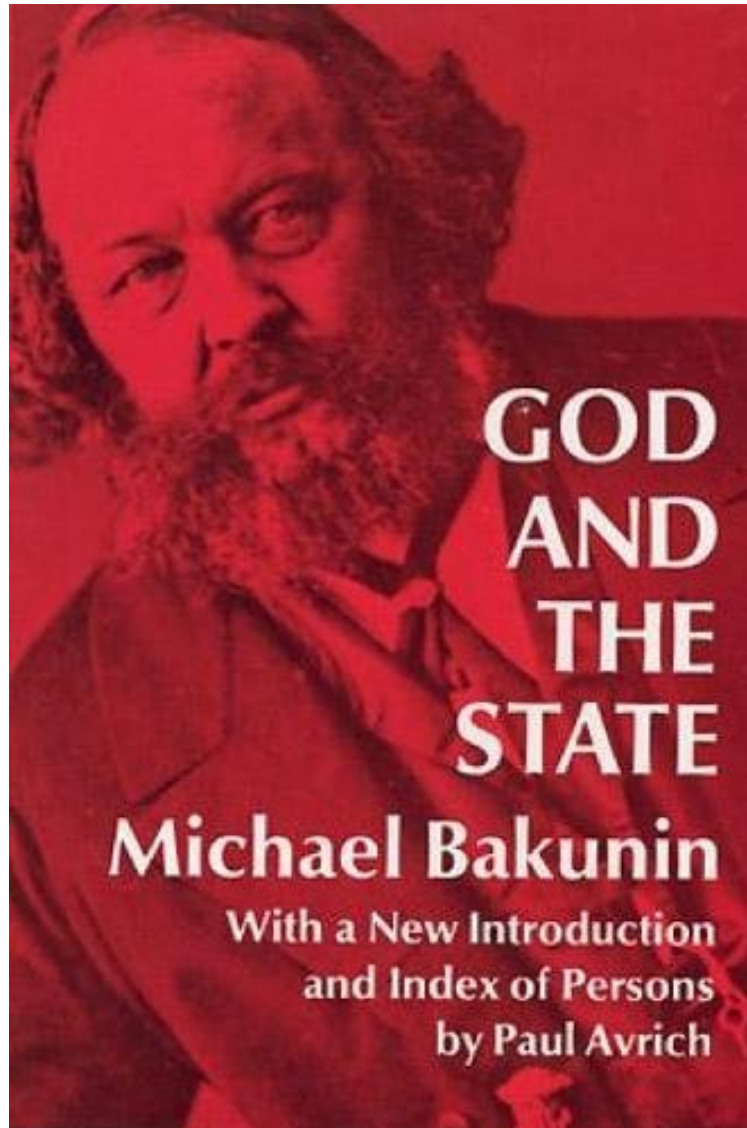


[FREE] God and the State

## God and the State

*Michael Bakunin*

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#645602 in Books Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin 1970-06-01 1970-06-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x 5.50 x .25l, .26 #File Name: 048622483X112 pages God and the State | File size: 46.Mb

**Michael Bakunin : God and the State** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised God and the State:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Ni Dieu, Ni Maitre! By Brian F. You cannot read this book and come away with nothing. Regardless of your personal position, you'll either have things made clearer and gain insight or you'll end up with more ammunition for your arguments. Along with Peter Kropotkin, Michael (Mikhail) Bakunin was a part of "the nobility" and eschewed the glory and "power" associated with that position. He suffered for it, but we

benefit from his suffering.. and his thinking. Ni Dieu, Ni Maitre!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good read but written through anger that was thrown together ...By CustomerHis theory is missing elements that take into consideration of people. Good read but written through anger that was thrown together and the topic was not set with other works.8 of 10 people found the following review helpful. God and HateBy David Metcalf"Therefore, if God existed, only in one way could he serve human liberty - by ceasing to exist." (28)In God and State, Russian anarchist/revolutionary Mikhail Bakunin excoriates religion's suffocating grip on the masses as stifling humanity's twin destinies of freedom and equality. In Bakunin's eyes, the mastery of God implicitly involves the slavery of man, and in this relationship that unilaterally permeates all forms of idealism, freedom and equality are both illusory and impossible. Bakunin posits an inverse relationship between the health of God and the health of man. As God strengthens, man's well-being suffers and vice versa. For man to progress to a society that universally affirms every individual's dignity, agency, rationality, and freedom, God must be removed."Slaves of God, men must also be slaves of Church and State, in so far as the State is consecrated by the Church." (24)Bakunin observes that it is when God nefariously bonds with state that He afflicts mankind most - for his dominion then not only concerns the metaphysical and the personal, but now extends over the political and social realms. It is this union that suppresses social revolution most, for it quiets a citizenry's social discontent by consoling its existential and spiritual discontent. In promising heaven, it persuades the people to tolerate a terrestrial hell."We should strive to understand the historic genesis, the succession of causes which developed and produced the idea of God in the consciousness of men. In vain shall we call and believe ourselves Atheists, until we comprehend these causes, for until then, we shall always suffer ourselves to be more or less governed by the clamors of this universal conscience whose secret we have not discovered." (22)Bakunin briefly examines the metaphysical mystery that is God, and notes that no theologian has ever succeeded in understanding the untouchable and opaque mysteries of God and spirit, in "reconciling and irreconcilable". Bakunin, cutting some philosophical and ontological corners, subsequently concludes that the "absurdity" that is theology has been inherited from our ancestors, which for one reason or another, conceived the idea of God for epistemological, existential, and/or pragmatic purposes: "The historical development of this terrible religious insanity which continues to obsess and crush us...I know not how many centuries were needed to develop this belief....religion is a collective insanity, the more powerful because it is traditional folly, and because its origin is lost in the most remote antiquity." (68)Bakunin suspects theology to be some thoroughly contrived metaphysical formation, insidiously machinated by some men to enslave others. However, theology is probably more innately and innocently conceived than Bakunin claims, and the exploitation of it by unscrupulous men to rule others is an indirect consequence rather than the direct cause of spiritual belief. Bakunin's caustic antagonism towards all things God is best understood by realizing that as an anarchist adamantly opposed to all forms of authority, God is the penultimate authority. These anarchist tones underlie most of Bakunin's atheism, and quite understandably, he believes that extirpating government requires extirpating God.Bakunin's animadversions appear directed at the religious establishments of continental Europe, and hence his broad stroke generalizations towards religion - more generally any doctrine of idealism - are both unfair and inaccurate. Not every mode of spirituality/idealism entails the abdication of freedom and reason. Not every form of idealism condemns man to miserable servitude to the absolute (both God and State in some forms), nor does every form of idealism proscribe an onerous and seemingly arbitrary code of behavior/morals. Bakunin's insistence however, is understandable since the religious traditions Bakunin encountered in his fight for social revolution doubtlessly did. Thus while his condemnation of religion assumes a bitter and biased countenance, the historical context of Bakunin's writings can elucidate why this is so."If God entire could find lodgment in each man, then each man would be God." (50)Bakunin asserts this supposition to refute theism, but he actually speaks the words of idealism here, borrowing the tongue of avatars for monistic and gnostic (for example) spiritual conceptualizations (Ralph Emerson and the Upanishads to name a few). These spiritual traditions do not conform to Bakunin's generalized notions of idealism, and hence Bakunin's denunciation of religion could certainly benefit from a more comprehensive and objective survey of all theological traditions of spirituality. Unsoundly committing all these traditions to the fires of "insanity" and "imbecility" by simply stating that the conception of God is inevitably unprovable and asinine, Bakunin's credibility as an exponent of atheism is undermined."Science is the compass of life - but it is not life." (55)While Bakunin exalts science excessively in its ability to provide us with answers, Bakunin astutely takes care not to simply substitute science upon the altar of dogmatic devotion which inevitably leads to the loss of freedom. Rightfully fearing a government of scientists replacing a government of idealists, he admonishes individuals not to worship scientists like priests, but instead - skeptically consulting their counsel - determine on their own whether their expertise should incur obedience. Using the ironic metaphor of Protestantism, Bakunin claims that science is our Christ - and we should not obey the priests and the churches and simply follow the followers. Instead, we should employ the empiricism of science and the rationality of mind towards truth in the most ideal and non-personal manner.Bakunin perpetuates the problematic construction of materialism/spiritualism, God/Science, etc. - as if existence is metaphysically constituted by this banal either/or proposition. Must we exclude all idealism in order to achieve a MATERIAL happiness and freedom? Must we exclude all idealism in understanding the MATERIAL truths of our world? Bakunin would proclaim an unequivocal yes, but I am not so sure.God and State is a well crafted writing, which elucidates the

religious impediments that political thinkers such as Marx and Bakunin encountered in striving to overturn the inegalitarian societies of their day. The pertinent feature of religion for Bakunin is its relationship with the state. There is a distinction between the authority of God coexisting with the authority of State, and the authority of God colluding with the authority of State. The latter scenario doubtlessly is Bakunin's 'beef' within this book. Even if Bakunin erroneously supposes all "idealisms" as unilaterally wrong and illusory, his writings provoke some interesting questions. In a free, classless and stateless society, what role - if any - can God have? Can any 'idealism' sit back and allow humanity to consult INDEPENDENTLY its own devices of reason, and its own ideas of justice?

Among the 19th-century founders of modern philosophical anarchism, none is more important than Michael Bakunin (1814-1876). Born into the Russian nobility, he renounced his hereditary rank in protest against Czarist oppression and fled to Western Europe. A colorful, charismatic personality, Bakunin quickly became central to the anarchism movement, and everyone involved either built upon or reacted to his ideas. Yet Bakunin, despite the power of his ideas, was primarily a man of action, and he wrote little. His only major work, *God and the State*, remained unfinished, although it is the torso of a giant.

Language NotesText: English, French (translation)