Brian Morris
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Kropotkin and the History of Anarchism
October, 2008

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"This effort was made in the same way as the extremely centralised and Jacobin endeavour of Babeuf. I owe it to you to say frankly that, according to my view, this effort to build a communist republic on the basis of a strongly centralised state communism under the iron law of party dictatorship is bound to end in failure. We learn in Russia how communism cannot be introduced" (KRP 254).

But though critical of the Bolsheviks, Kropotkin protested with all his strength against any type of armed intervention in Russia by the Allies, fearing this would only lead to reaction, and "would bring us back to a chauvinistic monarchy" (SW 321).

Kropotkin, like other anarchists, supported the revolution, but not the Bolshevik party, repudiating all forms of state socialism. To the end of his life Kropotkin was a revolutionary socialist – an anarchist communist.

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state" (KRP 130), and felt that the plans of the state socialists were not only impractical – as it was impossible to forsee everything – but that state socialism would inevitably lead to a party dictatorship (KRP 76). On this issue he and Bakunin were in close agreement, and with regard to the Russian Revolution, somewhat prescient, Emma Goldman, in fact, refused to describe the Bolshevik regime as "communist" considering it a form of "state capitalism". In Russia, she wrote, there has never been any attempt to apply communist principles in any shape or form. Kropotkin always emphasised that state socialism, by giving the state control and management over the main sources of economic life, besides the powers that the state already possesses, would inevitably create a "new tyranny even more terrible than the old one". He therefore concluded that thte state organisation "having been the force to which the minorities resorted for establishing and organising their power over the masses, cannot be a force which will serve to destory these priveledges" (KRP 170–71). State socialism would lead to state capitalism and to new instruments of tyranny, and "would only increase the powers of bureaucracy and capitalism" (KRP 286).

When Kropotkin returned to Russia in 1917 his worst fears were confirmed. In a letter to the Danish art critic Georg Brandes, Kropotkin drew an anthology between the situation as it then existed in Russia (1918) and the Jacobin revolution in France from September 1792 to July 1794. The Bolsheviks, he wrote, are "striving to introduce the socialisation of the land, industry and commerce. Unfortunately, the method by which they seek to establish a communism like Babeuf's in a strongly centralised state makes a success absolutely impossible paralyses the constructive work of the people" (SW 320).

In a message to the works of Western Europe (April 1919) Kropotkin reiterated the same views, in acknowledging that the effort to introduce communism in Russia under a strongly centralised party dictatorship had been an abject failure:

criticisms of the church, state power, and all the present property laws. Robbers, Tolstoy held, were far less dangerous than a well-organised government. Holding firm to the teachings of Christ, Tolstoy combined Christianity, anarchism and pacifism; this led to important criticisms of patriotism and militarism as well as to Tolstoy being heralded as an apostle of non-violent resistance, a political strategy late adopted by Gandhi, who always acknowledged his debt to Tolstoy. Kropotkin concluded that Tolstoy's religious arguments are so well combined with arguments derived from a dispassionate scrutiny of present evils "that the anarchist portions of his works appeal to the religious and non-religious reader alike" (KRP 299).

Although Kropotkin sympathetically deals with all forms of anarchism – his work is singularly free of the abusive epithets and rancour that mars much contemporary anarchist writing – Kropotkin makes clear his own allegiance to anarchist communism. This form of anarchism was advocated for the first time at the Jura congress in October 1880, and although Kropotkin was to play an important part in the development of anarchist communism and was later to become its chief exponent and advocate, he was not its originator. The linkage between anarchism and communism seems to have evolved spontaneously and independantly among the many "collectivist" followers of Bakunin in Italy, Spain and Switzerland. People important in the early development of anarchist communism, besides Kropotkin, include Elisee Reclus, Carlo Cafiero, Jean Grave and Errico Malatesta.

In his advocacy of anarchist communism Kropotkin came, like other anarchist members of the First International, to draw a clear distinction between his own conception of socialism and that of the Marxists. Kropotkin critiqued the "revolutionary government" and the "workers' state" of the Marxists and throughout his life he made strident criticisms of state socialism. He was always hostile to the idea that for the sake of the future, personal liberty could be sacrificed on the "altar of the

An introduction to the thought and politics of one of the most influential anarchist communists of 100 years ago — Peter Kropotkin

FOREWORD — by the Anarchist Federation

In the preface to her book on Kropotkin (Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism) Caroline Cahm writes that "…the history of the European anarchist movement and the anarchist communist ideas which have tended to dominate its thinking and activity are only just beginning to receive the attention they deserve". This was written in 1989 and only in the last few years has a slow process started that is beginning to rectify this situation, for example the publication of two new and important books on Bakunin. As Brian says, Kropotkin was not the originator of anarchist communism, and he never claimed to be. Anarchist communism developed amongst the workers of the First International and appears to have spontaneously expressed itself in several places at the same time. In Switzerland Dumartheray, the exiled worker from Lyons, who was familiar with the ideas of Cabet and his version of communism, seems first to have expressed these ideas. At the same time in Italy, Covelli, who had become familiar with the ideas of various German communists, was together with other members of the First International, including Malatesta, to express the ideas of anarchist communism. But it was above all Kropotkin who was to popularize anarchist communism and to be instrumental in its wider circulation in the European workers movement and beyond in, for example, China and Japan.

Brian is addressing himself in this pamphlet to Kropotkin's ideas on anarchism as a social and political movement. It should be pointed out though, that Kropotkin was very much

the importance of Stirner, and also the beautiful poetic writings of Nietzsche, he was never sympathetic to his strident egoism. Affirming Stirner's revolt against the state and all forms of authoritarian communism, Kropotkin wrote:

"Reasoning on Hegelian metaphysical lines, Stirner preaches the rehabilitation of the 'I' and the supremacy of the individual; and he comes in this way to advocate complete 'amoralism' (no morality) and an 'association of egoists'" (KRP 161).

But Kropotkin goes on: "how metaphysical and remote from real life is this 'self-assertion of the individual'; how it runs against the feelings of equality of most of us; and how it brings the would-be 'individualists' dangerously near to those who imagine themsleves to represent a superiour breed" (KRP 172).

He points out too the impossibility of the individual to attain any authentic or meaningful development of the human personality in conditions of oppression and economic exploitation. Inspite of its usefulness as a critique, and its importance in its advocacy of of the full development of the person (ego), for Kropotkin, individualist, "life-style" anarchism was a limited expression of anarchism and one that mostly appealed to artistic and literary figures (KRP 293).

A second current of anarchism outlined by Kropotkin was in fact that which found its expression in literary and artistic circles. Kropotkin emphasised that not only had the best of contemporary literature deeply influenced anarchism itself, but hundreds of modern authors were expressing, in varying degrees, anarchist ideas at the end of the nineteenth century. He mentions Ibsen, Whitman, Thoreau, Marc Guyau, Spencer, Herzen, Nietszche, and Edward Carpenter (KRP 299).

The third current of anarchism described by Kropotkin was that of Christian anarchism, represented by Leo Tolstoy, although Tolstoy never described himself as an anarchist. Drawing on the teachings of the Christian gospels and following the dictates of reason, Tolstoy, Kropotkin wrote, used all the powers of his imagination and rich talents to make powerful

in defending the right to private property, Tucker, Kropotkin wrote, opens up the way "for reconstituting under the heading of 'defence' all the functions of the state" (KRP 173–74). Thus Kropotkin concludes that the position of the mutualists is "the same as that of Spencer, and of all the so called 'Manchester School' of economists, who also began by a severe criticism of the state and end in its full recognition in order to maintain the property monopolies, of which the state is the necessary stronghold" (KRP 162).

The debate between the defenders of private property (and the so-called market socialists) and anarchist communists still reverberates in many contemporary anarchist journals.

Writing around the turn of the century, Kropotkin suggested that the individualist anarchism of the American Proudhonists found little support or sympathy amongst working people, i.e. those who possessed no property.

"Those who profess it – they are chiefly 'intellectuals' – soon realise that the individualisation they so highly praise is not attainable by individual efforts, and either abandon the ranks of anarchists, and are driven into the liberal individualism of the classical economists, or they retire into a sort of Epicurean a-moralism, or super-man theory, similar to that of Stirner and Nietzsche" (KRP 297).

These last two writers represent a second form of individualist anarchism, which Kropotkin describes as "pure individualism". The fullest expression of this individualist anarchism was to be found, Kropotkin wrote, in the remarkable works of Max Stirner (1806–1856), whose book *The Ego and its Own* (1845) was brought into prominence by John Henry Mackay at the end of the century. Stirner was a left-Hegelian metaphysician but proposed a strident philosophy of egoism that repudiated all "abstractions" – freedom, god, truth, humanity – in its affirmation of the unique ego, the corporeal self. Along with Nietzsche, Stirner has been seen as a precursor of existentialism. Although (unlike Marx and Engels) Kropotkin acknowledged

under the sway of the concept of scientific progress, prevalent among thinkers in the 19th century. Malatesta was to address himself to the notion of "scientific anarchism" as expressed by Kropotkin. He thought that this concept was neither science nor anarchism. Mechanical concepts of the universe could not be equated with human aspirations and the idea of anarchism. In addition Malatesta rejected Kropotkin's views on harmony in nature, which he saw as too optimistic. This in its turn would create too much optimism about the inevitability of anarchist communism. Rather for Malatesta, it was not the emphasis on harmony in nature but the struggle against disharmony in human society. Despite this, it was Kropotkin's linking of science and anarchism, with all of its faults, which won an audience throughout society and enabled anarchist communism to play a role in the working class movements as well as in intellectual life.

Kropotkin's views on the First World War cannot be ignored. Enemies of anarchism have tried to draw the lesson that this failure to take an internationalist position and to instead side with the Allies must have somehow sprung from his anarchist communism, and hence this body of ideas must be flawed. When one considers that the overwhelming majority of anarchist communists took an internationalist position then this theory is shown to hold no water. Rather it was perhaps Kropotkin's blinkered views on France as the leading country of radical thought and revolution, which must be defended at all costs, with false comparisons with the Paris Commune of 1871, which may have swayed Kropotkin to adopt this mistaken position, a position disastrous for both his reputation and for the international movement.

Let's leave the last word to Malatesta: "In any case anarchists will always find in his writings a treasury of fertile ideas".

INTRODUCTION

An important and talented geographer, an explorer in his early youth, Peter Kropotkin was one of the most seminal figures in the history of the anarchist movement. He has indeed been described as a unique combination of the prophet and the scientist. Although Kropotkin made many important contributions to science, particularly his theory of "mutual aid" which emphasized the importance of co-operation and symbiosis in the evolutionary process, throughout his life he was a revolutionary socialist, devoting time and energy to the anarchist cause. By his exemplary life and by generating a "treasury of fertile ideas", as his friend Errico Malatesta put it, Kropotkin undoubtably stirred the imagination of his generation. He was indeed a pioneer ecological thinker, and his *Fields, Factories and Workshops* was one of the great prophetic works of the nineteenth century.

Kropotkin has generally been ignored by academic scholars, who seem to prefer obscurantist musings of such reactionary philosophers as Heidegger, but Kropotkin's ideas continue to find resonance in many contemporary currents of thought – in the urban ecology of Lewis Mumford and Paul Goodman; the bioregional vision of Kirkpatrick Sale; the social ecology of Murray Bookchin; the plea for intermediate technology and organic farming by the likes of E.F.Schumacher and Wendell Berry; and in Taki Fotopoulos's project of inclusive democracy, to name but a few. Even poststructuralist philosophers like Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze seem to have appropriated many of the ideas of Kropotkin (and other anarchists) – with very little acknowledgement! In particular, Kropotkin's

tualism – were Stephen Pearl Andrews, Ezra Heywood and Lysander Spooner. At the end of the nineteenth century its most prominent representative was Benjamin Tucker (1854–1939) who had been a close friend of Warren. At the age of twenty-one Tucker had translated Proudhon's famous *What is Property* (1840) and in 1881 had founded the radical newspaper *Liberty*. Kropotkin describes Tucker's individualist anarchism as a "combination of (the conceptions), of Proudhon with those of Herbert Spencer" (KRP 296). For Tucker, "Anarchism means absolute liberty, nothing more, nothing less". This meant liberty in production and exchange, which he described as "the most important of all liberties". Like Proudhon, he was vehemently anti-communist and described Proudhon as "perhaps the most vigourous hater of communism that ever lived on this planet". Proudhon, of course, had equated communism with state socialism and authoritarian religious communities, and thus came to declare that "communism is oppression and slavery", a mode of organisation that denied the liberty and sovereignty of the individual and equality. Tucker therefore came to argue that Kropotkin was not an anarchist but a revolutionary communist. Tucker had the idea that the communist anarchists would force a communal property system on everyone and were thus not anarchists. Kropotkin, however, always stressed the autonomy of the individual and never denied the right of any person to cultivate their own plot of land.

Kropotkin offered many criticisms of the individualist anarchism (mutualism) of Proudhon. Warren and Tucker – in its stress on egoism and the right of individuals to oppress others if they have the power to do so, in its affirmation of private property, petty commodity production and the wage system (the market economy), and in justifying the use of violence to enforce agreements and defend private property. Kropotkin acknowledged and applauded Tucker's admirable criticisms of capitalist monopolies and the state and of state socialism, as well as his "vigorous defence of the rights of the individual", but

OTHER ANARCHIST CURRENTS

Besides anarchist communism, Kropotkin recognised and described three other currents within the anarchist movement as it developed towards the end of the nineteenth century in Europe and the United States – individualist, Christian and literary anarchism. The first of these, individualist anarchism, in turn, could be divided into two branches, the mutualists and the "pure" individualists.

The mutualists included, besides the many followers of Proudhon, the disiples of William Thompson in Britain and a contemporary of Proudhon, Josiah Warren (1798–1874). Having originally been a member of Robert Owen's socialist community "New Harmony" which was established in 1825 on the banks of the Wabash river in Indiana, Warren turned against communism, having felt that the failure of the New Harmony Community was due to its collectivism and to its suppression of individual initiative. In the following year, Warren established in Cincinnati a "store" in which goods were exchanged on the principle of time-value and labour checks. Such "equity-stores", Kropotkin noticed, were still in existence in the 1860s in the United States. In essence, Warren's radical thought was an amalgamation of individualism, fear of the state and economic mutualism.

The ideas of both Proudhon and Warren, Kropotkin writes, had an important influence in the United States, "creating quite a school". Of particular importance in the development of this school of economic thought – individualist anarchism or mu-

critique of the state, capitalism, representation and the vanguard party (Marxism).

A friend and close associate of William Morris, George Bernard Shaw, Edward Carpenter and the redoubtable Emma Goldman – who described Kropotkin as "my great teacher" – Kropotkin made enduring and substantial contributions to the development of physical geography and ecological thought, as well as to anarchist theory.

This pamphlet explores but one aspect of Kropotkin's intellectual legacy, and outlines Kropotkin's ideas on anarchism as a social and political movement.

THE HISTORY OF ANARCHISM

Kropotkin makes two essential points about anarchism as a political tradition. The first is that anyone who sides with the oppressed, who critiques the present status quo, or offers suggestions for a more viable future – one in which libery, equality and the wellbeing of all would have real, concrete expression – is more than likely to be dismissed by those in power (or their ideologues) as utopian, unpractical or misguided (AY 85). Secondly, Kropotkin emphasises that anachism is a social movement, and thus was born among the working people, and had little to do with the universities or intellectuals per se (KRP 146).

For Kropotkin, forms of anarchism were inherent in social life itself, and had co-existed with other social tendencies, throughout human history. He therefore suggested that at all times two tendencies were co-present, and continually in conflict;

" On the one hand, the masses were developing in the form of customs a number of institutions which were necessary to make social life possible at all – to insure peace amongst men, to settle any disputes that may arise, and to help one another in everything requiring co-operative effort " (KRP 146).

This was not a context devoid of power; it was rather one of a diffuse social power, an instituting "ground power", as Castoriadis describes it, that was reflected in various institutions – the clan in tribal society, village communities, the guilds in medieval Europe. But at all times too there were explicit forms

termath of the Paris commune, groups of workers by degrees adopted the label of their Marxist opponents, and came to describe themselves as "anarchist communists". Among the workers of Spain, France, Italy and Switzerland there thus emerged what Kropotkin refered to as the "main current" of anarchism – anarchist communism, which viewed anarchism and communism as necessarily complementary and mutually supporting. As Kropotkin wrote:

"The great bulk of anarchist workingmen prefer the anarchist communist ideas which gradually evolved out of the anarchist collectivism of the International Workingmen's Association." (KRP 297).

Among the better known exponents of this tendency were Elisee Reclus, Jean Grave, Errico Malatesta, Emma Goldman, Sebastian Faure, Emile Pouget and Johann Most – and, of course, Kropotkin himself, who spent a lifetime lucidly outlining, defending and promoting the anarchist communist tendency.

These were, respectively: the state socialism of the Marxists which put an emphasis on authority, and acknowledged the need for a revolutionary government – "the dictatorship of the proletariat" – to secure the development of communism; and Bakunin's anarchism, which advocated the abolition of the state and its replacement by a federal society based on free communes and voluntary associations.

Although Kropotkin never actually met Bakunin personally, he saw Bakunin as a key figure in the development of modern anarchism. In countering the efforts of the General Council of the International and the Marxists to turn the entire labour movement into an "elective parliamentary and political movement", Bakunin and his associates were instrumental in the founding of anarchism. As Kropotkin writes, it was out of this "rebellion" that modern anarchism subsequently developed (KRP 150).

Kropotkin thus felt that it was Bakunin, in a series of powerful pamphlets and letters, who first established the leading principles of modern anarchism, particularly in Bakunin's advocacy of the complete abolition of the state. This implied the repudiation not only of "revolutionary government" but of the democratic state and all forms of representative government.

"All legislation made within the state, even when it issues from the so-called universal suffrage, has to be repudiated because it always has been made with regard to the interests of the priviledged classes" (KRP 165).

Although Bakunin was at heart a communist, he desbribed himself as a "collectivist" anarchist to express a state of affairs in which all the instruments of production are owned in common – collectively – by the working people, through either labour associations or free communes. The form of distribution, whether by labour checks or not, was to be left to the collectives themselves. The anarchists within the first International did not initially refer to themselves as anarchists but rather as "federalists" or as "anti-authoritarian" socialists. But in the af-

of power, represented by a minority – the "sorcerers, prophets, priests and heads of military organisations, who endeavoured to establish and to strengthen their authority over the people" (KRP 71). In a sense, therfore, anarchism and "governmentalism" have co-existed throughout human history.

Anarchism is seen by Kropotkin as representative of the first social tendency, that is

"of the creative, constitutive power of the people themselves who aimed at developing institutions of common law in order to protect themselves from the 'power-seeking minority'" (KRP 147).

Like contemporary writers, Kropotkin implies that anarchism could be looked at in two ways. On the one hand, it can be seens as a kind of "river", as Peter Marshall (1992) describes it in his excellent history of anarchism. It can thus be seen as a "libertarian impulse" or as an "anarchist sensibility" that has existed throughout human history; an impulse that has expressed itself in various ways – in the writings of Lao Tzu and the Taoists, in classical Greek thought (especially that of Zeno of Citium), in the mutuality of kin-based societies, in the ethos of various religious sects, in such agrarian movements as the Diggers in England and the early Zapatistas in Mexico, in the collectives that sprang up during the Spanish civil war, and – currently – in the ideas expressed in the ecology and feminist movements. Anarchist tendencies seem to have expressed themselves in all religious movements, even in Islam. One Islamic sect, the Najadatm, believed that "power belongs only to God". They therefore felt that they did not really need an Imam or Caliph, but could organise themselves mutually to ensure justice.

On the other hand, anarchism may be as a historical movement and political theory that had its beginnings at the end of the eighteenth century. It was expressed in the writings of Willian Godwin, who wrote the classic anarchist text *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1973), as well as in the ac-

tions of the sans-culottes and the enrages during the French revolution, and by radicals like Thomas Spence and William Blake in Britain. As as social movement anarchism developed during the nineteenth century, and in its classical form, represented by Bakunin, Goldman, Reclus and Malatesta, as well as by Kropotkin, it was a significant part of the socialist movement in the years before the First World War, but its socialism was libertarian not Marxist. The tendency of writers to create a dichotomy between socialism and anarchism is, I think, both conceptually and historically misleading.

Kropotkin seems to have acknowledged these two ways of looking at anarchism. In his famous article on anarchism for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1910), Kropotkin defined anarchism as:

"A principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government – harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilised being" (KRP 289).

Society is thus envisaged as an interwoven network of an infinite variety of groups and associations at various levels of federation (local, regional, national, international) organised for a variety of different purposes and functions. Elsewhere, he gives another succinct definition of an anarchist society.

"The anarchists conceive a society in which all the mutual relations of its members are regulated, not by laws, nor by authorities, whether self-imposed or elected, but by mutual agreements between members of that society and by a sum of social customs and habits – not petrified by law, routine or superstition, but continually developing and continually re-adjusted in accordance with the ever-growing requirements of a free life

conception suggested a free federation of independent communes, and was advocated by workers mainly from the Latin countries, who came to be described as anarchists. The General Council of the International, led by Marx, Engels and some French Blanquist refugees – whom Kropotkin describes as "all pure Jacobinists" (KRP 165) – eventually used its position to make a coup d'état in the International, and this led to the famous "split" in the movement between the authoritarian socialists and the anarchists. It was in the personality of Michael Bakunin (1814–1876) that the anarchist tendency within the International "found a powerful, gifted and inspired exponent". And as Kropotkin writes, Bakunin soon became the leading spirit among those workers from Spain, France, Italy and Switzerland (KRP 294).

Bakunin had become a member of the Geneva section at the International Workingmen's Association in July 1868, for many of his associates were already memebers – and Kropotkin was to join the Association four years later on his visit to Switzerland. The conflict between Marx and Bakunin came to a head at the sham conference of the International held in London in September 1971. This conference affirmed the authority of the General Council (under Marx), declared the necessity of workers in each country to form their own political party, and disparaged anarchism as a political heresy. The Swiss groups of the International, almost all followers of Bakunin and thus hostile to Marx, immediately organised their own conference at the Sonvilier in the Jura. It took place in November 1871, and produced the "Sonvilier Circular" which critiqued the idea of the "conquest of political power by the working class". The split in the International crystallised around the leading figures of Marx and Bakunin, but it was much more than a struggle of personalities. For, as Kropotkin biographers write,

"It was also a clash of two wholly different conceptions of social organisation, two mutually alien philosophies of life" (WA 111).

BAKUNIN AND ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

It was, however, with the founding of the International Workingmen's Association, and in the aftermath of the Paris Commune of 1871, that anarchism came to be recognised in its modern form. The International Workingmen's Association was formally inaugurated in September 1864 in London – though its structure and constitution were not formally adopted until the first congress convened in Geneva in September 1866. It began primarily, as G.D.H. Cole notes, as a "trade union affair", though trade unions were still illegal in France. Most of the French participants of the 1864 proceedings were not industrial workers but artisans, and essentially followers of Proudhon's kind of socialism. Kropotkin describes them as "all mutualists" (KRP 294). Hence the first International began as a joint affair between British and French Trade unionists, with the participation of a number of exiles from other parts of Europe. Chief among these was Karl Marx (1818–1883) who quickly became one of its most important and active leaders. The first International, it is worth noting, was therefore not the creation of Marx, nor was it specifically Marxist at its inception.

What emerged in both the International and in the Paris commune were two very different conceptions of socialism and the revolution. One, represented by the Blanquists and the Marxists, followed that of the Jacobin tradition in the French Revolution and advocated a revolution through the establishment of a "socialist republic" – the centralised state. The other

stimulated by the progress of science, invention, and the steady growth of higher ideals" (KRP 157).

(Kropotkin admitted that no society had ever existed which fully expressed these principles).

Social life for Kropotkin was not therefore something immutable; there could be "no crystallization and immobility, but a continual evolution – such as we see in nature". Moreover, the advent of such a society would, Kropotkin believed, allow for the full develeopment of the individual; "free play for the individual, for the full deelopment of his individual gifts – *for his individualization*" (KRP 157).

Anarchism was seen by Kropotkin as having a double origin: as the

"Constructive, creative activity of the people, by which all institutions of communal life were developed in the past", and as a form of protest against external forces, or a a mode of resistance against the development of all forms of authority whether coercive or ideological (KRP 149).

From the remotest antiquity humans therefore have not only created anarcho-communist forms of association, but have expressed what Kropotkin describes as the "no-government tendency" which has opposed the emergence of hierarchic forms of organisation. The clan, the village community, the guild, the free medieval city, were all institutions, Kropotkin argues, by means of which the common people resisted the encroachments of brigands, conquerors, and other power-seeking minorities (KRP 287).

Kropotkin was always to emphasise the duality of human nature, that humans were instrinsically both egoistic and social, always striving to maintain the integrity of their own being while also motivated by social concerns. Both Lao Tzu and Zeno are thus seen by Kropotkin as expressing anarchist tendencies, as did the many religious movements which emerged throughout antiquity and the medieval period, to challenge state and ecclesiastical authority. Christianity itself, as a move-

ment against the Roman government, contained many elements, Kropotkin contends, which were "esentially anarchistic" (KRP 149). Likewise with the Anabaptist movement. Drawing on the support of the peasantry, it initiated the Protestant reform movement, until it was suppressed by the reformers under Martin Luther's leadership. But within the Anabaptist movement there was a considerable element of anarchism.

At the time of the Enlightenment, anarchist ideas were also expressed by the French philosophers, Rousseau and Diderot in particular, and such ideas, Kropotkin stressed, found their own expression later in the great French Revolution with the emergence of the independent "sections" in Paris, and of many "communes" throughout the country.

But for Kropotkin it was William Godwin (1756–1836) in his *Enquiry concerning, Political Justice* (1793) who first stated in definite form the basic principles of anarchism, even though he did not give that name to his own philosophy. Godwin advocated the abolition of the state, along with its laws and courts, believing that real justice could only be attained through free and independent social institutions. As regards to property, Godwin was openly a communist, stating that every person had the right "to every substance capable of contributing to the benefit of a human being". But Godwin, Kropotkin observed, had not the courage of his own convictions, and was later to mitigate his communist views in the second edition of *Political Justice* (1796). Godwin was essentially an individualist anarchist – society, he declared "is nothing more than an aggregation of individuals" – and a utilitarian, and his vision of a free and equal society is ultimately based on the Greek notion of individual self-development with its emphasis in reason and autonomy.

The person who first described himself as an anarchist (An-archy: no government, contrary to authority) was Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865). As a critic of the society of his day – both capitalism and the state – Kropotkin thought that

he was both great and inspiring. As for his constructive suggestions regarding an alternative future society, these Kropotkin thought unpractical or problematic – even though he described Proudhon as "undoubtably one of the greastest writers who have ever dealt with economic questions" (AY 97). Being hostile to both communism and state socialism, Proudhon developed a system of mutualism which in essence retained the notion of private property, and following the ideas of Robert Owen, advocated a system of labour checks, which represented the hours of labour required to produce a given commodity. The exchange of services and goods would be thus on the basis of equilvalence, facilitated by a scheme of mutual exchange and mutual banking. Kropotkin considered Proudhon's scheme as something of a compromise with the interests of capitalism, its individualism incompatible with the common ownership of land and the instruments of production, its mutualism simply replicating the wages system with all its problems and contradictions. But having experienced the reaction to the French Revolution and having lived through the revolution of 1848, Proudhon had seen with his own eyes, Kropotkin argued, the crimes perpetrated by the revolutionary republican government, and the problematic nature of state socialism. This led Proudhon is such works as *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* (1851) to advocate a society without government and to use the term anarchy to describe it.