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Kropotkin and the rise of anarchist communism

The development of anarchism in Britain was hugely influenced by the presence of large numbers of European exiles, as the country became an oasis of uneasy tolerance in a continent dominated by repression. For a time London was the centre of the international anarchist movement; freedom of expression had trumped the weather. The central figure in all this was Peter Kropotkin. Not only was he an international revolutionary celebrity, but he also integrated himself within the British movement and became a focal point for native anarchist ideas and organization. As Carissa Honeywell points out, ‘unlike other anarchist writers within this community (of political exiles) he wrote in English and directed his arguments to British readers’. If not a British writer, he was integral to the British milieu and found support amongst a growing communist sentiment, which had, in part, been nurtured by the most radical elements of Chartism. Honeywell is right to say that he ‘was part of British politics’.¹

Kropotkin first arrived in the UK in 1876 following his dramatic escape from the Peter and Paul fortress in St Petersburg. His arrest as a leading member of the dissident Chaikovskii Circle had followed on from an early military career in Siberia and a subsequent period of geographical research that marked him out as a distinguished scholar. Neither these, nor his impeccably aristocratic background, could save him from the Tsarist police. His first stay was short, leaving in January 1877 to live in Switzerland and work with the Jura Federation. However, he was to make the mistake of moving to France, where he was arrested again in the continuing repression that set in after the Paris Commune. Convicted along with more than sixty others in Lyon on scanty evidence, he served a further three years in prison before returning in poor health to Britain in 1886 to begin some thirty years of exile, until the Russian Revolution drew him back to his home country. And it was here in Britain that he conceived and wrote the major books

that were to form the theoretical basis for much of the anarcho-communist movement that was to follow: *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, *Mutual Aid* and *Ethics*.

Those works established Kropotkin's reputation and ensured his continuing influence. Yet, in the popular view, they obscured something else – his revolutionary zeal and his rejection of pacifism. He was not the gentle anarchist of *Mutual Aid*.² In part, this was down to the continuing influence of the man who was described by George Woodcock as Proudhon's 'most spectacular and most heretical disciple, Michael Bakunin'.³

In one aspect, Bakunin's heresy was of great value. He comprehensively broke with Proudhon's anti-feminism, arguing for complete gender equality.⁴ Kropotkin was prepared to take this further into the domestic sphere through a critique of housework as an instrument of women's oppression.⁵ He was a man of his times though; the solution to the crippling burden of domestic chores was not men sharing it, but technology to do it *for* women.

Kropotkin was also critical of those who divorced gender from class. He felt that middle-class reformers, campaigning for equal rights, only addressed the liberation of one class of woman, and then solely in their public lives, leaving the domestic sphere untouched. Not only that, but the nature of class inequality meant that middle-class women's liberation did not abolish housework, it merely displaced it, intensifying the exploitation of working-class women through domestic service.⁶ What is more, Kropotkin always refrained from using the gender-exclusive term 'fraternity', replacing it with 'solidarity', and from now on anarchism was firmly committed to a feminist agenda.

Kropotkin inherited three main ideological themes from Bakunin: his belief in revolutionary spontaneity as the main organizing principle of social change; the rejection of all forms of private property; and his anti-German sentiments, though, thankfully, without Bakunin's anti-Semitism. The latter has been widely blamed for Kropotkin's support for the Allied cause in the First World War, something that perplexed many of his anarchist comrades. To argue that it was would be to do him a disservice.

By 1914, anarchists broadly conformed to an anti-war orthodoxy. They saw war as purely a product of the nation state, capitalism and imperialism. They wanted nothing to do with something that was leading to the systematic slaughter of the working classes on the battlefields of Europe. Though not embracing the revolutionary defeatism of Lenin, they were active in opposing the war and wanted to see it end immediately. Hostility to the war was an ideological companion to their rejection of the state, but the real driver was moral revulsion at the phenomenon of war itself. From his earlier writings, such as the pamphlet *War!*,⁷ one would have supposed Kropotkin to have been with them. His was an orthodox view that the causes of war lay with imperial competition for markets. Yet in

1914 he published his *Letter to Steffen* in the November issue of *Freedom*,⁸ calling for support for the defence of France against the German invasion. The subsequent furore led to his departure from *Freedom*, the paper he helped to found. In 1916, at the peak of socialist anti-war agitation, he continued his stance by being a cosignatory with Jean Grave and others of the *Manifesto of the Sixteen*,⁹ opposing moves to end the war that would, presumably, cement German gains.

The question remains as to whether this stance can be ascribed mainly to his broad anti-German views. These were real enough, consistently held and in evidence throughout the letter. Even his use of clear and accessible language, which has led some to unfairly describe him as a propagandist rather than a theorist, was his deliberate counterblast against what he called 'the barbaric terminology of the German philosophers'.¹⁰ In today's parlance, he would be called a Germanophobe. Yet, this is a lazy explanation. Kropotkin was perfectly clear about his position. He had not renounced any of his earlier beliefs about war and its causes, but he felt that neither 'pacifist dreams' nor anti-war agitation stood any chance of ending the existence of war. It would require a total social transformation to remove its roots. However, he also saw the advance of a centralized, militaristic German state as a major danger. This was not a sudden conversion; Rudolf Rocker records Kropotkin expressing his growing alarm as early as 1896.¹¹ He also romanticized France as being the source of the liberties that the French Revolution had spread (he had written an appreciative history of the Revolution¹²), despite his experience of arrest and imprisonment in the country.

What Kropotkin was doing was looking beyond the general experience of war itself and considering the consequences of this specific war's potential outcomes. An anti-war stance on one side would aid Prussian militarism on the other. This debate mirrors the modern split in the left over the wars in Iraq and, particularly, Afghanistan, between anti-imperialists opposing Western interventions regardless and anti-totalitarians who generally support liberal intervention and the war against theocratic terrorism.¹³ Kropotkin's position was based on a rational calculation of what the effects of a German victory would be, especially when it would, as he saw it, have resulted from an act of aggression. His support for the Allied side was not an expression of prejudice.

Not only was Kropotkin no pacifist, he was also wedded to an eschatological concept of revolution, violent if necessary, writing that:

We are right to declare that a terrible revolution is inevitable if we are finally to cleanse our societies down to the roots ... The plague is already on our doorsteps; we must destroy its causes, and even if we have to proceed by fire and iron, we must not hesitate. It is a question of the salvation of humanity.¹⁴

Unlike Proudhon, he felt that antinomies could be resolved, once and for all, by a communist revolution. This linking of communism with social revolution marked a sharp departure from the left libertarian ideas of earlier in the century.

The one thing that Kropotkin did share with Proudhon was his attitude to Marxist state communism. Although he was not a close student of Marx, he agreed that Marx's advocacy of political, as well as social, revolution through the conquest of the state by the working class would lead to tyranny. As a natural scientist, he also denied the right of Marx to refer to his socialism as scientific. Martin Miller puts it nicely; Kropotkin 'argued that this (Marxism's) claim to science was a false one. What Marx had done, he believed, was merely to use Hegelian metaphysics to explain material reality.'¹⁵ Instead, he turned to Bakunin, adopted the idea of revolutionary spontaneity and decisively broke with Proudhon by denying the rights of all forms of individual property, including possession. He wrote:

In common with all socialists, the anarchists hold that the private ownership of land, capital, and machinery has had its time; that it is condemned to disappear; and that all requisites for production must, and will, become the common property of society.¹⁶

Fundamental to his analysis of property was the idea that capitalism had been a process of dispossession. The task of revolutionaries was to restore to the people that which had been stolen from them. State ownership would not be restitution; it would be compounding the original theft by placing all economic power in the hands of a centralized, despotic state. However, Kropotkin thought that by retaining direct ownership mutualism would in effect be the preservation of capital by other means, simply making it 'less offensive'.¹⁷ His reason for rejecting any form of individual possession is that private property dispossessed the people of their *collective*, not individual, property. What guaranteed their independence and liberty was not personal possession but rights of access to communal land and productive forces via the village commons and the city guilds.¹⁸ Thus, collectivization is only the restoration of rights that had existed previously, but partially, in full.

In repudiating the right of ownership through labour and denying any historical origin for it, Kropotkin underestimated, arguably, the strength of individual independence in pre-industrial society and thus dismissed an aspect of social organization that others had identified as liberating. Being critical of utopian and authoritarian socialists, he saw that there is more than one variety of collectivism. However, this insight was not applied to personal possession. He tended to see individual ownership as a monolith consisting only of 'bourgeois' private property.

There is a classic example of that reasoning in his early work, *Words of a Rebel*. He castigates liberals for first praising private property by pointing out the increased productivity of peasants once they own their own land and then justifying enclosure on the grounds of the superior virtue of private property, a process that actually dispossessed the individual peasant.¹⁹ He was right; it is an absurd argument. But then to deduce from this that the only possible property relationship is some form of collectivism is another logical non sequitur. Godwin, Hodgskin and Proudhon had, from the same position, all emphasized the natural right and social need of producers to directly own their own means of production and the product of their labour. Kropotkin's negation of all forms of individual possession does not automatically follow. If his justification of collectivism was to be convincing, Kropotkin needed to produce other utilitarian justifications. He did this mainly by focusing on agriculture.

The attention paid to agriculture is one of the positive features of Kropotkin's thought. In an explicit rejection of the Marxist notion of the historic role of the urban proletariat, he wrote: 'The emancipation of the proletariat will not even be possible while the revolutionary movement fails to embrace the countryside.'²⁰ Industrial workers still need to be fed and so agriculture not only is essential, but also has to be integral to a new revolutionary society. Yet, Kropotkin also felt that the liberation of the peasant and the farm labourer was not to come from land redistribution but collectivization. The major reason he gave is economic; collectivism is more productive. Whilst a peasant owner may produce more than a serf, a comparison of small-scale peasant farming with modern larger-scale intensive agriculture would, Kropotkin asserted, show the latter to be far more productive, leading to a reduction in work and ending the exploitation of the peasant. Only collective ownership would allow large-scale communal investment in expenditure and labour, thereby liberating the small farmer from time-consuming and back-breaking work, whilst producing an abundant supply of food for the whole community. Individual ownership hinders collective progress and impoverishes subsistence farmers.²¹

From the perspective of the twenty-first century, large-scale agriculture and collectivization do not appear quite so attractive. The experience of commercial agribusiness and the manifest disaster of collectivization in the Soviet Union suggests this type of farming is hardly liberating. Of course, Kropotkin would not have viewed these as anything other than another form of expropriation and centralization as they rested on the concentration of ownership rather than the abandonment of private property. Even so, he still doesn't wholly convince. And in making his argument, he too failed to compare like with like. He compared large-scale agriculture with a serf or a heavily taxed, socially marginalized peasant who has no access to capital, not with a small farmer with access to cheap credit and local markets. In addition, the subdivision of land into unviable plots is

a product of inequitable land ownership, rather than ownership itself. Intriguingly, recent work by two Nobel Prize-winning economists gives additional perspectives. Amartya Sen²² contradicts him by emphasizing the greater productivity of small-scale agriculture, whereas Elinor Ostrom²³ is more supportive by pointing to the effectiveness of the self-regulating commons. This indicates a sub-theme running through the argument of this book that the monist positions of both individualists and communists do not fully satisfy and that in the end there is a need for some type of synthesis.

Kropotkin's utilitarian proofs may not be completely persuasive, but the major justification for his communism was integral to his whole ideology that equal access and equitable distribution is only possible without property.²⁴ Kropotkin argued that collective ownership arises out of the collaborative nature of work. In common with Proudhon, he saw production as a social act, but the contribution of any individual is indivisible from the contribution of all. Once again, he ignored Proudhon's advocacy of association to pose a stark choice between individual ownership and communism:

... individual appropriation is neither just nor serviceable. All belongs to all. All things are for all men, since all men have need of them, since all men have worked in the measure of their strength to produce them, and since it is not possible to evaluate every one's part in the production of the world's wealth.²⁵

Thus, social justice needs communism:

The common possession of the instruments of labour must necessarily bring with it the enjoyment in common of the fruits of common labour.²⁶

Communism would mean that there is no need for any mechanism for the exchange of goods and labour. Instead, Kropotkin argued, the spontaneous actions of the people in a propertyless society would distribute goods according to need, and thereby fulfil all the distributive functions of the future society. Instead of 'worthless paper-money', the peasant would be rewarded with manufactured articles, given freely, and would then, out of solidarity, reciprocate by sending their produce into the cities.²⁷ Not only did Kropotkin explicitly reject the wage system and the market, but he also, in what seems a huge leap in faith, denied the need for any system of exchange whatsoever, even dismissing mutualism. Noel Thompson is right when he writes that Kropotkin 'added little of worth to the discussion of the basis upon which a decentralised communism would function in the absence of a market mechanism'.²⁸

For Kropotkin, private property is dysfunctional, preventing co-operation.²⁹ He gave the example of the patent, which turns ideas into

property, hindering the dissemination of knowledge – something many individualists also argued – though Kropotkin saw capitalism and individualism as one and the same, both enemies of human progress. He argued that capitalism, by its very nature, provides disproportionate rewards and these result in exploitation, not just of workers, but also of the country by the town,³⁰ whereas the two should live in harmony.

Kropotkin asserted that the aim of society should be the production of 'the greatest amount of goods necessary to the well-being of all, with the least possible waste of human energy'.³¹ Explicitly rejecting Adam Smith's contention that private wants can lead to public goods, he continued: 'This generalised aim cannot be the aim of a private owner; and this is why society as a whole ... will be compelled to expropriate all that enhances well-being while producing wealth.'³² Revolutionary expropriation became his chosen method of collectivization.

The starting point for the coming revolution would be the complete destruction of the state; social change is impossible if attempted through government. And this includes liberal democracy. Kropotkin's anti-democratic sentiment reflects much of the fashionable cynicism of our times.³³ Elections are 'fairs at which vanities are traded for consciences'.³⁴ Candidates behave disgustingly, falsely 'flattering the mother, the child, and if necessary caressing the asthmatic dog or cat of the "voter"!'.³⁵ Then again, there is the professional politician, 'the worst type of all', whose practice is based on 'display, pizzazz and corruption!'.³⁶ The answer to this charade is revolution. That revolution has to destroy government, which can never be the instrument for making a social revolution.³⁷

Kropotkin was convinced that the collapse of capitalism was inevitable and imminent. A spontaneous uprising of the masses would destroy it. The persistence of the injustices of capitalist society was inconceivable. And this belief in spontaneity meant that he put forward no particular revolutionary strategy to bring it about. Even though he admitted that anarchism was a minority view, he thought that it would soon spread and inspire the world to take action and that the people's instincts would lead them to the expropriation of property.

Kropotkin was certainly not a crude economic determinist, however he did insist that political power is underpinned by economic control.³⁸ It would not be enough to remove government without eradicating private property. This led Kropotkin into two theoretical difficulties. First, collectivization of all property means the dispossession of the small peasant farmer and artisan as much as the landed gentry and industrialist. Kropotkin did not wish these people away as Marxists tended to do by arguing that they form an anomalous class doomed to disappear. On the contrary, he is closer to people like Hodgskin in his views. Rather than focusing on the concentration of capital, Kropotkin argued that small factories and workshops proliferated in advanced capitalism³⁹ and, in contrast with his views on

agriculture, he saw these small productive organizations as the basis for the new urban economy. Nevertheless, if property were to cease to exist, then craftsmen in small workshops as well as the peasant farmer would have to be dispossessed.

Initially, Kropotkin appeared to limit expropriation to 'everything that enables any man ... to appropriate the product of others' toil'.⁴⁰ However, he later argued that as 'all is interdependent in a civilized society; it is impossible to reform any one thing without altering the whole'.⁴¹ And so, all property will have to be expropriated. This is hardly a course of action that would endear owner/producers to the revolutionary cause. Rather than face this problem and question his collectivism, Kropotkin ducked the issue by insisting that small proprietors would willingly abandon their property rights. In the countryside, he wrote, inspired by the bands of 'joyous and gay' (and, no doubt, inexperienced) workers flooding out of the cities to give voluntary help to the small farmer, 'do you think he will not ask to play his part in the great human family?'.⁴² The answer is probably no. The peasants would undoubtedly wish to maintain possession of the land, just as Proudhon suggested. This would be a fulfilment of centuries of ambition and rural culture. The revolution would only be supported if it gave land to the peasant rather than removed it. Accordingly, the question arises that if the small proprietor does not wish to be dispossessed, how will a propertyless society emerge without coercion? This highlights Kropotkin's second theoretical problem. Can a process of dispossession be one of liberation?

Firstly, the question arises as to who precisely dispossesses whom. Kropotkin was not naive enough to rely on simple generalizations and realized that there had to be an agent of expropriation. This again he thought would arise spontaneously. He envisaged voluntary groups of people springing up who would survey and allocate housing to the most needy,⁴³ take command of the food supply and set up large communal kitchens,⁴⁴ all acting with heroic altruism and, in a telling phrase, guaranteeing that there would be no counter-revolution because the 'people are up in arms'.⁴⁵

This instantly raises a problem. Armed groups of expropriators are exercisers of power and they may form the basis of a future power structure that could undermine the very liberty that is central to his anarchist vision. This could happen in two ways. First, if there were resistance, the expropriation of property would have to be accompanied by violence. Violence is hardly the best way of ensuring social harmony, and historical examples of human behaviour during the violent breakdown of civil order are not encouraging. Communal divisions, ethnic and confessional hatreds, local rivalries and even the petty jealousies of neighbours would have to dissolve instantly in the fervour of revolutionary enlightenment. The process of revolutionary expropriation could be a vehicle for the expression of conflict rather than its resolution.

Secondly, those who coerce the property owners also have to be of common mind and intention, the benefit of all. Individual desire and partiality are assumed to vanish. Again, this is highly unlikely and there is every chance of the misuse and entrenchment of coercive power, even of the emergence of an embryonic state system.⁴⁶ Evolutionary approaches, such as Proudhon's, avoid this potential. However, Kropotkin is unshakable in his Bakuninist conception of the revolution. Indeed, John Quail quotes Stepniak in asserting that Kropotkin was 'too exclusive and rigid in his theoretical convictions'.⁴⁷ This may be unfair in some respects, but Kropotkin would not abandon his belief in spontaneous revolution, whatever the objections.

The picture of Kropotkin's ideology that emerges is one that denies the necessity of politics, property and exchange; asserts that there is no need for a revolutionary organization; and argues that the cathartic process of rebellion instantly transforms human personalities. It is hardly surprising that one of the main criticisms levelled against him is over-optimism. If that were his sole output, it would be hard to see his reputation as a major influence on libertarian thought surviving. Instead, faced with his own internal contradictions and assailed by the external challenges of liberal individualism together with the rise of what is now known as social democracy,⁴⁸ he sought to explain the plausibility of his position. In doing so, he produced work that, stripped of its historical context, was to prove to be of enduring significance and of great influence and interest for subsequent generations of anarchists.

Mutual aid

Kropotkin was fully aware of the objection that egoism and greed could lead to abuse by those who organized expropriation. In earlier works, he dealt with this in a rather simplistic way by arguing that antisocial behaviour is a function of life in capitalist society and will disappear in a transformed world. By the end of his life, he took a more sophisticated stance, relating human behaviour to social development.⁴⁹ For Kropotkin, human institutions are not the product of any social contract but an emanation of human nature itself, and this is what he began to explore. For this enquiry, he abandoned revolutionary rhetoric and began to examine human history through his particular expertise, the natural sciences. In doing so he established a small tradition of the geographer/scientist anarchist, in which he was followed by Elisée Reclus and Patrick Geddes.

Kropotkin resisted any temptation to romanticize human nature. He rejected both the Hobbesian conceptions of the brutish state of unrestrained humanity together with the idyllic idea of the noble savage as ideological

abstracts. Instead, he based his views on his understanding of the processes of natural evolution. The most important evolutionary advantage that humans had was, according to Kropotkin, our capacity to co-operate and support each other – mutual aid. His book that elaborated on this theme, *Mutual Aid*, began life as a series of articles in the prominent periodical, *The Nineteenth Century*, as an answer to what Kropotkin saw as a misreading of Darwin in a previous piece by T. H. Huxley.⁵⁰ Huxley emphasized the struggle of individual organisms against each other for resources. This reading had been widely translated into Social Darwinism and a crude Malthusian individualism. Kropotkin saw this as a distortion of the totality of Darwin's thinking and instead wrote from the Russian tradition in evolutionary thought, which emphasized the collective struggle of a whole species for survival in a potentially hostile environment,⁵¹ neatly dovetailing with his collectivist politics. The themes Kropotkin developed in *Mutual Aid* were extended in his later work, *Ethics*, and together they form a coherent account of his thinking on human nature and his theory of history. Probably, the best place to start is his discussion of the nature of conscience.

Kropotkin agreed with Kant that there is a categorical moral imperative, a sense of right and wrong, but he rejected Kant's metaphysics. Kant may have identified its existence but could not explain its origins. Darwin provided this explanation. Human conscience is the result of a struggle between, using Proudhon's term, two antinomies: the instinct for individual gratification and the instinct for sociability⁵² – the very conflict that he saw at the heart of human evolution. It is the social instinct that is the basis for human evolutionary success and it is there we find our conscience. The feeling of guilt we experience after a selfish act is a reflection of our innate sociability. In this way, Kropotkin found morality in nature, rather than seeing it as a human construct that was necessary so that people can transcend nature. It is universal and, as he succinctly put it, 'A man who possessed no trace of such instincts would be a monster'.⁵³

These pangs of conscience are not momentary sensations. Because the social instinct is far more powerful and permanent than the instinct for individual survival, feelings of remorse will persist long after the sensation of personal gratification has gone and will affect later behaviour. Kropotkin saw the ultimate triumph of sociability occurring as humans become accustomed to the idea of duty and the individual instinct coincides more and more with the social instinct.⁵⁴ People learn from experience. This emphasis on social learning came to the fore when he introduced a second aspect of human behaviour – an instinct for justice. He argued that Darwin's explanation was incomplete because it excluded a concept of justice derived from our capacity for reason;⁵⁵ thereby he united Enlightenment thinking with evolutionary biology.

The demands of evolution ensure that personal desires are made subordinate to the needs of the group, both through instinct and intellectual understanding. At first sight, this could appear to be profoundly illiberal. Certainly, Kropotkin was no friend of liberal individualism, which he felt to be divisive and likely to produce the triumph of the strong over the weak. However, he was not proposing the submission of the individual to a general will, expressed through a social contract. Instead, Kropotkin argued that there is an inherent moral connection between all people, an instinctive identification with others, which allows for communal self-regulation. Therefore 'the conceptions of good and evil were thus evolving not on the basis of what represented good or evil for a separate individual but on what represented good and evil for the whole tribe.'⁵⁶ Collective good should always have precedence over individual desire if that desire was harmful to others. The well-being of all is instinctively wished for through the development of a sense of justice to augment natural human conscience. Because of this, acts of self-sacrifice are entirely voluntary, free decisions made by free individuals, rooted in their deep integration in an organic community. In this way, the sense of justice is not the unconditional suppression of individual liberty; it is the suppression of the freedom of the individual to oppress others – permanently.⁵⁷ But still, it makes me uneasy. Kropotkin didn't accept the argument that individual liberty, with all the messy conflicts that can imply, can be the basis of a collective good and that without it communal organizations can be stultifying, conformist and oppressive. Individual liberties can act as a permanent restraint on the possibilities of collectives developing authoritarian tendencies. For Kropotkin, communal self-regulation without external authority was liberty. His collectivism is certainly consistent, but I find his conception of freedom worryingly limited.

This, in turn, raises the question, from where does this concept of justice arise? The answer comes back once again – nature. Human morality and justice are both to be found in nature and are not external to it. After all, societies based on mutual aid and solidarity preceded the existence of human beings. People had a powerful role model, they learnt through the observation of animals. They lived with animals, tracked their patterns of migration, saw them as wise, in constant communication and observed the way they lived in mutually supportive organic societies.⁵⁸

Nature itself is neither moral nor immoral. What Kropotkin argued is that it contains the examples of behaviour, which, when learnt and internalized, become an instinctive morality and the basis for the conscious reasoning that leads to human progress. Virtue is of and in nature and it is discovered by our immersion in it, not our conquest of it. If we lose our contact with the natural world, we also lose the sources of the instinct that creates institutions of mutual aid and solidarity and a selfish, destructive individualism comes to the fore. The industrial state is a perfect example of

the development of institutions that are expressions of individual greed and exploitation. It gives the selfish instinct the opportunity to acquire wealth by fostering 'the struggle for domination and the enrichment of some through the toil of others'.⁵⁹

This set Kropotkin against the dominant nineteenth-century concept of progress. Far from industrial society ushering in a new, more peaceful form of social solidarity, the exploitative nature of industrialism produces war and violence. Those who argue that nature is violent and competitive, who speak of the inherently evil nature of humanity and the need for restraint through religion or authority, are merely sophists. Not only are they ignorant of intra-specific co-operation in the natural world, they are, according to Kropotkin, spouting an unscientific ideology in order to justify their privilege. 'Every state constitutes an alliance of the rich against the poor, and of the ruling classes, i.e., the military, the lawyers, the rulers, and the clergy, against the governed',⁶⁰ not the establishment of a social contract protecting social order.

In fact, Kropotkin maintained, peoples living closer to the state of nature in simple societies can have a 'far clearer perception of justice than the more developed peoples'.⁶¹ He recounted that during his travels in Siberia it was difficult for him 'to explain how it was that in our Christian societies people frequently die from hunger, while side by side with them other people are living in affluence. To a Tungus, an Aleut, and to many others, such a situation is utterly incomprehensible'.⁶² Yet, even in complex industrial societies with their myriad of injustices, such an ethic is developed, but usually amongst the oppressed and by the need to survive. Informal and active mutual aid is a necessity in the lives of the poor and it is they who Kropotkin saw as the most morally advanced. This is what the revolution will call into being – the morality of simple societies recreated in advanced ones. He would not wish to rescue people from the 'idiocies of rural life'.

Kropotkin's idea of a future anarchist society is rooted in his theory of history, understood as a process of social evolution analogous to the evolution of species. He did not see history as linear, nor was it cyclical. Instead, he insisted that, as in nature, periods of growth are often followed by regression and there is no pattern to this, only an explanation. Societies lose their vitality when they have abandoned mutual aid in favour of individualism and competition, resulting in war, conflict and barbarism. Even the inventiveness of modern industrial society, he argued, owes more to co-operation rather than competition, contrary to the conventions of nineteenth-century political economy.⁶³ Kropotkin saw modern industrial society as being based on the advances in technology generated by the medieval city between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. Industrial progress was halted by the collapse of these highly co-operative communities, and it was only the nineteenth century's rediscovery of their technology that launched the Industrial Revolution.

That collapse, for Kropotkin, was due to the fundamental cause of all historical change, the conflict between authority and liberty. Liberty was embodied in voluntary collective institutions, authority was the product of religious and military elites conspiring to 'reign over the peoples, hold them in subjection and compel them to work for the masters'.⁶⁴ Though Kropotkin felt that history had lurched between structures dominated by these two tendencies, he did not ascribe these shifts to a single motivating force, such as class conflict. The causes of social change are multifaceted. However, at no point in time has one tendency succeed in abolishing the other. Indeed, so deeply rooted is mutual aid in the human psyche, that it is incapable of abolition. Mutual aid is the dominant feature of human history, persisting amongst the people even at the time of the blackest repression. Authority, on the other hand, is capable of being eradicated, and the task of the revolution is to obliterate it forever. Because of the centrality of mutual aid in human life, Kropotkin challenged traditional historiography. He argued that human history has been overwhelmingly peaceful.

The twenty-first century has begun with war, civil conflict, totalitarian resurgence and arbitrary terrorism. It follows on from the century of total wars and systematic genocide. The word 'peaceful' to describe history does not immediately spring to mind. Yet, in the midst of it all, people survive. They help each other and do their best to maintain their lives and hope for a better future. In the middle of war, peace still exists. What is more, Kropotkin believed, history is skewed. History as conventionally understood is an intellectual construct that records the occasions when peaceful life breaks down, not the far longer periods of tranquillity and more numerous examples of individual lives lived in co-operative activity in both simple and complex societies. He pleaded for a social history that would 'restore the real proportion between conflict and union' and that 'after having heard so much about what used to divide men' will 'reconstruct stone by stone the institutions which used to unite them'.⁶⁵ Those institutions are the historic embodiment of mutual aid.

The earliest form of human social organization was not, as was the dominant nineteenth-century view, the family. Kropotkin claimed it was the clan or tribe. Whereas the family embodies individual values, the clan is imbued with the collective ethic. Using many examples of simple societies, Kropotkin demonstrated how communal sharing of survival needs and the identification of individual interests with the requirements of the tribe as a whole lead to customs, practices and values in which the individual sacrifices personal interests willingly for the benefit of the whole. This can lead to practices, such as infanticide, which, in another example of his anti-liberalism, he argued is totally misconstrued by 'civilized' societies. Infanticide is practiced only if the population outstrips the means of feeding it. Increase food supplies and infanticide stops. In extreme conditions, self-sacrifice for

the good of all is considered to be natural and is undertaken willingly. That sacrifice can be life itself: 'The savage [sic] ... considers death as part of his duties towards the community.'⁶⁶

The collapse of the clan system did not come about through new methods of production, but internally through the rise of the family, and, most importantly, through the disruption caused by the wave of migration from the East due to environmental factors. According to Kropotkin, it was the desiccation of Central Asia that led to the wholesale migration of people towards the West.⁶⁷ The resulting conflict with the indigenous people fundamentally altered social structures. However, new forms of organization soon adapted themselves to the requirements of mutual aid.

The rise of the family was countered with its integration within the village community. This new society had a strong identity with territory, yet did not develop a conception of private property. The territorial rights of a village were held in common. As village communities developed, they began to form networks for trade and rules, customs, and institutions for self-regulation. Uncultivated land was brought into productive use, new communities grew and flourished, domestic industry evolved, as did market centres, all without any superimposed authority.

Although immensely successful, village communities were to fall under the destructive power of authority. Undoubtedly force and wealth played a role in the establishment of power. However, Kropotkin, paradoxically, asserted that 'the deeper we penetrate into the history of early institutions, the less we find grounds for the military theory of the origin of authority. Even that power which later on became such a source of oppression, seems, on the contrary, to have found its origin in the peaceful inclinations of the masses.'⁶⁸ Out of the passion for justice arose a judiciary, arbitrators in disputes who began to be venerated and to collect imposed penalties. Though initially still accountable to collective institutions, such as the folkmote, the judge or king began to emerge as an independent person of power and to destroy the liberty of the village. The reason for the toleration of this was the spread of the concept of authority embodied in Roman law and the teachings of the Church. Kropotkin was not satisfied with a purely materialistic explanation of the development of power and the subjection of the village community by the imposition of feudalism. For him, ideology plays a crucial role in historical development. Those ideas enabled a collective institution to be crushed. The powerful legitimated their greed through the ideology of power in order to consolidate their domination. Kropotkin was scathing about those who argued that the village community died due to relative economic failure rather than deliberate action.⁶⁹ It died at the hands of the state.

The struggle between authority and communal independence was to take a further turn when the larger, fortified villages rose against the new feudal monarchs and established their independence through the medieval

city. Kropotkin indulged in the fashionable nineteenth-century cult of the medieval by claiming that 'not only many aspirations of our modern radicals were already realized in the Middle Ages, but much of what is described now as Utopian was accepted then as a matter of fact'.⁷⁰ The medieval city was, for Kropotkin, one of the pinnacles of human achievement. Not only did the arts and sciences flourish, but also work was fulfilling and satisfying, whilst the city was broadly equitable. This social justice was achieved by the embodiment of mutual aid, the guild system.

The guild system protected both the quality of production and the earnings of the producers and, although admitting to wide differentials between master, journeyman, and apprentice, 'this was a difference of age and skill, not wealth and power'.⁷¹ The guilds were not merely trade and employment organizations, they were instruments of social integration. Given the wealth and the flourishing of inventiveness in the Middle Ages, how then did the city fall under royal power and lose its independence to the nation state, ushering in a new dark age? Kropotkin's answer embodied hints as to his vision of a future society.

There were many factors involved in the rise of the state and the fall of the free cities. However, three elements stand out in Kropotkin's writing. First, he again stressed the importance of ideology. A deliberately constructed intellectual hegemony, preaching that 'salvation must be sought for in a strongly-centralized State, placed under a semi-divine authority; that one man can and must be the saviour of society',⁷² took root. Yet, this ideology can be defeated and another can supplant it, bringing change in its wake. People can be inspired by other ideas, to give them a sense of the possible, in order to create revolution. This is the duty of the conscious anarchist. 'All that is needed is that the public mind should be thoroughly convinced of the necessity of this transformation, and should come to look upon it as an act of justice and progress.'⁷³

Action, rather than ideas alone, was needed to bring down the independent city-state, but Kropotkin felt that these cities had made two fatal errors that sealed their fate. The first was that they allowed a class system to develop, which in its turn bred class conflict.⁷⁴ As those families who gained at the expense of the outsiders faced resentment and demands, they resorted to the tactics of authority to suppress dissent and maintain privilege. The city became feudalized.

The second error was, for Kropotkin, the most serious: 'The greatest and the most fatal error of most cities was to base their wealth upon commerce and industry, to the neglect of agriculture.'⁷⁵ The consequence of this was not merely the inability to feed the population but also the creation of a policy hostile to the land. Lack of self-sufficiency led to trade, in search of which colonies had been established. The need to maintain mercenary armies drained finances, exacerbating the gap between rich and poor. With the growth of exploitation, of both the peasants outside and the workers

within the city, the oppressed were only too willing to fall into the arms of a royal 'saviour'. The people 'by too much trusting to government ... had ceased to trust themselves ... The State had only to step in and crush down their last liberties.'⁷⁶ The independent city had doomed itself.

As a result, authority and centralization had been re-established. The attractiveness of the governmental idea even appealed to socialists. However, Kropotkin's optimism knew no bounds. Mutual aid continued and was still to be found in trade unions, friendly societies, co-operatives, and the simple neighbourliness of the poor in urban slums. It was embodied in the risings and revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, even if they had been seduced by statist ideas and betrayed by authority.⁷⁷ What is more, it had not gone away and was now about to triumph. And this time it would rectify the mistakes of the past.

Fields, Factories and Workshops – a study in sustainability

The coming revolution would usher in a new society, which will be permanent, based on the certainties of scientific knowledge, and will expel authority forever. It is a dream that Kropotkin was sure would one day come to pass and, to counter a charge of utopianism, he explored the viability of this new world in his prolonged essay on the political economy of sustainable cities and integrated labour, *Fields, Factories and Workshops*.⁷⁸ Kropotkin sought to use science to show that it was possible to recreate the independent industrial city in a modern setting, closely integrating it with agriculture and maintaining unity with the natural world. It would mark the final victory of mutual aid. This meant that he wrote outside the mainstream of political economy, rejecting many of the conventional doctrines of both liberals and socialists, including the left libertarians that preceded him. Though he did have one thing in common with them – contempt for Malthus' ideas on population.

Kropotkin denied that hunger was the result of population pressure:

... the over-population fallacy does not stand the very first attempt at submitting it to a closer examination. Those only can be horror struck at seeing the population of this country increase by one individual every 1,000 seconds who think of a human being as a mere claimant upon the material wealth of mankind, without being at the same time a contributor to that stock.⁷⁹

A growing population meant a greater potential for inventiveness and production:

... the productive powers of the human race increase at a much more rapid ratio than its power of reproduction. The more thickly men are crowded on the soil, the more rapid is the growth of their wealth creating power.⁸⁰

Kropotkin saw technological, industrial, agricultural and scientific development as essential to human prosperity. For all his emphasis on nature, he was not a rural romantic, as so many Victorian figures were. And, as a result of the progress he envisaged, Kropotkin insisted that well-being for all is a physical possibility.

To bring this about there has to be a solution to the failings of the systems of production in capitalist societies, to turn social exclusion into inclusion. Sharing the critique of under-consumption, he wished to include the unemployed as producers and the poor as consumers, thereby enabling all to make their full contribution to the collective wealth of society. Yet though he is often seen as an ecologist, he was not a conservationist: 'However splendid, a meadow remains a meadow, much inferior in productivity to a cornfield.'⁸¹ On the other hand, he was an early bio-regionalist, arguing that the natural organizational basis for human life is not the arbitrary and artificial boundaries of the nation state, but the natural geographical limits of sustainable regions. Kropotkin denied the need for exports to finance production at home. Instead, he argued for a predominantly self-sufficient local economy.

With a familiar-sounding picture of Britain's comparative decline and the impact of globalization, Kropotkin argued that it was impossible for Britain to remain the supplier of cotton goods to the world. Not only did excessive reliance on export trade lead to exploitation overseas and to war over the control of markets, it made a country instantly vulnerable to competitors. Production for export also leads to over-specialization, resulting in an inability to supply all local needs whilst rendering communities frighteningly dependent on only one source of employment. As one nation develops it will supplant the production of another, leaving unemployment and destitution in its wake.

Kropotkin did not argue for a cessation of trade, though he wished to limit it 'to the exchange of what really must be exchanged'.⁸² In contrast to material goods, the exchange of ideas and inventiveness needed to be extensive, free and unrestricted. However, he argued, both had to be free from the distorting effects of markets and money. Goods and ideas need to be freely given and freely received. There can be no artificial restrictions on human development, no secrets, no patents, and no monopolies. A free society is one based on free exchange:

Services rendered to society, be they work in factory or field, or mental services, cannot be valued in money. There can be no exact measure of

value (of what has been wrongly termed exchange value), nor of use value, in terms of production.⁸³

Free exchange in necessities is best achieved by production close to the point of consumption. Free exchange in ideas is the result of an egalitarian and interdependent global society. He felt that by localizing and collectivizing production, goods could be manufactured for need rather than for profit. After jettisoning the ideas of exchange and value, he then called into question the twin economic pillars of the centralizer's faith: the concentration of capital and the division of labour.

As mentioned earlier, Kropotkin did not feel that small industries died out as a result of the growth of industrial capitalism. New technology, especially electricity, provided greater opportunity for small-scale productive workshops to grow in number. Where small-scale manufacture did decline, this was not the result of the greater efficiency achieved by economies of scale, but the ability of larger firms to dominate the market place, thereby stifling diversity and innovation. Centralization did not occur because of mass production, but because mass producers have the power to control how and where goods are sold: 'This is why the "concentration" so much spoken of is often nothing but an amalgamation of capitalists for the purpose of dominating the market, not for cheapening the technical process.'⁸⁴

Kropotkin argued that the removal of a conventional market economy would release the energies and creativity of industry, thereby increasing production of a more diverse range of goods. In stark contrast to his ideas on agriculture, he was convinced that a manufacturing economy based on small-scale local production was not only possible, but would also be more productive. Whilst Kropotkin castigated the socialists for ignoring this fact, he also lambasted the right for trying to use small trades as the basis of nostalgic conservatism. Instead, small industries are capable of being the foundation of a new, decentralized economic order, responding to the needs of a community of free individuals, rather than the dictates of a cash economy.

Fed by the productiveness of intensive, collectivized agriculture, the bond between the city and the country would be cemented in two other ways. The first was by Kropotkin's insistence on organic agriculture:

Science ... sometimes misguided – as was the case with Liebig's theories, developed to the extreme by his followers, who induced us to treat plants as the glass recipients of chemical drugs, and who forgot that the only science capable of dealing with life and growth is physiology, not chemistry.⁸⁵

Thus *Fields, Factories and Workshops* is much concerned with manure, as

well as examining ingenious systems for using the by-products of urban industrial life: heat, light, glass and, of course, sewage.

The second was the idea of integrated labour. Fed by his rejection of the division of labour, Kropotkin asserted the need for each individual worker to be both an industrial and agricultural producer. Kropotkin argued that just as the centralization of production does not carry economic benefits for the many, so too the division of labour is counterproductive. Division may have brought some economic and technological advances, but at a cost to the individual and the community. To dispose of the division of labour is essentially liberating and solidaristic: 'Political economy has hitherto insisted chiefly on division. We proclaim integration; and we maintain that the ideal of society ... is a society of integrated, combined labour.'⁸⁶

The combination of industry and agriculture is hardly original in radical thought. Thomas More's *Utopia*, for instance, describes a vision of integrated labour similar to that of Kropotkin.⁸⁷ Kropotkin's unique contribution to this tradition was that he did not solely advocate integrated labour on moral grounds, but tried to argue that it is the cornerstone of economic efficiency, modernity and social change, whilst using modern science to show that it was technically possible.

In all his discussions of the nature of work, Kropotkin emphasized its importance in the fulfilment of human personality. For industrial workers, agricultural work provides a change to a healthier environment, is good exercise, and helps develop an understanding of nature, which is so important to the development of mutual aid. Yet, what Kropotkin was also aware of is the need to reduce the amount of work each individual has to perform. Participation in agriculture is not an exhortation to Stakhanovite sacrifice for the good of the community. It is about producing the basic material needs and the rounded personalities of a predominantly self-sufficient community. As technology develops, so work is reduced, and Kropotkin devoted many pages to exercises in calculating the reductions in working time possible. However, release from punishing labour does pose problems for a new society in its formative stages. Because of this, the integration of labour is a pragmatic requirement as much as an ideological goal.⁸⁸ Necessity is the mother of integration.

Kropotkin's enthusiasm did tend to lead him into hyperbole. He glossed over the need for agricultural expertise and writes of how industrial workers 'will gladly turn to the labour of the fields, when it is no longer a slavish drudgery, but has become a pleasure, a festival, a renewal of health and joy'.⁸⁹ Yet in his later work, whilst his reasoning remained essentially the same, he used additional, more sophisticated arguments. In particular, he asserted that the relationship between agriculture and industry is not antagonistic but symbiotic. This was partly down to the need to mechanize agriculture but also to provide a variety of seasonal employment for workers.⁹⁰ He also advocated an education system that would produce

all-round practical skills married to academic and scientific study. Even at the higher levels of intellectual research, knowledge without a practical understanding is limited.⁹¹ The rounded personality is integral to the self-supporting community. It is individually fulfilling and socially functional.

Kropotkin painted a picture of work fulfilling all needs, material, physical and emotional, in an organic, technologically advanced community. But this is not a community that has transcended agriculture; instead, it has embedded agriculture and nature into the very essence of its existence. Its integrated labour force is creative and diverse, its productive systems are dynamic and progressive, and its technology is advanced. It is a society that has established justice and abolished centralized authority. This vision can hardly fail to appeal.

Yet reading Kropotkin is impossible without feeling some misgivings. His work is almost a complete reversal of Proudhon's. Rather than peasant agriculture and large-scale industry, based on the division of labour and direct ownership, he gives us large-scale collectivized agriculture and small-scale industry without any ownership at all. Instead of mutualism, we have a world without any formalized systems of exchange. And in place of Proudhon's caution about human nature and the need for restraints, he gave us the triumph of mutual aid established through spontaneous revolution. His casual dismissal of democracy and rejection of individual liberty in favour of a restrictive collectivism gives cause for concern, as does his optimism that violent revolution would trigger universal benevolence. Often when looking at the impact of ideology on history we should not only be aware of what it is, but also of what it might become. I am reminded of the observation in Milan Kundera's brilliant novel, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, of the discomfort of young, intelligent communist activists who after 1948 'had the strange feeling of having sent something into the world, a deed of their own making, which had taken on a life of its own, lost all resemblance to the original idea, and totally ignored the originators of the idea'.⁹²

Despite these reservations, Kropotkin's writing can still be compelling, particularly his bio-regionalism, analysis of sustainability and the examination of mutual aid in human history. They are important themes and have influenced others who would not be attracted to his revolutionary communism. Of course, in the nineteenth-century radical milieu, his revolutionary ideas would not have seemed outlandish and so they provided a platform for promoting an increasingly popular alternative to the libertarian left ideas that had featured so prominently in the first half of the century. Kropotkin had helped take anarchism on a divergent path.

However, the early variant of left libertarianism had not gone away and it was to resurface again as a contemporary rival to anarcho-communism. It took the form of two vibrant movements, a specifically individualist anarchism and a group of libertarians usually known as the English Individualists who were influenced by Herbert Spencer; Spencer had, as a

young man, worked with Thomas Hodgskin⁹³ at *The Economist* magazine. Both movements were part of a continuing tradition in British radical thought. How they developed and interacted with anarcho-communism is the subject of the next two chapters.

Notes

- 1 Carissa Honeywell, *A British Anarchist Tradition*, p.10
- 2 This is not the case with academic studies; Martin Miller's excellent biography stresses the continuity of Kropotkin's revolutionary ideas, whilst Caroline Cahm sees him as a key influence on the revolutionary movement and a vehicle for the expression of Bakuninist ideas. Martin A. Miller, *Kropotkin* (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London, 1976); Caroline Cahm, *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism: 1872–1886* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- 3 George Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p.133.
- 4 In G. P. Maximoff (ed.), *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism*, preface by Bert F. Hoselitz, University of Chicago, introduction by Rudolph Rocker, biographical sketch of Bakunin by Max Nettlau (The Free Press: New York and Collier-Macmillan Limited: London, 1953), p.326.
- 5 Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, introduction by Alfredo M. Bonanno (Elephant Editions: London, 1990), p.125.
- 6 Ibid pp.127–8.
- 7 First published as a pamphlet in English in 1886 by the individualist anarchist Henry Seymour, and later reprinted by the radical publisher William Reeves in an undated edition. Peter Kropotkin, *War!*, trans. from *Paroles d'un Revolte* (International Publishing Company: London, 1886).
- 8 Full text available here: http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/kropotkin/steffenletter.html (accessed 12 July 2012).
- 9 A full text translated by Shawn P. Wilbur is available here <http://libertarian-labyrinth.blogspot.gr/2011/05/manifesto-of-sixteen-1916.html> (accessed 12 July 2012).
- 10 Peter Kropotkin, *Ethics. Origin and Development*, trans. by Louis Friedland and Joseph R. Piroshnikoff (Black Rose Books: Montréal, 1992), p.167.
- 11 Rudolf Rocker, *The London Years*, trans. by Joseph Leftwich with an introduction by Colin Ward (Five Leaves: Nottingham and AK Press: Oakland, 2005), p.75.
- 12 Peter Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution: 1789–1793*, introduction by Alfredo M Bonanno (Elephant Editions: London, 1986).
- 13 This author falls into the latter camp and thus has some sympathy for the stand that Kropotkin took. The criticisms directed at him remind me very much of those aimed at the late Christopher Hitchens.

- 14 Peter Kropotkin, *Words of a Rebel*, trans. by George Woodcock (Black Rose Books: Montréal and New York. 1992), pp.32–3.
- 15 Martin Miller, *Kropotkin*, p.182.
- 16 Peter Kropotkin, 'Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles', in Peter Kropotkin, *Fugitive Writings* (ed.), with an introduction by George Woodcock (Black Rose Books: Montréal, 1993), p.72.
- 17 Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, p.160.
- 18 Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, with an introductory essay 'Mutual Aid and the Social Significance of Darwinism' by John Hewetson (Freedom Press: London. 1987), see especially Chapters IV, V and VI.
- 19 Peter Kropotkin, *Words of a Rebel*, p.210.
- 20 Ibid p.103.
- 21 Ibid pp.214–15.
- 22 Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2001).
- 23 Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*. See p.xxi.
- 24 Peter Kropotkin, *Words of a Rebel*, p.52.
- 25 Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, p.33.
- 26 Ibid p.46.
- 27 Ibid p.84.
- 28 Noel Thompson, *The Market and its Critics: Socialist Political Economy in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Routledge: London and New York, 1988), p.279.
- 29 Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, p.116.
- 30 Ibid p.102.
- 31 Ibid p.103.
- 32 Ibid p.103.
- 33 I find the rejection of democracy on the basis of a few ad hominem somewhat disturbing, as with the cliché 'they are all the same' when at times they are manifestly not.
- 34 Peter Kropotkin, *Words of a Rebel*, p.133.
- 35 Ibid p.131.
- 36 Ibid pp.134–5.
- 37 Ibid p.176.
- 38 Ibid p.118.
- 39 Peter Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow* (ed.), introduced and with additional material by Colin Ward (Freedom Press: London, 1985), p.129.
- 40 Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, p.61.

- 41 Ibid p.64.
- 42 Peter Kropotkin, *Words of a Rebel*, p.214.
- 43 Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, pp.92–3.
- 44 Ibid p.78.
- 45 Ibid p.93.
- 46 This is depicted in the fictional ‘ambiguous utopia’ of Ursula Le Guin’s reflective science fiction novel on the dilemmas of propertyless anarchist societies. Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia* (Harper Prism: New York. 1994).
- 47 John Quail, *The Slow Burning Fuse: The Lost History of the British Anarchists* (Granada Publishing: London, Toronto, Sydney and New York, 1978), p.52.
- 48 See Ruth Kinna, ‘Kropotkin’s Theory of Mutual Aid in Historical Context’, *International Review of Social History* (Vol. 40, No. 02, August 1995), pp.259–83.
- 49 Peter Kropotkin, *Ethics*, pp.74–5.
- 50 Coincidentally, under whom Patrick Geddes was to commence his career in scientific research.
- 51 Stephen Jay Gould, ‘Kropotkin was no Crackpot’, *Natural History* 106 (June 1997), pp.12–21.
- 52 Peter Kropotkin, *Ethics*, p.40.
- 53 Ibid p.40.
- 54 Ibid p.41.
- 55 Ibid p.146.
- 56 Ibid p.77.
- 57 Ibid p.80.
- 58 Ibid pp.50–54.
- 59 Ibid p.316.
- 60 Ibid pp.259–60.
- 61 Ibid p.314.
- 62 Ibid p.175.
- 63 Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*, pp.232–3.
- 64 Peter Kropotkin, ‘Modern Science and Anarchism’, in Capouya, Emille and Keitha Tompkins (eds), *The Essential Kropotkin* (Macmillan: London and Basingstoke, 1976), p.57.
- 65 Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*, p.103.
- 66 Ibid p.94.
- 67 Ibid p.104.
- 68 Ibid p.133.
- 69 Ibid p.189.

- 70 Ibid p.159.
- 71 Ibid p.158.
- 72 Ibid pp.177–8.
- 73 Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, p.85.
- 74 Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*, p.176.
- 75 Ibid p.177.
- 76 Ibid p.179.
- 77 Ibid p.179.
- 78 Much of the detail was edited out of the Freedom Press edition. For data please turn to an earlier copy such as P. Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories and Workshops: or Industry Combined with Agriculture and Brain Work with Manual Work* (Thomas Nelson and Sons: London, Edinburgh, Dublin and New York, 1912).
- 79 Peter Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow*, p.70.
- 80 Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, p.35.
- 81 Peter Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow*, p.57.
- 82 Ibid p.103.
- 83 Ibid p.168.
- 84 Ibid p.154.
- 85 Ibid p.62.
- 86 Ibid pp.25–6.
- 87 Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. with an introduction by Paul Turner (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1965).
- 88 Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, pp.86–7.
- 89 Ibid p.88.
- 90 Peter Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow*, pp.156–8.
- 91 Ibid pp.185–6.
- 92 Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, trans. from the Czech by Michael Henry Heim (Faber and Faber: London and Boston, 1992), p.6.
- 93 Hodgskin's review of Spencer's *Social Statics* was published in *The Economist*, Vol. IX, No. 389 (8 February 1851), pp.149–51 and is available online here <http://praxeology.net/TH-HS-SS.htm> (accessed 23 July 2012). It provides an interesting commentary on the relationship between their views.