasonable observer. And as for overturning governments, it is well known that at certain epochs this can be done without much difficulty. There are times when governments crumble to pieces almost of themselves, like houses of cards, before the breath of the people in revolt.

To overturn a government is for a revolutionary middle-class man everything; for us it is only the beginning of the social revolution. The machine of the State once out of gear, the hierarchy of functionaries disorganised and not knowing in what direction to step, the soldiers having lost confidence in their officers—in a word, the whole army of defenders of Capital once routed—then it is that the grand work of destroying all the institutions which serve to perpetuate economic and political slavery will become ours. The possibility of acting freely being attained, what will revolutionists do next?

To this question the Anarchists alone give the proper answer: "No Government!" All the others say: "A Revolutionary Government!" and they differ only as to the form to be given to that government. Some decide for a government elected by universal suffrage in the State or in the commune; others decide on a revolutionary dictatorship.

A revolutionary government! These are two words which sound very strange in the ears of those who really understand what the Social Revolution means, and what a government means. The words contradict each other, destroy each other. We have seen, of course, many despotic governments—it is the essence of all government to take the side of the reaction against the Revolution, and to have a tendency towards despotism. But such a thing as a revolutionary government has never been seen, and the reason is that the revolution—meaning the demolition by violence of the established forms of property, the destruction of castes, the rapid transformation of received

ideas about morality—is precisely the opposite, the very negation of government, this being the synonym of “established order,” of conservatism, for the maintenance of existing institutions, the negation of free initiative and individual action. And yet we continually hear this white blackbird spoken of, as if a “revolutionary government” were the simplest thing in the world, as common and as well known to all as Royalty, the Empire, and the Papacy!

That the so-called revolutionists of the middle class should preach this idea is nothing strange. We know well what they understand by Revolution. They understand by it a bolstering up of their Republic, and taking possession by the so-called Republicans of the lucrative employments reserved to-day for the Royalists. It means at the most the divorce of Church and State, replaced by the concubinage of the two, the sequestration of the goods of the clergy for benefit of the State, and above all for that of the future administrators of these goods; perhaps it may mean the referendum, or some other political machinery. But that Revolutionary Socialists should make themselves the apostles of such an idea—we can only explain by supposing one of two things. Either they are imbued with prejudices which they have imbibed without knowing it from literature, and above all from history, written to suit middle-class ideas; or else they do not really desire this Revolution which they have always on their lips; they would be content with a simple plastering up of present institutions, provided that they would secure power for themselves, leaving to the future to decide what they should do to satisfy “the beast” called “the people.” They only go against the governors of the time being in order to take their places. With these people we care not to argue. We will then only speak to those who honestly deceive themselves.

Let us begin with the first of the forms of “revolutionary government” which is advocated—the elected government.

Royalty or some other power we will suppose has just been overturned; the army of the defenders of Capital is routed. Everywhere there is fermentation, discussion of public affairs, everywhere a desire to march onward—new ideas arise, the necessity of important changes is perceived. It is necessary to act, it is necessary to begin without pity the work of demolition, in order to prepare the ground for the new life. But what do they propose we should do? Convoke the people to elections, elect at once a government and confide to it the work which we all of us, and each of us, should undertake of our own initiative.

This is what Paris did after the 18th of March, 1871. “I will never forget,” said a friend to us, “those delightful moments of deliverance. I came down from my upper chamber in the Latin Quarter to join that immense open-air club which filled the Boulevards

from one end of Paris to the other. Everyone talked about public affairs; all mere personal preoccupations were forgotten; no more was thought of buying or selling; all felt ready body and soul to advance towards the future. Men of the middle class even, carried away by the general enthusiasm, saw with joy a new world opened up. ‘If it is necessary to make a social revolution,’ they said, ‘make it then. Put all things in common; we are ready for it.’ All the elements of the Revolution were there, it was only necessary to set them to work. When I returned to my lodging at night I said to myself, ‘How fine is humanity after all, but no-one knew it; it has always been calumniated.’ Then came the elections, the members of the Commune were named—and then little by little the ardour of devotion and the desire for action were extinguished. Everyone returned to his usual task, saying to himself, ‘Now we have an honest government, let it act for us.’ What followed everyone knows.

Instead of acting for themselves, instead of marching forward, instead of advancing in the direction of a new order of things, the people, confiding in their governors, entrusted the initiative in them. This was the first and inevitable result of the elections. Let us see now what these governors did who were invested with the confidence of all.

Never were elections more free than those of March, 1871. The opponents of the Commune admit it themselves. Never was the great mass of electors more influenced with the desire to place in power the best men, men of the future, true Revolutionists. And so they did. All well-known Revolutionists were elected by immense majorities; Jacobins, Blanquists, Internationalists, all the three revolutionary divisions were represented in the Council of the Commune. No election could give a better government.

But what was the result of it? Shut up in the City Hall, charged to proceed after the forms established by preceding governments, these ardent revolutionists, these reformers found themselves smitten with incapacity and sterility. With all their good will and their courage they did not even know how to organise the defence of Paris. Of course, people now blame the men, the individuals for this; but it was not the men who were the cause of this failure—it was the system.

In fact, universal suffrage, when it is quite free, can only produce, at best, an assembly which represents the average of the opinions which at the time are held by the mass of the people; and this average at the outbreak of the Revolution has only a vague idea of the work to be accomplished, without understanding at all how they ought to undertake it. If only the bulk of the nation or the commune could understand beforehand what is necessary to be done as soon as the government is overturned! If this dream of arm-chair utopians

could be realised, we should never have had bloody revolutions; the will of the bulk of the nation once expressed, the rest would submit to it with a good grace. But this is not how things are done. The Revolution bursts out long before a general understanding has come, and those who have a clear idea of what should be done the next day are only a very small minority. The great mass of the people have as yet only a general idea of the end which they wish realised, without knowing much how to advance towards that end, nor having much confidence in the direction to follow. The practical solution will not be found, will not be made clear until the change has already begun; it will be the product of the Revolution itself, of the people in action—or else it will be nothing, the brain of a few individuals being absolutely incapable of finding solutions which can only spring from the life of the people.

This is the situation which is reflected in a body elected by universal suffrage, altogether apart from the vices inherent in representative governments in general. The few men who represent the revolutionary idea of the epoch find themselves swamped among the representatives of the revolutionary schools of the past, and of the existing order of things. These men, whose presence is so necessary among the people, particularly in the days of the revolution, to broadcast their ideas, to put the mass in movement, to demolish the institutions of the past, find themselves shut up in a hall, vainly discussing how to wrest concessions from the moderates, and how to convert their enemies, while there is really only one way of inducing them to accept the new idea—namely, to put it into execution. The government becomes a parliament with all the vices of a middle-class parliament. Far from being a “revolutionary” government it becomes the greatest obstacle to the Revolution, and at last the people find themselves compelled to put it out of the way, to dismiss those whom but yesterday they acclaimed as their chosen. But it is not so easy to do so. The new government which has hastened to organise a new administration in order to extend its domination and secure obedience, is not disposed to give up its power so easily. Jealous of maintaining that power, it clings to it with all the energy of an institution which has not yet had time to fall into senile decay. It decides to oppose force with force, and there is only one means then to dislodge it, namely, to take up arms, to make another revolution in order to dismiss those in whom the people had placed all their hopes.

There you see the revolution divided against itself! After losing precious time in delays, it now loses its strength in internecine divisions between the friends of the new government and those who see the necessity of dissolving it. And all this happens because it has not been understood that a new life requires new forms; that it is not

by clinging to ancient forms that a revolution can be carried out! All this for not having understood the incompatibility of revolution and government, for not having seen that the one is, under whatever form it presents itself, the negation of the other, and that outside of Anarchy there is no such thing as revolution.

The case is no better in that other form of “revolutionary government” so often extolled—a Revolutionary Dictatorship.

2. Dictatorship

THE DANGERS TO which the Revolution is exposed when it allows itself to be controlled by an elected government are so evident that a whole school of Revolutionists entirely renounces the idea of it. They understand that it is impossible for a people in insurrection to give themselves, by means of elections, any government but one that represents the past, and which must be like leaden shoes on the feet of the people, above all when it is necessary to accomplish that immense regeneration, economic, political, and moral, which we understand by the Social Revolution. They renounce then the idea of “legal” government at least during that period which is a revolt against legality, and they advocate a “revolutionary dictatorship.”

“The party,” they say, “which has overturned the government will take its place, of course. It will seize upon power and proceed in a revolutionary manner. It will take the measures necessary to secure the success of the insurrection. It will demolish the old institutions; it will organise the defence of the country. As for those who will not recognise its authority, why the guillotine will settle them, whether they belong to the people or the middle class, if they refuse to obey the orders necessary for the advance of the Revolution.” The guillotine still in action! See how these budding Robespierres argue, who know nothing of the grand epic of the century but its period of decline, men who have never learned anything about it except from speeches of the hangers-on of the Republic.

For us Anarchists the dictatorship of an individual or of a party (at bottom the very same thing) has been finally condemned. We know that Revolution and Government are incompatible. One must destroy the other, no matter what name is given to government, whether dictatorship, royalty, or parliament. We know that what makes the strength and the truth of our party is contained in this formula—“Nothing good or durable can be done except by the free initiative of the people, and every government tends to destroy it”; and so the very best among us, if their ideas had not to pass through the crucible of the popular mind before being put into execution,

and if they should become masters of that formidable machine—the government—and could thus act as they chose, would become in a week fit only for the gallows. We know whither every dictatorship leads, even the best intentioned—namely, to the death of all revolutionary movement. We know also, that this idea of dictatorship is never anything more than a sickly product of governmental fetish-worship, which, like religious fetish-worship, has always served to perpetuate slavery.

But we do not now address ourselves to Anarchists. We speak to those governmental Revolutionists who, led astray by the prejudices of their education, honestly deceive themselves, and ask nothing better than to discuss the question. We therefore speak to them from their own point of view.

To begin with one general observation: those who preach dictatorship do not in general perceive that in sustaining this prejudice they only prepare the way for those who later on will cut their throats. There is, however, one word of Robespierre's which his admirers would do well to remember. He did not deny the dictatorship in principle; but "have good care about it," he answered abruptly to Mandar when he spoke to him of it, "Brissot would be the Dictator!" Yes, Brissot, the crafty Girondin, deadly enemy of the levelling tendencies of the people, furious defender of property (though he once called it theft), Brissot, who would coolly have consigned to the Abbaye Prison Hebert, Marat, and all the moderate Jacobins!

Now this was said in 1792! At that time France had already been three years in Revolution! In fact, royalty no longer existed; it only awaited its death stroke. The feudal régime was actually abolished. And yet even at this time, when the revolution rolled its waves untrammelled, it was still the counter-revolutionist Brissot who had the best chance to be made dictator! And who would it have been previously, in 1789? Mirabeau is the man who would have been acknowledged as the head of the government! The man who made a bargain with the king to sell him his eloquence—this is the man who would have been thrust into power at this time, if the insurgent people had not imposed its sovereignty, sustained by its pikes, and if it had not proceeded, by the accomplished facts of the Jacquerie, in making illusory every government constituted at Paris or in the departments.

But governmental prejudice blinds so thoroughly those who speak of dictatorship, that they prefer the dictatorship of a new Brissot or a Napoleon to abandoning the idea of giving another master to men who are breaking the chains of their slavery!

The secret societies of the time of the Restoration and of Louis-Philippe contributed powerfully to maintain this prejudice of dictatorship. The middle-class Republicans of the time, aided by the

workers, made a long series of conspiracies, with the object of overturning Royalty and proclaiming the Republic. Not understanding the profound change that would have to be effected in France before even a Republican régime could be established, they imagined that by means of a vast conspiracy they would some day overturn Royalty, take possession of power and proclaim the Republic. For more than thirty years those secret societies never ceased to work with an unlimited devotion and heroic courage and perseverance. If the Republic resulted from the insurrection of 1848, it was thanks to these societies, and thanks to the propaganda by deed made by them for thirty years. Without their noble efforts the Republic would, up to the present, have been impossible.

The end they had in view was to get possession of power themselves and to instal a republican dictatorship. But, of course, they never succeeded. As ever, from the very nature of things, a conspiracy could not overturn royalty. The conspirators had indeed prepared the way for its fall. They had spread widely the republican idea; their martyrs had made it the ideal of the people. But the final effort which definitely overturned the king of the bourgeoisie was much greater and stronger than any that could come from a secret society; it came from the mass of the people.

The result is known. The party which had prepared the way for the fall of royalty found itself thrust aside from the steps of the Government House. Others, too prudent to run the risk of conspiracy, but better known, more moderate also, lying in wait for the opportunity of grasping power, took the place which the conspirators hoped to conquer at the point of the bayonet. Journalists, lawyers, good talkers who worked hard to make a name for themselves while the true republicans forged weapons or expired in jail, took possession of power. Some of them, already well known, were acclaimed by the people; others pushed themselves forward and were accepted because their name represented nothing more than a programme of agreement with everybody.

It is useless to tell us that this happened because of a want of practical spirit in the party of action, and that others will be able to do better in future. It is a law as immutable as that which governs the movement of the stars, that the party of action must be thrown aside, and the intriguers and talkers seize upon power. They are always better known to the great mass that makes the final effort. They get more votes, because with or without voting papers, by acclamation or by the ballot-box, at the bottom it is always a kind of tacit election which is made in such cases by acclamation. They are acclaimed by everybody and above all by the enemies of the revolution, who prefer to put forward nobodies, and thus by acclama-

tion those men are accepted as rulers who are really either enemies of the movement or indifferent toward it.

The man who more than any other was the incarnation of this system of conspiracy, the man who by a life spent in prison paid for his devotion to this system, on the eve of his death uttered these words, which of themselves make an entire programme—"Neither God nor Master!"

3. *The Impotence of Revolutionary Government*

TO IMAGINE THAT a government can be overturned by a secret society, and that this secret society can take its place, is an error into which have fallen all the revolutionary organisations which sprang to life in the bosom of the republican middle class since 1820. And yet facts abound which prove what an error it is. What devotion, what abnegation, what perseverance was displayed by the republican secret societies of the Young Italy Party! And yet all this immense work, all these sacrifices made by the youth of Italy, before which even those of the Russian revolutionary youth pale, all the corpses piled up in the casemates of Austrian fortresses, victims to the knife and bullets of the executioner—all this only brought into power the crafty, robbing middle class and royalty!

It is inevitable, it cannot be otherwise. For it is not secret societies nor even revolutionary organisations that can give the finishing blow to governments. Their function, their historic mission, is to prepare men's minds for the revolution, and then when men's minds are prepared and external circumstances are favourable, the final rush is made, not by the group that initiated the movement, but by the mass of the people altogether outside the society. On the 31st of August Paris was deaf to the appeals of Blanqui. Four days later he proclaimed the fall of the government; but then the Blanquists were no longer the initiators of the movement. It was the people, the millions who dethroned the man of December, and proclaimed the humbugs whose names for two years had resounded in their ears. When a Revolution is ready to burst out, when the movement is felt in the air, when its success is already certain, then a thousand new men, on whom the organisation has never exercised any direct influence, come and join the movement, like birds of prey coming to the field of battle to feed on the victims. These help to make the final effort, but it is not in the ranks of the sincere and irreconcilable conspirators, it is among the men on the fence that they look for

their leaders. The conspirators who are still possessed with the prejudice of a dictatorship work then unconsciously to put into power their own enemies.

But if all this that we have just said is true with regard to political revolutions or rather outbreaks, it is much more true with regard to the revolution we desire—the social revolution. To allow any government to be established, a strong and recognised power, is to paralyse the work of the revolution at once. The good that this government would do is nil, and the evil immense.

What do we understand by Revolution? It is not a simple change of governors. It is the taking possession by the people of all social wealth. It is the abolition of all the forces which have so long hampered the development of humanity. But is it by decrees emanating from a government that this immense economic revolution can be accomplished? We have seen in the past century the Polish revolutionary dictator Kosciuszko decree the abolition of personal servitude, yet the servitude continued to exist for eighty years after this decree. We have seen the Convention, the omnipotent Convention, the terrible Convention as its admirers call it, decree the equal division per head of all the communal lands taken back from the nobles. Like so many others, this decree remained a dead letter because in order to carry it out it was necessary that the proletariat of the rural districts should make an entirely new revolution, and revolutions are not made by the force of decrees. In order that the taking possession of social wealth should become an accomplished fact it is necessary that the people should have their hands free, that they would shake off the slavery to which they are too much habituated, that they act according to their own will, and march forward without waiting for orders from anyone. And it is this very thing which a dictatorship would prevent, however well intentioned it might be, while it would be incapable of advancing in the slightest degree the march of the Revolution.

But if government, were it even an ideal revolutionary government, creates no new force and is of no use whatever in the work of demolition which we have to accomplish, still less can we count on it for the work of reorganisation which must follow that of demolition. The economic change which will result from the Social Revolution will be so immense and so profound, it must so change all the relations based to-day on property and exchange, that it is impossible for one or any individual to elaborate the different forms which must spring up in the society of the future. This elaboration of new social forms can only be made by the collective work of the masses. To satisfy the immense variety of conditions and needs which will spring up as soon as private property is abolished, it is necessary to have the collective suppleness of mind of the whole people. Any authority external to it

will only be an obstacle, and beside that a source of discord and hatred.

But it is full time to give up this illusion, so often proved false and so often dearly paid for, of a revolutionary government. It is time to admit, once for all, this political axiom that *a government cannot be revolutionary*. People talk of the Convention, but let us not forget that the few measures taken by the Convention, little revolutionary though they were, were only the sanction of action accomplished by the people who at the time trampled under foot all governments. As Victor Hugo has said, Danton pushed forward Robespierre, Marat watched and pushed Danton, and Marat himself was pushed on by Cimourdain—this personification of the clubs of wild enthusiasts and rebels. Like all the governments that preceded it and followed it, the Convention was only a drag on the action of the people.

The facts which history teach us are so conclusive in this respect, the impossibility of a revolutionary government and the injurious effect of that which is called by the name are so evident, that it would seem difficult to explain the determination with which a certain school calling itself socialist maintains the idea of a government. But the explanation is very simple. It is that socialists, though they say they are the followers of this school, have an entirely different conception from ours of the Revolution which we have to accomplish. For them, as for all the middle-class radicals, the social revolution is rather an affair of the future about which we have not time to think much at present. What they dream of in their inmost thoughts, though they don't care to confess it, is something entirely different. It is the installation of a government like that of Switzerland or the United States, making some attempts at expropriation in favour of the State, the creation of what they call "public services." It is something after the ideal of Bismarck. It is a compromise made in advance between the socialist aspirations of the masses and the desires of the middle class. They would, indeed, wish the expropriation to be complete, but they have not the courage to attempt it; so they put it off to the next century, and before the battle they enter into negotiation with the enemy.

For us who understand that the moment is near for giving a mortal blow to the middle class, that the time is not far off when the people will be able to lay their hands on all social wealth and reduce the class of exploiters to a state of impotence, for us, I say, there can be no hesitation in the matter. We fling ourselves body and soul into the social revolution, and as on the road we follow, a government, whatever may be its device, is an obstacle, we will sweep from our path all ambitious men, however they shall come to thrust themselves upon us as governors of our destinies.

Publishers' Postscript

KROPOTKIN'S ESSAYS ARE SO much to the point, and for those initiated in revolutionary history, so topical, that this postscript will be considered by them as unnecessary and redundant. Yet for fear that its value, in the eyes of the politically uninitiated who read the foregoing pages, should be minimised because it was written some fifty years ago, and deals with a period in French history accepted just as "another date" by the present generation, we propose very briefly to illustrate Kropotkin's arguments with examples provided by contemporary history, and to indicate sources of reference for those readers who wish to make a more detailed study.

The repressive nature of Government has long been recognised by workers and thinkers throughout the ages. But the voices of this minority have always been stifled by the louder cries of the politicians—those whose profession IS to govern others—who have at their disposal all the means for directing public opinion and who also control the means for the suppression of opinions which they consider prejudicial to the existing state of things and to their controlling positions in the complex machinery of State.⁽¹⁾

Kropotkin illustrates his arguments with the case of France in 1870. Yet France of 1936 provides an equally illuminating example. The Popular Front was a Government of "honest men" which was to act in the name of the workers and their political and economic aspirations. At the time of its election, strikes were sweeping across the whole of France. The role of the Popular Front was to appease the workers with the forty hour week, holidays with pay and a number of other concessions. They returned to their factories, in response to the appeals of "their" government. Within six months all the promises made by the Government were broken and the workers back to where they started, but with one important difference: the revolutionary situation and the revolutionary spirit of June 1936 were

(1) God and the State by M. Bakunin (Mother Earth Pub. Co., U.S.A., 1s.).*
The State: Its Historic Role by P. Kropotkin (Freedom Press, 4d.).*
Anarchy, by E. Malatesta (Freedom Press, 3d.).*

no longer there. The Popular Front actually represented the counter-revolution and with its coming into office controlling power of the economic life of the country passed from the hands of the workers into the hands of the Government. And as in the past the "Government of the people" becomes the instrument of reaction and repression.⁽²⁾

In Russia the counter-revolutionary role was played by the Bolsheviks. In 1917 the workers and peasants of Russia in soldiers' uniforms revolted against the autocracy of the Tsar and then against the bourgeoisie. The peasants seized the land, the workers the factories and they defended the revolution by arming themselves against the white armies. Once the counter-revolutionary armies had been defeated, the Bolshevik party proceeded to establish its dictatorship, and outlawed thousands of revolutionaries who had sacrificed all for the revolution. And with their bureaucracy there sprung up all the instruments of oppression common to the present-day Capitalist State.

It is interesting to note what Kropotkin had to say with regard to the Russian Revolution when he was visited by Emma Goldman in June, 1920.

"The Bolsheviks had been carried to the top by the high tide of the Revolution. Once in power they began to stem the tide. They have been trying to eliminate and suppress the cultural forces of the country not entirely in agreement with their ideas and methods. They destroyed the co-operatives which were of utmost importance to the life of Russia, the great link between the country and the city. They created a bureaucracy and officialdom which surpasses even that of the old regime. In the village where he lived, in little Dmitrov, there were more Bolshevik officials than ever existed there during the reign of the Romanovs. All these people were living off the masses. They were parasites on the social body, and Dmitrov was only a small example of what was going on throughout Russia. It was not the fault of any particular individuals: rather was it the State they had created, which discredits every revolutionary ideal, stifles all initiative, and sets a premium on incompetence and waste."⁽³⁾

(2) *Lessons of Defeat*, by Pierre Robert (International Publishing Co.).
Le Front Populaire Ruiné par ses Chefs, by F. S. de Toury (Sorlot, Paris, 1939).

(3) *My Disillusionment in Russia*, by Emma Goldman (Daniel, 6s.). (Above quotation from American edition, pp. 156-157).

And more recent observers, confirm what Kropotkin had actually noted right from the beginning,⁽⁴⁾ and had foretold nearly forty years before in his essays on Revolutionary Government.

In Spain the counter-revolutionary role of the People's Government is abundantly clear. The Popular Front Government was in actual fact a safety-valve which prevented an angry and discontented people from taking matters into their own hands. Again the Government made promises, which on paper appeared to meet many of the demands of the people, and succeeded in preventing for the time being, any further action by the workers themselves. The various reforms were carried out to a small degree only, in spite of what Popular Front apologists say to the contrary, and furthermore the political position in July 1936 was that the Fascist generals were in control of the army while the prisons were full of revolutionaries. (Note that the Popular Front Government had championed the cause of the Asturian workers who had been in prison since 1934, in order to get into power.)

Unlike the French, the Spanish workers took over control in July 1936, and their victories over superior forces in many large centres, are too well known to be described here. Throughout the country workers' committees sprung up, and agriculture and industry were reorganised on a collective basis wherever the revolutionary sections of the workers were sufficiently strong.⁽⁵⁾ The politicians at last were at the mercy of the workers, and many declared themselves willing to co-operate with the workers. One of them, Companys, once president of Catalonia, offered himself to the revolutionists to dispose of him as they wished. (As later events showed, this was a clever psychological move by an equally clever and shrewd politician.)

(4) *Bolshevism, Promises and Realities*, by P. G. Maximoff (Anarchist Federation, Glasgow, 2d.).*
The Guillotine at Work, by P. G. Maximoff, 630 pp. (Chicago Section, Alexander Berkman Fund, \$3.50).
The Russian Enigma, by Anton Ciliga (Routledge, 7s. 6d.).*
Assignment in Utopia, by Eugene Lyons (Harrap, 3s. 6d.).
Back from U.S.S.R., by Andre Gide (Warburg, 2s. 6d.).
Afterthoughts on U.S.S.R., by Andre Gide (Warburg, 2s. 6d.).
The Crushing of the Russian Revolution, by Emma Goldman (Freedom Press, 4d.).
The Russian Myth (Freedom Press, 4d.).*
(5) *Social Reconstruction in Spain*, by G. Leval (Freedom Press, 3d.).
Colectivizaciones, by A. Souchy (Tierra y Libertad, Barcelona).
Spain and the World—Fortnightly publication—1936-1939 (Freedom Press).*
Behind the Spanish Barricades, by J. Langdon Davies (Warburg, 5s.) see pp. 64-73.
Storm over Spain, by M. Mitchell (Warburg, 6s.) see pp. 139-148.

A "Revolutionary Government" was duly formed. It was argued that since it included representatives of the workers' syndicates this was a sufficient safeguard against any attempt by the bourgeoisie to sidetrack the revolution. How mistaken they were. As an example, one can mention the collectivization decree of October 1936. Though on the surface it appeared to ratify all the revolutionary conquests of the Catalan workers, in actual fact it was a means of getting Government control of these peasants' and workers' collectives. And to strengthen their grip, the Government later took control of all raw material, thus holding the key to success or failure of the collectives concerned.⁽⁶⁾ This was only the beginning. As the struggle went on, so further repressive action was taken against the collectives by the Communist controlled Negrin Government. And the Catalan workers who had been flattered and beguiled by Companys in 1936 who declared himself to be in their hands, now found themselves in his hands and surrounded by an army of bureaucrats, gun-men, secret police—in a word all the instruments of a new State equally repressive as the one they had destroyed by untold sacrifice and heroism. The struggle in Spain was lost long before the military defeat in Catalonia. It was lost when all power and initiative passed from the workers' organizations into the hands of the politicians. The mistake was to believe that a Government was necessary for the success of the Revolution, whereas all power should have remained in the hands of the syndicates and workers' militias.⁽⁷⁾

There are conclusions, valuable conclusions to draw from history. And a close study of the Spanish revolution will only go to prove even more conclusively what Kropotkin observed: *"it is time to admit, once for all, this political axiom that a government cannot be revolutionary."*

(6) Social Reconstruction in Spain, pp. 7-9.

(7) The Tragedy of Spain, by R. Rocker (Freie Arbeit Stimme, N. York, 15c).

Revolution and Counter-Revolution, by Felix Morrow (Pioneer Publishing Co., N.Y.).

The Tragic Days in May, by A. Souchy (Freedom Press, 3d.).

Homage to Catalonia, by G. Orwell (Warburg, 10s. 6d.).

La Traicion de Stalin, by G. Pradas (Cultura Proletaria, 75c.).

*Indicates that these books may be obtained from Freedom Press.