

PETER KROPOTKIN  
**ANARCHISM**

A Collection of  
Revolutionary Writings



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REVOLUTIONARY WRITINGS

**PETER KROPOTKIN**

*Edited by*  
Roger N. Baldwin

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# INTRODUCTION

## TO THE DOVER EDITION

IT is forty years now since I compiled these pamphlets and forty more years since most of them first appeared. Yet their philosophy retains a fresh relevance to the enduring conflicts between authority and freedom, to human rights and to the age-old ideals of a society of equality and justice.

Kropotkin's confidence in the capacity of mankind to achieve such a society may seem naive. But evidence is not lacking, even in this violent and confused era, to sustain a belief in it. Personal freedom, voluntary association, and democratic control of power are still vital forces in political thought and practical struggles.

My belief in those principles attracted me years ago to Kropotkin's writing and led me to edit these scattered pamphlets in book form. I was then engaged in social and political reform and searching for answers to the problems of the injustices of power, coercion, poverty and inequality. I had explored the gospel of salvation according to Marx and rejected it as rigid and alien dogma. However, Kropotkin offered, not dogma or a blueprint for a revolution, but working principles, as revolutionary in themselves as the Golden Rule or the ethics of Jesus. Like Tolstoi, he called them anarchism—with a non-Christian sanction. I never accepted the whole doctrine nor put a tag on my beliefs, but I took from the philosophy only what seemed relevant to the practical direction of aims of social justice.

I have found those principles applicable to much that has marked world history since Kropotkin's time. The revolution that has ended European colonial rule over subject peoples and brought national independence to them, along with the dignity of sovereign equality, is surely in line with the growth of freedom, despite its expression in the form of coercive political states. With the revolution has come the recognition of racial equality, the decline of white superiority, and so a basis for a world order of all peoples. Kropotkin's principles, though they did not deal directly with the subjection of the colonial peoples, would fit this epochal revolutionary change in attitudes and power. So, too, only in less degree, has the emancipation of women—squared with the thought of Kropotkin, presenting today a picture of legal political participation all over the world—been accomplished in the remarkable span of less than a generation.

I like to think that Kropotkin would have endorsed the first charter of human rights ever adopted by the world community, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, accepted as goals, not practical law, by almost all States. Although the product of governments most unlikely to observe or enforce them at present, it sets forth the rights of "every person" against the abuses of power. It presents the old dilemma of authority versus freedom, but at least the world has its first code of rights and in terms of personal freedoms.

Whatever speculation may suggest as to Kropotkin's influence on events since his time, he has still a considerable audience throughout the world in elite circles. His larger works, unlike these



pamphlets, are widely translated and distributed (*Mutual Aid, The Conquest of Bread, The Great French Revolution*, etc.). Unlike his chief opponent Karl Marx, he has no organized following, but his anarchist ideas still mark a few revolutionary movements, especially in Spain and among those working-class circles that call themselves syndicalists. Anarchism, as far as it ever had any organized expression, has almost disappeared.

I was struck on a visit to the Soviet Union in 1967 by the recognition accorded Kropotkin, and that by a government whose dictatorial power represented everything Kropotkin detested. It is to be explained by the tribute the Russians pay to a great revolutionist against the Tsars, a world-renowned scientist and an author of social criticism and idealism. It must be noted that Kropotkin called his system of ideas anarchist communism, and that in common with Marx he believed in the abolition of the State as coercive. "While the State exists," said Lenin, "we cannot speak of liberty. When we can speak of liberty, there will be no State."

But more than that, as I recount in "The Story of Kropotkin's Life," he had the personal admiration of Lenin, so great that Lenin journeyed to call on him at his country home. And whom Lenin admired let no Communist reject. So in Moscow I found him honored above any Russian, except Communist leaders, by having a subway station named after him—apparently the highest honor of all—along with an avenue, a street and a village. His birthplace, a handsome house in a little park-like setting, is marked by a bronze plaque.

But it is marked also by a use that I am sure would have delighted Kropotkin. Leased by the American Embassy, it has been completely renovated as a school for English-speaking children, just opened indeed at the time of my visit in 1967. I was delighted, on my own account. I had lived in the house forty years before for a few months one summer as the guest of Mme. Kropotkin, his widow; it was so soon after his death that the faded wreaths of his funeral were still kept among souvenirs in the house.

Later I wrote a brief account for the children of what I had learned of Kropotkin's boyhood in that house and how even at the age of twelve he had given up his title of prince so that he could feel close to the common people. I told them how he had always struggled for greater freedom for everybody, in Russia and in his long exile abroad, and how he had come home after the revolution to die, and how from the very house in which they studied the great funeral started which took him one bitter winter day to his last home.

I hope the children will understand the spirit of freedom embodied in the gentle, kindly man whose profile in bronze marks their school—perhaps quite as well as some who read these pamphlets.

ROGER N. BALDWIN

*New York*  
*January, 1970*



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# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF KROPOTKIN'S LIFE AND TEACHING

THE revolutionary movement against the Russian Czars during its hundred years of struggle aroused the idealism of the youth in the cities. Thousands of young men and women in the professional classes risked their positions, their chances for careers and their family ties to engage in revolutionary and educational propaganda among the peasants and workers and later in secret conspiracies against the government. Hundreds of them were hanged or exiled. Their agitation continued unceasingly for years under a persecution unmatched in modern history. The revolution finally triumphed in the overthrow of the Czar and the seizure of power and property by the workers and peasants.

Kropotkin grew up in the midst of this struggle,—in the years of intense agitation for the abolition of serfdom and for a constitutional government. He was born a prince of the old nobility of Moscow, was trained as a page in the Emperor's court, and at twenty became an officer in the army. The discovery that he was engaged in revolutionary activities in St. Petersburg while he was presumably devoting his life to scientific geography, caused a sensation. He was arrested and held in prison without trial. He became at once one of the most hated and most beloved representatives of the revolutionary cause. He was one of the very few of the nobility to go over to the revolution, and his family connections and training at the court made him a conspicuous figure. After making a dramatic escape in broad daylight from his fortress prison in St. Petersburg after a year's confinement, he found refuge in England. For forty-two years he lived virtually in exile, chiefly in England, engaged in scientific research and anarchist propaganda. He returned to Russia in 1917 after the Kerensky revolution,—an old man of seventy-five.

But he could feel no enthusiasm for a revolution which set up a new governing class, particularly when followed by the dictatorship of a political party. Yet he looked upon it with far-seeing eyes. He regarded the revolution as a "natural phenomenon independent of the human will, similar to a typhoon," and waited for it to spend its force in order to begin a real reconstruction through the free cooperation of peasants' and workers' associations.

He died four years later in his little cottage in the country a few miles from Moscow,—continuing to the end his writing on social problems. His family and friends refused the State funeral offered by the government as a gesture contrary to his principles. The Soviet Government turned over to his friends the house in the old nobles' quarter where he was born, to be used as a museum for his books and papers and belongings, and renamed one of the principal streets of Moscow for him,—as a tribute to his services to the revolutionary cause in Russia.

But it is neither as a scientist nor as a Russian revolutionist that Kropotkin is most significant to the world at large. It is rather as a revolutionary anarchist, who put into anarchism the methods of science. He was in fact a scientist in two wholly unrelated fields,—geography and revolutionary social ethics,—for his anarchism was essentially applied ethics. He was one of the leading authorities of his time

both in geodetic mathematics and Siberian geography. He was the first man to formulate a scientific basis for the principle of anarchism, —in its opposition to authority in all forms and in its advocacy of complete social reorganization on the basis of the free cooperation of independent associations. He brought to social science a wealth of training in the natural sciences. Unlike most scientists he states his observations and conclusions so simply that his works were published in popular book and pamphlet form in almost all languages. Their wide appeal was due also to his passion for the education of the masses in revolutionary ideas, feeling that once they understood their powers and mission, they would unite to destroy the State, monopoly and private property.

Mutual aid, sympathy, solidarity, individual liberty through free cooperation as the basis of all social life—these are the positive ideas at the root of Kropotkin's teachings. Abolition of the State, of authority in all forms, of monopoly and class rule, are their negative forms. Coupled with them was a belief,—shared by many revolutionists of all schools,—in an approaching social revolution, a universal seizure of property by the workers and peasants, which would end exploitation and class rule and usher in free cooperation and individual liberty.

He shared with socialists their criticism of capitalism, and in large part their conception that the forms of the economic life of a people determine their social institutions—law, government, religion and marriage. But he disagreed with them in the use of political methods as a means of achieving power and in their conception of a workers' State. Anarchist-communism, he described, as the “no-government system of socialism.” But anarchism as a principle of freedom carried him outside the economic and political struggle into all social relations,—marriage, education, the treatment of crime, the function of law, the basis of morality.

Kropotkin's social outlook was colored by his early contacts with the Russian peasantry. When he thought of the masses, he unconsciously pictured to himself peasants oppressed by landlords and Czars, quite capable of handling their own affairs when a revolutionary upheaval once gave them freedom. His outlook on the working-class was also colored by his limited contacts. He was not close to the working-class struggle as a whole. His only intimate connections were with the Jura Federation in Switzerland, the Russian Jewish workers in London and to a lesser degree with the anarchist workers in Paris. His bitter hostility to Marxian socialism cut him off from the German workers' movement. He knew little of the practical problems of leadership, or of the psychology of action among the workers. And, like many intellectuals, he idealized their capacities.

Kropotkin, unlike many others who called themselves anarchists, notably the Tolstoians, was not opposed to the use of violence. He did not condemn deeds of violence, particularly the assassination of tyrants, but considered them useful acts in the struggle toward liberation. Civil war he regarded as inevitable in the conflict of classes, though he wished it to be limited to the “smallest number of victims and a minimum of mutual embitterment.” Even international wars he regarded as sometimes significant of conflict between advanced and reactionary forces. This attitude explains how he could champion the Allied cause in the World War, for he feared the triumph of German militarism would be fatal to the progress of the revolutionary forces which he believed were far more advanced in the Allied countries. His profound love for France, and a strong sentimental attachment to Russia, probably influenced this attitude.

Of the non-resistant anarchism of Tolstoi he wrote, “I am in sympathy with most of Tolstoi's work though there are many of his ideas with which I absolutely disagree,—his asceticism, for instance, and his doctrine of non-resistance. It seems to me, too, that he has bound himself, without reason or judgment, to the letter of the New Testament.” He was also scornful of Tolstoi's idea that the propertied classes could be persuaded to give up their prerogatives without a violent struggle.

Kropotkin objected to being called a “philosophical anarchist” because he said he learned anarchism not from philosophy but from the people. And like many other anarchists he objected to the implication that it was only a philosophy, not a program of action, not a movement rooted in the struggle of the masses. “Philosophical” sounded aloof, too respectable, too pacific. It smacked of books and the study.

To concepts of anarchism other than “anarchist-communism,” —the school founded by Michael Bakunin,—he was inhospitable. The anarchist schools of thought have only one point in common,—the abolition of the State as an institution of compulsion,—and all sects emphasize their points of difference. He regarded “individualist anarchism” of the school of Benjamin Tucker in America and Max Stirner in Germany, as hopelessly conservative, committed only to winning personal liberty without a revolutionary change in the economic system. He said of individualism in general, so often conceived as the leading principle of anarchism: “Individualism, narrowly egotistic, is incapable of inspiring anybody. There is nothing great or gripping in it. Individuality can attain its supreme development only in the highest common social effort.” He called the individualism of Nietzsche “spurious,” remarking that it could exist “only under a condition of oppression for the masses” and in fact destroyed individuality “in the oppressor himself as well as in the oppressed masses.” Ibsen he regarded as the only writer who had achieved a conception of true individualism, but “had not succeeded in expressing it in a way to make it clearly understood.” The French anarchist thinker, Pierre Proudhon, inspirer of the “mutualist school” of revolutionary economic changes through the reorganization of banking and money, he considered an impractical dreamer.

Kropotkin did not carry his differences of opinion into the open, except in his relentless opposition to all forms of authoritarianism, which meant a constant state of warfare with authoritarian socialism as represented by the followers of Marx. Besides his opposition to him on principle he had a strong personal dislike for Marx,—whom he never met,—largely due to Marx’s treatment of Bakunin. Marx, according to common report, had helped spread false rumor that Bakunin had been in the employ of the Russian secret service. Yet when these two once met at the home of George Sand, Marx greeted Bakunin effusively. Kropotkin could not tolerate what he regarded as unpardonable hypocrisy. This feeling was intensified by the discovery that parts of the *Communist Manifesto* had been lifted almost word for word from a work by Considerant. Kropotkin took almost a boyish delight in scoring anything on Marx, and, furthermore, he had contempt for him as a politician.

But aside from a personal feeling which was doubtless the result of his hostility to authoritarian socialism, his differences with Marx on other fundamental points were great. Although he was a materialist, accepting in large part the socialist economic interpretation of history, he did not regard economic forces as so overwhelming a factor in the class struggle. All through his work the power of ideas is stressed,—a factor accepted by the Marxians as important but secondary, and originating in the struggle of classes. That struggle itself seemed to Kropotkin less influential in revolutionary progress than arousing the “people” to revolutionary thought and feeling. Such a concept was doubtless based on his early outlook in Russia, where the masses of the peasants stood opposed to a small ruling class. The socialist conception was a sharper, clearer picture of class lines and interests than the industrial west. Yet in his *Great French Revolution* Kropotkin embodies an interpretation that is shared by the whole socialist-communist school. Indeed, the Soviet Government offered him large returns for the right to use it as a text-book in Russian schools—an offer which Kropotkin characteristically refused because it came from a government.

In his social thinking Kropotkin tended to develop his facts from his theories. He described his method as “inductive-deductive.” In his geographical scientific work he got his facts first and

developed his theories. The difference in his approach to the two fields was doubtlessly due to his strong feeling on all social issues. Regarding them he was a propagandist at heart, tending to ignore or brush aside the facts that contradicted his interpretations. He maintained that he was always ready to alter his theories in the light of facts, but like all men of deep convictions he cherished them too profoundly to see opposing facts except to demolish them. While much of his work in the social sciences is really scientific, —especially *Mutual Aid and Fields, Factories and Workshops*, —preconceptions color large parts of it,—a fact which, however, does not detract greatly from its value.

In his personal life he held with equal tenacity to the standards he had developed. He scrupulously refused to take a penny in compensation for his work for the movement. He refused loans or gifts even when living in pressing poverty. And even at such times he would share the little he had with all who came to him in distress. His habits were marked by moderation in everything but work, in which he was tireless. He was rigid in his opposition to tactics which he thought out of harmony with the broad principles of anarchist-communism, even when the ends appeared good. He condemned comrades who jumped bail in political cases both because of the breach of faith with bondsmen and the practical effect on securing bail in other cases. He refused to countenance aid to the Russian revolutionists from the Japanese Government at the time of the Russo-Japanese war, both because of its demoralizing influence and his hostility to governments.

Kropotkin is referred to by scores of people who knew him in all walks of life as “the noblest man they ever knew. Oscar Wilde called him one of the two really happy men he had ever met. Romain Rolland said Kropotkin lived what Tolstoi only advocated. In the anarchist movement he was held in the deepest affection by thousands,—“notre Pierre” the French workers called him. Never assuming a position of leadership, he nevertheless led by the moral force of his personality and the breadth of his intellect. He combined in extraordinary measure high qualities of character with a fine mind and passionate social feeling. His life made a deep impression on a great range of classes,—the whole scientific world, the Russian revolutionary movement, the radical movements of all schools, and in the literary world which cared little or nothing for science or revolution.

The significance of his revolutionary teachings in its practical relation to the world of today remains to be examined.

The years since Kropotkin did his most important work have been marked by the colossal events of the World War and the Russian Revolution, with the consequent tightening of the conflict between capitalism and the working-class, and with sharp changes in the revolutionary movement based on the Russian experience. The general revolution which Kropotkin felt was imminent broke in Russia along with a complete expropriation of the owning class by the workers and peasants, followed by a dictatorship committed to working out communism. This revolution is the best available test of the significance of anarchist principles in action. Both Kropotkin’s attitude to it and the activities of other anarchists make it clear. Let us first state the situation in Russia.

The enormous obstacles against which Soviet Russia has contended in the world of capitalism, in internal opposition and in the indifference of the peasantry have prevented, with other lesser factors, any consistent progress toward communism and even necessitated a retreat toward capitalism. The economic order is a state socialism, with considerable private capitalism in the form of limited concessions, and a huge land-owning peasantry largely unconcerned with “progress.” The political order is a dictatorship by the Communist Party, the only legal party, which uses the state power to silence all opposition and to insure, as far as possible, the unimpeded execution of its program. It is in fact and spirit the realization of the very ideas which Kropotkin so vigorously fought in Marxian socialism.

The communist movement throughout the World, which developed after the Russian Revolution from the old socialist parties, carries on a militant struggle to direct the labor and radical forces toward similar revolutions elsewhere. The communists are everywhere opposed equally to the parliamentary ideas and tactics of the socialists and to the non-political and anti-State tactics of the anarchists and syndicalists,—all of whom they regard as impotent from a revolutionary standpoint. The socialists and anarchists,—long bitter opponents in the radical camp,—now share a common hostility to the Soviet government for its forcible suppression of their activities in Russia, and for its imprisonment and exile of their comrades there. The socialists hope the dictatorship may be dissolved into a democratic, parliamentary regime; the anarchists that it may give way to free federations of the decentralized workers' and peasants' organizations as the economic system. But because of the common hostility to capitalism, socialists and anarchists are on the whole reluctant to play into the hands of the capitalist enemies of Soviet Russia. Both defend Soviet Russia against capitalist attacks (with some conspicuous exceptions) while condemning it bitterly for its forcible suppression of opposition. The communists on their side, while repressing anarchist and socialist activities in Russia, help defend them in capitalist countries when they are attacked for revolutionary or working-class activities.

The differences in the communist attitude inside Russia and outside are accounted for by the practical necessities of the tactics making for revolution and the responsibilities of a government based on such a revolution. The Soviet Government will make the compromises with capitalism necessary to insure increased production of goods and trade, while refusing to tolerate radical opposition to those compromises. Even in their own Communist Party it is silenced. But outside Russia they must encourage all the forces making toward the growth of working-class power.

In this paradoxical situation the anarchist-communists in Russia play varying roles. Some cooperate with the Soviet Government in its economic work, accepting the necessity of the dictatorship while holding to their anarchist faith, pointing out that even Lenin believed in the ultimate validity of anarchist-communism while ridiculing and opposing it now as barren of tactics for achieving its own objects. Others have accepted the necessity of silence in Russia, preferring such a dictatorship to living under a capitalist dictatorship anywhere else. Others continue to express their anarchist beliefs and to criticize Soviet policy,—and scores of them are in prison or exile. Still others have left Russia—by actual or self-imposed exile,—and are living quietly elsewhere. A few continue active anti-Bolshevik propaganda on foreign soil. Among other than Russian anarchists, similar differing attitudes to the Soviet Government and communism dictate their activities,—though practically all of them oppose the forcible suppression of revolutionary opposition in Russia.

What Kropotkin himself would have done had he been younger, or even had he lived longer, can be gathered from his comments appearing on pages 256-259. He visualized the function of anarchists as participation only in the voluntary organizations of the peasants and workers. His advice to anarchists both in Russia and outside was to work constructively in the building of a new economy, and express that constructive purpose through the syndicalist trade unions.

What practical effect both the anarchist opposition and collaboration have had on the development of the Russian Revolution is difficult to say. The movement in Russia was weak,—far weaker than the socialist,—but its policies had a direct bearing on the central economic problems confronting the Bolsheviks. The chief policy—freedom for the trade unions, cooperatives and peasants' associations,—has gained as a practical working measure in the face of the failure of rigorous centralized control by a governmental bureaucracy.

Outside Russia, in the world of working-class struggle, the movement represented by Kropotkin's

theories is widely spread but comparatively small. The anarchist-communist movement was never really well organized, and it was always barren of practical technique. It flourished chiefly on uncompromising protest, and visions of a revolutionary goal to be achieved by abolishing the State. It was simple and daring. From a vigorous movement of protest from 1870 to 1900, it has diminished in numbers and influence. Today it is represented chiefly in the syndicalist trade-union movement in Latin countries,—notably in Spain, Portugal, Mexico and South America, but with strong smaller movements in Germany, France and Sweden. Scattered anarchist journals appear as the mouth-pieces of little groups all over the world, with one anarchist daily in Buenos Aires. A syndicalist international, organized in 1922 under the name of the old International Working Men's Association to which Kropotkin belonged, represents the syndicalist trade-unions, with headquarters in Berlin.

But quite outside any organized movement, anarchist ideas are held by many people in all classes of society and are expressed in a great variety of activities, modifying and directing other movements. It has been said that all of us are naturally anarchists at heart,—which is only to say that we all desire the largest possible personal freedom and the least possible external restraint. This instinctive attitude accounts for the response to anarchist ideas in widely different groups, particularly when they do not bear that label, feared because of old associations of violence and popular caricature. Anarchism, as Kropotkin so often pointed out, is only the formulation of a universal and ancient desire of mankind. On that basis the viewpoints of scores of distinguished philosophers, writers and religious leaders may be labeled anarchist. And anarchist writers have claimed for the philosophy such diverse personalities as Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Jesus, Lao-tse, Ibsen, Nietzsche and Anatole France.

It is commonly said of anarchism that it is a beautiful dream for a remote future when we shall all have become civilized enough to get along without government and police. Or, according to the Marxians, when the class struggle is over. But that view misses the essential point that anarchism is an ever-present working principle of growth toward larger freedoms, and in all social activity. It means to create ends, no really free society is possible without the constant building up of habits of freer relationships, of increased individual liberty, and of larger independence for all social groups. It is significant that under the Bolshevik dictatorship in Russia, this very principle which is so scorned and ridiculed in political life, is the one that works best in building up education, the cooperatives, the trade unions, and the great network of economic and social organizations. It is significant, too, that all over the world social advances in any field are being made only on the solid basis of increased individual responsibility, voluntary association and free federation. The highway of progress lies only through increased liberty for groups and individuals, whether in education, with its new type of schools in which adult authority is minimized, or in dealing with crime, with the growing tendency to substitute friendly treatment for the brutality of the prison régime, or in family life, or in the trade unions and cooperative organizations of producers and consumers.

Kropotkin's teachings, embodying these principles, will long serve to inspire faith in freedom and to clarify thinking as to how to achieve it. It will help shape policies and develop movements in a world which has still many years of struggle before it between the forces of authority and liberty.

ROGER N. BALDWIN

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# THE STORY OF KROPOTKIN'S LIFE

KROPOTKIN is remembered chiefly as he became in his later years, a kindly, beaming philosopher-scientist, whose light blue-gray eyes looked out through spectacles with serenity and penetration. Bald, with a wide forehead and bushy white beard, he at once impressed all he met as a man of great intellectual force, but without the slightest self-consciousness or sense of superiority. Though his kindness and courtly manners marked him in all relations, they were not of the patronizing aristocrat, but of a genuine lover of his fellow-men who made no distinctions between them. Whether lecturing to a scientific association or an anarchist group, dining with the aristocrats or working people, he was simple, warm, earnest,—overflowing with feeling for the cause he had at heart, but with no concern for himself, no sense of leadership or position.

Although he was a direct descendant of the Ruriks, who were Czars before the Romanoffs, he never referred to himself as a prince, and he disliked titles. He says in his Memoirs that he dropped his title at the age of twelve “under the influence of republican teachings,” and never used it thereafter. He even rebuked his friends, when they so referred to him.

The young Kropotkin of Russian revolutionary memory already showed all the traits which later distinguished him. The same duality of interest marked him from his teens,—on the one side a love of intellectual pursuits, dispassionate and scientific, and on the other a passionate interest in the oppressed. He came early to science and philosophy largely through the interest of his older brother, to whom he was bound by an unusual affection. His revolutionary convictions were the expression of naturally warm sympathies, aroused by the condition of his father's serfs and by the agitation around him.

His early years in a great establishment in Moscow, divided into masters and serfs, impressed him deeply. He was born in 1842 when the agitation for freedom of the serfs was well under way. Growing up in a home in the nobles' quarter, where his father, a wealthy landowner, kept fifty servants to do the work for a family of eight to twelve, he was at once faced with the iniquities of the feudal system. He saw the serfs,—his nurses, his friends,—punished, sometimes cruelly beaten. His father ordered the establishment like a factory, for all the goods were made at home or on the country estate where the family went for the summers, and from which the peasants brought in all the supplies for the long winters. That father was a little autocrat, absolute master of the lives, loves and welfare of all his peasants and serfs numbering over one thousand two hundred and fifty. He had inherited them with three great country estates and the Moscow house, and the little family lived in luxury off their labor.

The father had no occupation. The old Moscow nobility had lost their jobs at court when the capital had been moved to St. Petersburg, and held only honorary positions. But he busied himself in military style,—for he was trained as an officer in the army,—in ordering the affairs of his estates and in doing favors for all who sought his help. He enjoyed playing the man of influence, and put endless energy into the petty affairs of strangers just to get the satisfaction of being looked up to. He kept open house and entertained lavishly.



It took five cooks to prepare the food, a dozen men servants to wait on table, with a dozen more to tend the dozen horses. A private orchestra of the servants played for meals and for the gay card parties and dances that often kept the house open till the small hours.

Kropotkin's mother, a beautiful woman, daughter of a governor-general of Siberia, died of tuberculosis when he was only between three and four years old. He with his two older brothers were reared by French tutors and German nurses. The eldest boy was separated by some years from Peter and his brother Alexander, who was a year and a half older. The two small boys were raised together. They saw little of their father. He was even to them an autocrat, a distant and fearful figure. He married again two years after their mother's death, a marriage arranged solely for social advantage. The new mother caused all connections with the boys' mother's family to be broken, but gave them no attention herself. The servants and a French tutor raised the two youngsters.

At the age of ten, Kropotkin's future training was determined quite accidentally by being favored with the attention of the Emperor at a costume ball in Moscow, in which the children of the nobility took part. As a result of being picked out for his charm and good looks, young Peter was invited to become a page of the Emperor, for which a limited number of boys each year were trained in a special school in St. Petersburg. But he did not enter the corps for three years. When he was only twelve,—still studying at home in Moscow,—he began to write novels and to read French and Russian political books. It was then he dropped his title of prince in referring to himself, coming to the decision through reading libertarian tracts. But he appears to have kept his decision quiet. His brother Alexander was even more pronounced in his interest in liberal ideas, in philosophy and in political economy. Both boys used to discuss together by the hour the great issues of the day. At thirteen, Peter went to the corps of pages at St. Petersburg and the brothers were separated.

There he attended the military school in which all the pages were entered, carrying on their studies and serving in court. He became absorbed in mathematics, physics, astronomy and history. He even started writing a text-book on physics. On the practical side he turned to surveying. And here in this school strangely enough, he got his first knowledge of the revolutionary movement, which at once gripped him. At seventeen or eighteen he read his first revolutionary paper, Alexander Herzen's *Polnaya Zvezda*, published in London and secretly circulated in Russia. It advocated nothing more radical than a constitution for Russia, but that advocacy was considered revolutionary by the Czars.

It was at this time that the agitation for the freeing of the serfs came to a head, and the Emperor's proclamation issued in 1861, just as Peter was finishing his schooling, gave him profound joy. He was now an officer in the army with his choice of service. He elected to go to Siberia as aide to the Governor-General with headquarters at Chita. There he tried to reform the conditions of the prisoners and the exiles, and to improve the local town governments. Geographical research was part of the job and Kropotkin went into it intently, making the studies which led to his later work. After he had been there two years his brother Alexander, to his great joy, joined him, for he too was an officer in the army. Both of them resigned together three years later,—in 1867, when Peter was twenty-five,—as a result of their revulsion at the cruelty to Polish exiles.

Peter went to the University in St. Petersburg; his brother to the law. For five years he studied mathematics and the geography of Siberia. His report on Siberia was published. He discovered, after long and painstaking research, what to him was a supreme joy,—the general principle that the mountains in Siberia are formed in just the opposite direction to that assumed by all previous geographers, a discovery with far-reaching effects. He became secretary of the section of the Russian Geographical Society dealing with physical geography, and refused the secretaryship of the whole society only because he felt himself too strongly drawn to the cause of the peasants.

At this time, at the age of thirty, he took a trip to western Europe to study workers' movements. He went to Zurich, where he joined a local of the International Working Men's Association, but quit in disgust when he saw the workers' interests being sacrificed to the political fortunes of a friendly lawyer. But in the Jura Federation, composed chiefly of watchmakers, he found what he instinctively was drawn to,—an association without political ambitions, and with no distinctions between the leaders and the rank-and-file. This federation had been greatly influenced by Bakunin's anarchist teaching. It was Kropotkin's first direct contact with anarchism. He says of it in his *Memoirs*:

“The theoretical aspects of anarchism, as they were then beginning to be expressed in the Jura Federation, especially by Bakunin; the criticisms of State socialism—the fear of an economic despotism far more dangerous than the merely political despotism—which I heard formulated there; and the revolutionary character of the agitation, appealed strongly to my mind. But the equalitarian relations which I found in the Jura Mountains, the independence of thought and expression which I saw developing in the workers and their unlimited devotion to the cause appealed far more strongly to my feelings; and when I came away from the mountains after a week's stay with the watchmakers, my views upon socialism were settled. I was an anarchist.”

He never met Bakunin, who died a few years later, but he was greatly influenced by his personality. He was impressed with Bakunin's not posing as an intellectual authority, but with his being a “moral personality,”—which could be said also of Kropotkin himself. He was won to revolutionary thought in its class significance, not as political reform. He says of this view;

“I began to understand that revolutions—that is, periods of accelerated rapid evolution and rapid changes—are as much in the nature of human society as the slow evolution which incessantly goes on now among the civilized races of mankind. And each time that such a period of accelerated evolution and reconstruction on a grand scale begins, civil war is liable to break out on a small or larger scale. The question is then not so much how to avoid revolutions as to how to obtain the greatest results with the most limited amount of civil war, the smallest number of victims and a minimum of mutual embitterment. For that end there is only one means; namely, that the oppressed part of society should obtain the clearest possible conception of what they intend to achieve and how, and that they should be imbued with the enthusiasm which is necessary for that achievement; in that case they will be sure to attach to their cause the best and the freshest intellectual forces of the privileged class.”

Returning to Russia after these months in Switzerland, he at once joined the “Circle of Tchaykovsky,” a secret educational organization of students, who later became socialists, which was part of the movement “to the People,” regarded as revolutionary. Still casting about for the most practical means of working for the revolutionary ideal, Kropotkin was divided between going to his estate, just inherited upon his father's death, to start a peasant land movement, or to agitate among the courtiers for a constitution. While he was debating this, he continued his geographical work, going to Finland to finish a study there. For two years in St. Petersburg he worked day times on geography, and at night in his revolutionary circle, going to meetings dressed as a peasant and under an assumed name.

He finally decided to go to his estate to start the land league, but waited in St. Petersburg longer than he had intended in order to present a paper to the Geographical Society. At the meeting he was proposed for president, which he declined to consider, knowing that he might be arrested at any time. Many of his friends had already been imprisoned. As he was leaving his lodgings the next day he was pursued, identified by one of the workers in his own circle who had turned spy, and taken to jail. He was lodged in the Fortress of Peter and Paul. His arrest caused a sensation, for the proof of his connection with the revolutionary cause was clear. He was then thirty-two (March, 1874.)

Then followed almost two years in prison awaiting trial. He was allowed to read and write, indeed to continue his scientific work. His brother Alexander was arrested after a visit to him, simply for writing a letter to an exile in London. He was sent to Siberia, where he lived the rest of his life, committing suicide after twelve years. Kropotkin fell ill in the fortress and was transferred to the prison hospital. As he convalesced there, a daring plot was formed by his friends to effect his escape. Incredible as it seems, he was able to run from the inside court-yard where he exercised daily, through a door opened to let in some wagons, and out to the street before the astonished guards could collect their wits enough to shoot. Once in the street he jumped into a waiting cab and was lost in the traffic. Disguised, he made his way out of Russia to Sweden where he got a boat to England. There he intended to stay only briefly, and to return to Russia to continue his revolutionary activities. But he soon changed his mind. He says of the decision which kept him in virtual exile for forty-two years:—

“I was soon taken up by the wave of the anarchist movement which was just then rising in western Europe; and I felt that I should be more useful in helping that movement to find its proper expression than I could possibly be in Russia. In my mother country I was too well known to carry on an open propaganda, especially among the workers and peasants; and later on when the Russian movement became a conspiracy and an armed struggle against the representatives of autocracy, all thought of a popular movement was necessarily abandoned; while my own inclinations drew me more and more intensely toward casting in my lot with the laboring and toiling masses. To bring to them such conceptions as would aid them to direct their efforts to the best advantage of all the workers; to deepen and widen the ideals and principles which will underlie the coming social revolution; to develop these ideals and principles before the workers, not as an order coming from their leaders, but as a result of their own reason; and so to awaken their own initiative, now that they were called upon to appear in the historical arena as the builders of a new, equitable mode of organization of society—this seemed to me as necessary for the development of mankind as anything I could accomplish in Russia at that time. Accordingly I joined the few men who were working in that direction in western Europe, relieving those of them who had been broken down by years of hard struggle.”

He made contacts in England with the scientific journals, to which he contributed articles and reviews, and so earned a meagre living. He left Russia with nothing, and his estate was of course confiscated. For the rest of his life he continued to make his living solely by his scientific writings, refusing to take anything for his labors in the anarchist movement, though he was often desperately poor.

But England depressed him. He said of it. “Life without color, atmosphere without air, the sky without a sun, had the same effect on me as a prison. I suffered for air. I couldn’t work.” So he moved a year later to Switzerland, where he joined the Jura Federation and settled down among the workers. Bakunin had just died (1876), but the conflict between his ideas and those of the authoritarian Marxists raged. Of that struggle Kropotkin wrote:—

“The conflict between the Marxists and the Bakunists was not a personal affair. It was the necessary conflict between the principles of federalism and those of centralization, the free commune and the state’s paternal rule, the free action of the masses of the people and the betterment of existing capitalist conditions through legislation,—a conflict between the Latin spirit and the German geist, which after the defeat of France on the battlefield, claimed supremacy in science, politics, philosophy, and in socialism too, representing its own conception of socialism as ‘scientific,’ while all other interpretations it described as ‘utopian.’”

He found a congenial group of friends in James Guillaume, an intellectual, a highly educated man who was the author of serious works, in Elisée Réclus, the distinguished French geographer, then in

exile, and in Enrico Malatesta, Italian anarchist and follower of Bakunin. Most of the Russians in Switzerland he found had become Marxists, and so his friends were among the Latins. He met at this time a young Russian student, Sophie Ananieff, living also in virtual exile in Switzerland. Shortly after they were married there.

As Kropotkin studied the forces about him he came to see that anarchism needed a deeper interpretation than its significance to politics and economics. His philosophical and scientific outlook moved him to probe for a synthesis, a unity which should establish it as a principle of life. This conception colored practically all his thinking, all his work in social ethics, and led him to ceaseless activity in research and interpretation to the day of his death. Even his writing in the natural sciences, notably his *Mutual Aid*, a classic reply to the school of the “survival of the fittest,” was impelled by this desire to prove on a scientific basis the case for voluntary cooperation and freedom. Of this period of growth he says:

“I gradually came to realize that anarchism represents more than a new mode of action and a mere conception of a free society; that it is part of a philosophy, natural and social, which must be developed in a quite different way from the metaphysical or dialectic methods which have been employed in sciences dealing with man. I saw that it must be treated by the same methods as the natural sciences; not, however, on the slippery ground of mere analogies such as Herbert Spencer accepts, but on the solid basis of induction applied to human institutions. And I did my best to accomplish what I could in that direction.”

With the exception of a trip back to England and to Paris, Kropotkin lived in Switzerland for five years, until he was thirty-nine,—doing what he describes as his best work, with the help of his wife and Elisée Réclus. It was chiefly in the form of articles and editorials for a fortnightly paper, *Le Révolté*, which he started at Geneva in 1879, and which he continued for many years, despite persecution and suppression, under the later names of *La Révolte* and *Les Temps Nouveaux*. Most of the material in the pamphlets reprinted in this volume was first published in his paper. The pamphlet achieved large editions in a dozen languages. Elisée Réclus collected the best of his early writing in the paper into a book, *Paroles d'un Révolté*, published only in French, in 1885 by Marpon Flammarion, while Kropotkin was at the Clairvaux prison.

The little group did not find Switzerland an easy land of refuge. The Jura Federation, frankly anarchist, was broken up by the Swiss authorities following anarchist assassinations in Europe, with which of course it had no connection. After the killing of Czar Alexander II in 1881, Kropotkin was expelled from Switzerland, doubtless at the instance of the Russian Government, which always kept close watch on him through its secret agents. The Russian Holy League, organized to defend the Czar's regime, often threatened him with death.

Finding refuge again in England, Kropotkin continued his writing and his lecturing for a year, but to tiny audiences. Interest in radical ideas was at low ebb. Then, because of Mme. Kropotkin's ill health in that climate, they went to Thonon, where her brother was very ill. There Kropotkin continued his paper for anarchist propaganda while writing scientific articles for *The Encyclopedia Britannica*—the same strange combination of disrepute and respectability which marked him all his life. His distinction as a geographer was also recognized by his election to the British Royal Geographical Society, an honor which he declined because of his hostility to any association with a “royal” organization.

When a little later a demonstration took place at Lyons, in which some bombs were thrown, Kropotkin was arrested along with some sixty anarchists in France, though he was at Thonon and had

no relation to the affair. All were charged with “membership in the International Working Men’s Association,” although Kropotkin alone was a member. They were tried together at Lyons in 1883 and all were convicted in an atmosphere made hysterical by the press. Kropotkin was among the four to get the maximum five year sentence, and was sent to Clairvaux prison. There he stayed for three years while friends and sympathizers all over France worked for amnesty for the whole group, finally succeeding in getting a vote of pardon in the Chamber. Among many distinguished Frenchmen who worked for his freedom was Georges Clemenceau, then a radical, who was unceasing in his efforts in the Chamber.

At Clairvaux conditions were fairly good for the political prisoners,—no compulsory labor, a chance to study and write, to buy their own food and wine, and to work outdoors in a garden—a privilege secured for politicals by Clemenceau. They organized classes for study among the prisoners. Ernest Renan sent Kropotkin part of his library for use. Sophie Kropotkin came to Clairvaux after a year and was allowed to see her husband daily. Yet Kropotkin bristled at the whole system. His *Prisons and their Moral Influence on Prisoners*, (pages 219-235) was chiefly the result of his observations and experience at Clairvaux. He also wrote up his early and later prison experiences in book form in *In Russian and French Prisons*. The whole edition was at once bought up and destroyed by the Russian secret service, and Kropotkin himself was unable to obtain an additional copy in response to advertising.

After his release he went to Paris, only to be expelled, finding refuge for the third time in England, where he settled in a cottage outside London. His only child, Alexandra, was born at this time, which gave him great joy, although his life was saddened then by the news of the suicide of his beloved brother Alexander in exile in Siberia. This was his last family tie in Russia. The eldest brother had gone other roads from early youth and Kropotkin had no contact with him.

He found a new spirit in the English workers far more vital than five years before. He was encouraged to start an anarchist paper in London, *Freedom*, a monthly still published by the group which he got together. He continued his French paper, now *La Revolte*, for *Le Révolté* had succumbed to a prosecution for anti-militarist propaganda. A series of his early articles in *Freedom* were later revised and published in book form as *The Conquest of Bread*, the most comprehensive and effective work in existence on anarchist economics.

At this time, too, he was inspired to write *Mutual Aid*, the most widely known of all his books. He says he got the statement of the main idea, that of cooperation as a factor in the survival of animal and human societies, from the Russian geologist Kessler, but the inspiration came from Huxley’s *Struggle for Existence* (1888) which aroused his anarchist soul to combat. *Mutual Aid* was published as a series of articles in the *Nineteenth Century* (London), for which Kropotkin wrote extensively. His researches for this work led him into a study of the guilds and “free communes” of medieval Europe, to which he referred time and again as examples of non-political economic organizations freely cooperating. He embodied these studies in a work, *The State; Its Historic Rôle*, which he followed some years later with *The Modern State*.

For thirty years after his return from France Kropotkin lived in England, in or near London, until his return to Russia in 1917. They were years of tireless writing and studying, relieved by manual craftsmanship in book-binding and carpentry, and a devotion to music which was a lifelong passion. He took occasional trips to France and Switzerland in later years when the authorities forgot the ban on him, and he made two lecture tours in the United States in 1897 and 1901. In these years of ceaseless labor, interrupted only by ill-health, he wrote four books, *Fields, Factories, Workshops, The Great French Revolution*, his crowning achievement in research and interpretation, the *Memoirs of a*

*Revolutionist*, first published as a series of articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* (Boston), and *Modern Science and Anarchism*. In addition he wrote a pamphlet, *Anarchist Morality*, reprinted in this volume and numerous articles, many published later as pamphlets. He continued of course his scientific geographical studies and writing from which he earned his living.

He was offered the chair of geography at Cambridge University, but with the offer went a pretty plain intimation that the university would expect him to cease his anarchist activities while in their service. Kropotkin of course declined the offer.

It was as a speaker at the British Association for the Advancement of Science, holding its meeting in 1897 at Toronto, that Kropotkin first went to America. Interested friends in the United States secured an engagement for him to give three lectures on *Mutual Aid* at the Lowell Institute in Boston after the Toronto meeting. He also lectured in New York. On this first American trip Kropotkin was induced to undertake the writing of his *Memoirs*. Robert Erskine Ely and other American friends impressed on him the importance of the story, and secured the consent of Walter Hines Page, then editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, to run it as a series of articles, despite objections by the *Atlantic's* editorial council. Mr. Ely wrote the introduction, which brought Kropotkin's significance before a wide public hardly familiar with anarchist philosophy or revolutionary struggle. When it appeared in book form through Houghton, Mifflin & Company in 1899, it carried an introduction by George Brandes. It ranks high among life stories, vividly and modestly told. His intimate picture of the struggle against the Czars is unique. It deals chiefly with his early years, and brings his story only to 1889, when he was forty-seven.

On this trip, Kropotkin went out of his way to visit Pittsburgh to meet his fellow-anarchist, Alexander Berkman, then serving a long sentence for an attempt on the life of H. C. Frick of the Carnegie Steel Corporation. As Berkman was at the time in solitary confinement, Kropotkin was refused permission to see him. It is said that some years later, Andrew Carnegie invited Kropotkin, among other notables, to a party at his castle in Scotland. Kropotkin wrote a dignified declination on the ground that he could not accept the hospitality of a man in any way responsible for keeping Berkman in prison.

But it was in 1901 that he made his more memorable visit to the United States, traveling as far west as Chicago, lecturing at leading universities, and again at the Lowell Institute, Boston where he gave series on Russian literature, later published in book form as *Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature*. In New York he spoke before the League for Political Education; before an audience at Cooper Union on anarchism, with Ernest Crosby, the biographer of Tolstoi, as chairman; and twice at a Fifth Avenue hall, where he talked anarchism as well as Russian literature to a fashionable assemblage. In Boston the Rev. Edward Everett Hale invited him to speak in his church, but Kropotkin refused because of his hostility to the church as an institution, though he finally was persuaded to reconcile his scruples to speaking in the church's lecture room.

He spoke at Harvard, where he was warmly received by Prof. Charles Eliot Norton and others, and at Wellesley College. He did not neglect his anarchist friends, speaking at many meetings arranged by them. The Russian secret police kept track of him even on this tour. The press was fair, even friendly and his audiences large and alert, plying him with questions at the close of each address. He spoke from notes and in an English strongly accented, in a professorial but very earnest style.

Robert Erskine Ely, who assisted in arranging some of his lectures, relates an incident of his stay in New York in which Kropotkin was the unwitting means of bringing together two persons as little likely to meet as any two in the country. Ely had taken Kropotkin to call on Mrs. Jefferson Davis,

widow of the president of the Confederacy, at her request. During the interview, Booker Washington, who was in search of Mr. Ely, was announced as in the hotel lobby, and Mrs. Davis expressed a desire to meet the Negro educator. So these three extraordinary people sat and politely conversed as if it were a most ordinary occasion.

These American trips were the only real breaks in the years of study and writing in England. Kropotkin's health became uncertain and in later years did not permit his undertaking the strain of public lectures. But his health did not seriously affect his studies and his writing, nor his activity as a propagandist and as adviser to the scores of comrades who came to him as the guiding intellectual force of the anarchist movement.

When the 1905 Russian Revolution broke out, Kropotkin aided by publishing a paper in London, and by such activities as exiles could undertake. He later wrote a pamphlet on it, *White Terror in Russia*, in English. His home was a center for Russian revolutionary refugees, whether anarchists or not.

He foresaw the World War, urging his French comrades long before it broke out not to oppose an extension of the period of military service, for he feared German militarism. He broke with many of his anarchist friends on his espousal of the Allied cause in what to them was a purely nationalist-capitalist war. His attitude during the war split the anarchist camp even further than the traditional sectarianism of the radical movement had already done.

When the Russian Revolution began in March 1917, and the Czar was overthrown, Kropotkin at once prepared to return, overjoyed that he had lived to see the success of the great struggle to which he had given his early vigorous years and to which he had always contributed as best he could in exile. He went back in June, settling first in Petrograd, and later in Moscow.

Despite his seventy-five years, he took an immediate and active interest both in the working out of the Revolution and particularly in the conduct of the war. Kerensky consulted him constantly. He appeared in the "democratic convention" of all factions held in Moscow where he urged a renewed military offensive. On the side of the Revolution he accepted membership on a commission of intellectuals which undertook the task of promoting further revolutionary changes without bloodshed—but it never really got under way.

The Bolshevik seizure of power in October, 1917, ended these activities, and Kropotkin soon moved out of Moscow into Dmitrov, a small town nearby. There he and his wife and daughter had a four or five room wooden house, a garden and a cow. He got only the regulation food allowance for an old man, despite the fact that he was in ill-health and his family complained bitterly of his inability to work because of the lack of the essentials of life. But he did not complain himself, except to friends, and he refused to ask the Government for anything. His friends, however, did,—but without success until they finally got to Lenin, a great admirer of Kropotkin, who at once ordered the local Soviet to let Kropotkin keep his cow and to give him an extra allowance of food. His daughter has Lenin's order written in hand on the back of some printed form.

Kropotkin refused to have any relations with the local Soviet. However, in 1920 when Margaret Bondfield of the British Labour Mission was visiting him he accompanied her to a meeting of the local Soviet in the school house at which she had been asked to speak. According to Henry Alsberg, who was in the party, all the members arose as he came in and cheered him. He appeared very uneasy. When Miss Bondfield had finished, the chairman turned to Kropotkin and invited him to speak, saying that all Russians were proud of him as a very great man. He arose, half pleased and half angry, grew very red, and sat down without speaking a word.



Although Kropotkin could take no active part in the development of the revolution under the Bolsheviks, he was very deeply concerned over the terrorism both as a detriment to the Revolution itself and on humanitarian grounds. A friend, who was also a friend of Lenin, came with a message saying that Lenin was anxious to see Kropotkin and willing to come to Dmitrov in order to discuss it. The interview was at once arranged. Although Lenin was cordial and appreciative of Kropotkin's view, nothing came of the meeting.

Irreconcilable as he was to the Bolsheviks, Kropotkin even more vigorously opposed foreign intervention in Russia or counter-revolutionary movements. He even stopped his friends when they made bitter tirades against the government. His advice to anarchists was to aid in "reconstruction" through the unions and associations outside the government. To young anarchists abroad he advised joining the syndicalist movement as the best way to the realization of the anarchist goal.

Of the revolution under the Bolsheviks, he wrote once in 1919 for the British Labour Mission, and once, after much urging, in November, 1920, just before his death. These statements are so revealing of his big outlook, so wise in their tolerant understanding, that we are reprinting them in this collection under the head, *The Russian Revolution and the Soviet Government*.

But Kropotkin took no part in any movement. He was old and feeble and engrossed in his studies, chiefly the writing of a book on *Ethics*, published after his death. He continued to grow feebler and was actually taken ill with pneumonia. He died in the little house in Dmitrov on February 8, 1921, seventy-eight years of age.

The Soviet Government offered his family a State funeral, which they, of course, declined. Instead the anarchist group in Moscow arranged the funeral in the Trade Union house.

Twenty thousand people marched in the two-hour procession to the grave in such bitter cold that the musical instruments froze. Black banners were carried demanding "the release from prison of the friends and comrades of Kropotkin." At the grave, speeches were made by Emma Goldman, by representatives of the released prisoners, of the Tolstoians, of scientific and labor organizations, of the students, of the Social Revolutionists, and of the Communist Party.

The little Dmitrov house was given by the Government to the widow for her personal use. Kropotkin's birthplace in Moscow—the big wooden house in the old nobles' quarter with its six massive square columns—was turned over to his wife and friends by the government for use as a museum for his books, papers, letters and belongings, and is now maintained by the contributions of old friends and admirers throughout the world.

ROGER N. BALDWIN

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# NOTE ON THE EDITING OF THE PAMPHLETS

Kropotkin's work in the field of anarchist teaching was popularized through cheap pamphlets, sold up into the hundreds of thousands in practically every European language,—and Chinese and Japanese as well. He wrote only a few pamphlets as such. The score or more different pamphlets were chiefly reprints of articles and speeches which he adapted to the needs of anarchist propaganda.

Written in a simple style and resounding with calls to action, they appealed also by close reasoning and vivid illustrations. They met the need of workers for a systematic and scientific treatment of the problems confronting those who believed in the revolutionary mission of the working-class, and who rejected the appeal to political methods or to the concept of a State dictatorship by a party of the working-class. They aroused both the spirit of freedom and of revolution. And they voiced the drama of combat against the whole range of authoritarian forces, in the camps of capitalism and of socialism alike.

These pamphlets first appeared in French or English, oftener in French, for most of the articles or speeches from which they were taken were in French. A few were written in Russian. Kropotkin wrote in all three languages. Most of his scientific articles and his larger books were written in English. The pamphlets were translated into a dozen languages, —their greatest circulation being in Latin and English-speaking countries. Their circulation in Japanese has been surprisingly large.

The profound changes in the radical and working-class movement throughout the world following the World War and the Russian Revolution, decreased interest in pamphlets dealing with conditions before the war. Their circulation fell off everywhere. The anarchist movement itself lost in numbers and vigor from the dissension among its own followers, from the emergence of communism as a stronger fighting force, and from the general depression of working-class militancy in the face of capitalist consolidation and persecution. Anarchist publications of all sorts have accordingly decreased. But it is noteworthy that much of Kropotkin's work has been published in Sweden and Germany since the war, and a complete bibliography covering over five hundred titles in all languages appeared in 1926.

These pamphlets represent far more than the phases of revolutionary struggle of Kropotkin's time. They make a lasting contribution to thought in the confused conflicts which mark the long transition to a socialist economy and to the freedoms which lie in and beyond it. It is to present the essence of that thought that these pamphlets have been edited in book-form, omitting only the references and illustrations no longer pertinent, and controversial material of no current interest. They appear as they were written except for these omissions, for improvements in phrasing and punctuation, and for better translations.

All the pamphlets ever published in English are reprinted here except four,—*The Commune of Paris*, which deals with one event to which Kropotkin refers clearly enough in other work; *War*, a

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