

The Life of Peter Kropotkin



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Braamfontein, 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa

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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-grey 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 patronising aristocrat, but of a genuine lover of his fellowmen 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 that 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 labour.

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 favours 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 favoured 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 textbook 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 *Polar Star*, 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

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 labour organisations, 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.

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 schoolhouse 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 realisation 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* (coming soon, in pamphlet form, from Zabalaza Books -ed).

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

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 that 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 evo-

lution and rapid changes - are as much in the nature of human society as the slow evolution which incessantly goes on now among the civilised 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 Tchaikovsky," a secret educational organisation 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 courtyard 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: -

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 centre 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

a study of the guilds and "free communes" of medieval Europe to which he referred time and again as examples of non-political economic organisations freely co-operating. He embodied these studies in a work, *The State: It's Historic Role*, 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 bookbinding 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 labour, interrupted only by ill-health, he wrote four books; *Fields, Factories and 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 (see earlier note -ed), 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 it's 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, travelling as far west as Chicago, lecturing at leading universities, and again at the Lowell Institute, Boston where he gave a series on Russian literature, later published in book form

"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 labouring 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 organisation 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 labours in the anarchist movement, though he was often desperately poor.

But England depressed him. He said of it: "Life without colour, 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 centralisation, 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 Errico 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 coloured 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 co-operation and freedom. Of this period of growth he says:

"I gradually came to realise 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 (i.e. in the book *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, of which this pamphlet is an extract-ed) was first published in his paper. The pamphlets 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, organised 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 Encyclopaedia Britannica* - the same strange combination of disre-

pute and respectability which marked him all his life. His distinction as a geographer was also recognised by his election to the British Royal Geographical Society, an honour which he declined because of his hostility to any association with a "royal" organisation.

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 sympathisers 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 George 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 labour, 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 organised 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 119 - 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 that he got together. He continued his French paper, now *La Révolte*, 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 co-operation 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