

# Mutual Aid Can Save the Planet

New Edition of Kropotkin's Classic

Kim A. Broadie

2021

a review of

*Mutual Aid: An Illuminated Factor of Evolution* by Peter Kropotkin, Illustrated by N.O. Bonzo, Introduction by David Graeber & Andrej Grubacic, Foreword by Ruth Kinna, Preface by GATS, Afterword by Allan Antliff. PM Press/ Kairos 2021

This new edition of anthropological essays by Russian naturalist and anarchist philosopher Peter Kropotkin's 1902 *Mutual Aid* provides us with key insights necessary to prevent our headlong plunge into planetary suicide.

His study of animal and early human societies demonstrates that mutual aid is the most important factor in human and animal evolution. Society is the arena where we are naturally cooperative and mutually supportive. It is the State that creates conflicts. The institution is a coercive and malignant tumor on top of society.

The book shows the encroachments of the State into the free cities of medieval Europe where the arts and sciences flourished among the freemen in guilds that "sprang out of a conception of brotherhood and unity fostered by the city."

What happened? Ideas. Ones that Kropotkin ascribes to the pulpit, the university, and the judge's bench. These self-serving institutions advocated for 200 years that public safety and social good can come about only as a result of a centralized State, justifying any atrocity.

Mutual aid is the principle needed for our survival. Kropotkin writes that it is the main causal factor in evolution. It has resulted in an ecosystem whereby different species occupy different niches, reducing competition between individuals and groups.

Humans have created a system that has elevated competition between individuals, corporations, and nations resulting in deadly battles over the world's resources. The winners reap the rewards, and the losers get scraps. Meanwhile, our beautiful Earth is laid waste.

This new edition of *Mutual Aid* has been beautifully illustrated by one of anarchism's most creative current artists, N.O. Bonzo. The reader will also enjoy original artwork by GATS and insightful commentary by David Graeber, Ruth Kinna, Andrej Grubacic, and Allan Antliff.

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