

thus forcing us to re-consider the broader context of each one. It is a stimulating and insightful book, with an argument as relevant to the teacher of the medieval survey as to the specialist.

Margaret McGlynn  
University of Western Ontario

David Porter, ed., *Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2006).

Robin Adèle Greeley, *Surrealism and the Spanish Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006).

Overwhelmed by civil war, defeated, and ruthlessly punished, the Spanish Revolution of 1936 has left few traces in contemporary European politics and society. Yet the groundswell of genuine revolutionary activity that accompanied the Spanish Civil War has remained a significant international landmark for theorists of social revolution, glorified as a hopeful alternative to the repressive outcomes of Leninism and as a moment of popular victory, however fleeting, over the numerous alleged forces of mass repression. The Spanish Revolution's most salient quality was pluralism: various sects of rural and urban anarchosyndicalists, Marxist socialists, and intellectual avant-gardists all shared in the revolutionary moment. Their ideological differences led to insuperable disunity and lethal vulnerability, but also created a dynamic conversation about the meaning and means of human liberation. These two books illustrate this process from two very different perspectives, reflecting the revolution's pluralist appeal beyond Spain's borders. David Porter has reedited an earlier collection of the writings and correspondence of the noted anarchist militant Emma Goldman, for whom the heady events of 1936 formed a kind of climax for a career dating from her involvement in anarchist circles as a youth in New York in the 1890s. For Goldman, Spain's predicament of civil war, urban and rural unrest, and its abundance of committed revolutionaries formed the ideal *mise-en-scène* for the revolution she long had theorized. The Surrealist avant-garde, the subject of Robin Adèle Greeley's richly illustrated monograph, similarly turned with great illusion to Spain as an open laboratory to achieve a synthesis of art and revolutionary politics.

A skilled orator who was both inspirational to women and highly respected by her male comrades, Goldman attained great stature in revolutionary circles during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This collection of her writings has been culled from several collections of private correspondences in the US and Europe, in addition to material published in numerous leftist newspapers in the 1930s. The collection is impressive for its completeness, though this virtue also

accounts for a good deal of repetition of basic ideas and themes. It is nevertheless a very useful and well-organized source for anyone interested in the posture of the international anarchist movement toward the Spanish Civil War. Thematic chapters give readers a thorough sense of Goldman's public persona as an animator of revolutionary activity and her private misgivings about anarchists' collaboration with 'statist' forces such as the Soviet-backed Communist party and the Republican government. Porter introduces each of Goldman's texts with a brief commentary, providing readers with some context for the events and personalities referred to in the documents.

In his general introduction, Porter provides useful biographical information and an outline of Goldman's political and ideological trajectory. Porter does not conceal his admiration for Goldman, and his introductory reflections adopt an analytical framework little different from that of his subject. Like Goldman, Porter refers routinely to unwieldy concepts such as oppression, liberation, capitalism, the masses, and the state, and at one point even posits the view—with which Goldman would surely have concurred—that “essentially democracy and Fascism are the same” (195). However emotive a slogan for the discontented Spanish peasants of 1936, this statement is not easily defended seventy years hence, and reveals a lack of historical perspective that leads Porter to overlook several chances to interrogate Goldman's writings more critically. Porter portrays Goldman as an independent thinker, citing several public deviations from anarchist orthodoxy over the issues of violent tactics and the desirability of pragmatic compromise. Yet Goldman's conclusions about the Spanish Revolution's ultimate failure reveal few original insights, reflecting rather the mainstream leftist view then and since that a genuinely popular social experiment was undermined by a combination of capitalist appeasement, fascist aggression, and Stalinist perfidy.

Beyond this anodyne analysis of the war's outcome, Goldman's writings lead us to contemplate the more meaningful question of the will to revolution itself. Porter characterizes anarchism as a “faith” (67) and refers to “the bright sun promis[ing] a vast new beginning” (263). Faith in a day of human liberation—an abstraction rarely elaborated—overwhelms discussions of revolutionary tactics and policy. In a passage quite revealing of the quasi-religious quality of anarchism whereby devotion trumps aptitude, Goldman lends her support to the anarchist economist Diego Abád de Santillán: “Of one thing I am certain, even if I am not about Santillán's fitness in the economic council, and that is his stern honesty and consecration. I lived in his house and I saw his devotion” (55).

The Surrealist avant-garde shared with the anarchists the elusive goal of combining social revolution with individual liberation. Like other artistic movements of the day, the Surrealists' chief mission was to develop a revolutionary aesthetic, but by the 1930s the movement had ossified into rigid orthodoxy. André Breton even convened a ‘Surrealist tribunal’ in 1934 to condemn the Spanish Surrealist painter Salvador Dalí for his earnest exploration of the psychological

appeal of Hitler. Greeley's study of Surrealist engagement with the Spanish Civil War shows how the war launched a new stage of creative experimentation. Most artists associated with Surrealism identified viscerally with the besieged Spanish Republic. Some were enlisted to make art in the service of the Republican cause, a formidable challenge for those who wished to support the government without reducing their artistry to propaganda. Greeley begins her book with an illuminating discussion of Miró's struggle to reconcile collective political action "with the concept of individualist creative autonomy at the heart of [the Surrealist] enterprise" (18). Those who have found themselves baffled by the works of Miró and Dalí will learn a good deal from Greeley's explanations of the former's iconoclasm and the latter's obsession with grotesque Freudian images. Whatever one thinks of Dalí's flights of psychosexual fancy, he deserves credit for taking fascism seriously. Though many of Dalí's acts can be ascribed to his healthy appetite for attention, he recognized that Surrealism, a movement so concerned with the political potency of the irrational, was well suited for understanding the appeal of fascism and visually rendering its psychological underpinnings. Greeley thus provides a helpful political context for understanding the themes of narcissism, desolation, and masochism in Dalí's Civil War-era work.

As Greeley moves her discussion to other Surrealists, she advances the idea that the movement's obsession with Freudian psychoanalysis helped liberate political art from its knee-jerk sympathy for historical materialism. The applicability of Surrealist principles to a range of modernist political movements explains the career trajectory of the erstwhile pro-Republican painter José Caballero, who, following the war, became an illustrator for Spain's most important fascist literary publications. Exploring ideas of individual psychology in largely Freudian terms, Surrealism enabled artists to retreat from politics as much as to pursue them, or at least to understand politics in non-partisan terms. Surrealist explorations of the eroticism of warfare, for example, are disturbing to many viewers, but allowed artists to comment on human affairs without descending to the unseemliness of partisan propaganda. Greeley's account of the Surrealist struggle with political art reaches its narrative climax in a final chapter on Picasso's *Guernica*. Though Picasso was not a Surrealist, Greeley argues that he was strongly influenced by the movement, particularly the notion that for political art to overcome propaganda, the politics must lie not in the image but in the liberating act of representation itself. Picasso's rigorous documentation of the work's every stage, and his insistence that sketches and intermediate photographs be displayed alongside the final canvas, indicate that the process was, in a sense, the product. Greeley gives dazzling examples of the work's aesthetic evolution from the preliminary sketches to the final canvas, arguing that the work's universal political effect is largely the result of Picasso's own struggle throughout the creative process to exalt and repress his own feelings toward violence.

Like Porter, Greeley does not depart from her subjects' political views, largely accepting their interpretations of Republicanism and, in the case of Miró, Catalan nationalism. Though it is one of the most compelling themes of her work, Greeley seems uncomfortable with the notion that truly political art of the period should be compelled to contend with fascism as well as socialism. The reader also will encounter a few minor factual errors, though these do not undermine the argument or diminish the book's overall strength, which is its clear and rich analysis of the Surrealist engagement with the Spanish Civil War. Both books are useful sources on aspects of the Spanish Civil War as an international political and cultural event. The war and accompanying revolution produced a chaotic autochthonous reality, but to many outsiders it was also an ideal laboratory to bring hitherto theoretical and intellectual abstractions to fruition.

Sasha D. Pack

State University of New York, University at Buffalo

John Rodden, *Textbook Reds: Schoolbooks, Ideology and Eastern German Identity* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

At a time when a former East German, Angela Merkel, is the chancellor of Germany, it is fitting to have a study that examines the influence of East German schoolbooks and culture on eastern Germans since the 1990 unification of Germany. Indeed, a recent article by Roger Boyes in the Berlin newspaper, *Der Tagesspiegel*, (22 September 2007) credited Chancellor Merkel's commitment to the environment and to combating global warming to her background in the former communist East German youth organization, the Free Democratic Youth (FDJ). With Merkel in office, it makes a lot of sense to examine how people brought up in East Germany view the world now.

There are many strong points to John Rodden's book, *Textbooks Reds*, but a significant drawback is that it sets out to do too much within the covers of one book. There is not enough connective tissue holding the three main sections of the book together. The largest first section of the book (almost 170 pages) examines the ideological components of former East German school textbooks in many subjects: language and literature, geography, civics, history, biology, chemistry and math. The second section of the book (almost 140 pages) is a series of interviews with students and teachers from the former East Germany about their textbooks but also about many other things. A third section of almost forty pages looks at how post-unification German schools try to 'educate for tolerance'. There is no real conclusion, just a two-page epilogue that is further indication that the author could not tie all the different parts of his book together.

While each section of the book definitely has its strengths, the reader is