DISSIDENT GEOGRAPHIES

An introduction to radical ideas and practice

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in memory of Tren Wills

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Acknowledgements

Dissident Geographies: An Introduction

This book is about radical ideas and practices, their geographical origins and manifestations, and their implications for geographical thought. The dissident geographies explored in the book all share a political commitment to overturning prevailing relations of power and oppression. Each chapter introduces a different strand of radical thought and action *before* going on to examine the contexts in which these ideas and practices developed and their geographical implications in more depth. The book has a threefold approach to dissident geographies; first, we introduce the spaces and places within which different radical ideas are produced and practised; second, we explore the impact these ideas have had on social and political landscapes; and third, we unpack the implications of these ideas for the scholarly discipline of geography. As such, *Dissident Geographies* explores the spatiality of political practice *and* the politics of geographical thought.

Dissident Geographies aims to introduce a range of radical ideas which have shaped, and continue to shape, the ways the world is understood, experienced and changed for the better. The book illustrates the ways in which these political traditions and activism outside the academy shape the production and dissemination of knowledge within geography, by tracing the disciplinary development and contribution of a number of dissident ideas. The radical traditions that we include are anarchism, marxism, feminism, the struggle for sexual liberation, and postcolonialism. Each of these has a distinct history and geography, different agendas for action and diverse implications for the contemporary world. But each of these radical traditions also has important and productive links to other bodies of thought and action, and their protagonists have often formed political alliances with one another. Each set of radical ideas has inspired new visions of past, present and future worlds, and each tradition has adherents who are drawing on those ideas to inform their behaviour, alliances and actions today. Moreover, the development of these ideas within the discipline of geography has shown that geographical knowledge is not – and

should not attempt to be – static and detached from what is going on in the world, but is rather dynamic and profoundly influenced by events, struggles and politics beyond university life. If we are to understand and change the contemporary world, *Dissident Geographies* is designed to help illuminate the history and geography of radical ideas and so inform analysis and action today (for more on the broader history of geographical thought see Barnes and Gregory, 1997; Cloke *et al.*, 1991; Daniels and Lee, 1996; Gregory *et al.*, 1994; Livingstone, 1993; Massey *et al.*, 1999; Peet, 1998; Unwin, 1992. For more on activism and the academy see Blomley, 1994; Castree, 1999; Tickell, 1995).

Dissident Geographies examines the impact of different radical ideas in shaping the ways in which geography is researched, taught and institutionalised as an academic discipline. Each set of ideas that we examine has raised new research agendas and new research methods within geography while also highlighting pervasive power inequalities between geographers, both staff and students. Radical ideas thus have implications not only for *what* geographers do but also for *how* they do it. In putting new issues on the agenda, anarchist, marxist, feminist, sexual and postcolonial geographers propose new ways of relating to each other in the context of new institutional practices within the discipline. Less hierarchical, more inclusive, relations within the discipline are argued to be important in determining *who* is attracted to being a geographer, *what* they are able to do once they enter the discipline, and their ability to take up positions of power. Dissident geographers seek to overturn traditional power relations and attract working class people, women, sexual dissidents and people of colour to a discipline in which they can flourish and progress to play leadership roles.

Ignited by the wave of radical protests that spanned the Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam war movements, student unrest and the campaigns for gay and women's liberation, dissident geographers began to challenge the prevailing orthodoxies of the discipline in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As part of this endeavour, a group of graduate students and faculty members in the Geography Department at Clark University in the United States set up a new journal called *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography* in 1969. In the first issue, Richard Peet argued that radical geography posed important challenges for the future: first, it could help to design and campaign for a more equitable society 'in which poverty, suffering and the deadening feeling of uselessness and helplessness are eradicated, and in which a free people achieve a higher order of existence' (Peet, 1969: 4); second, it could help to achieve radical change through argument, polemic and activism; and third, it could help to restructure academic geography, to democratise its institutions, and to change what was taught. Radical geography was to be about designing and fighting for social change as well as revolutionising the discipline of geography.

In the early days, this awakening of radical geography was mainly characterised by geographical interpretations of anarchist and marxist thought, but subsequently, over the course of the 1980s and 1990s, the radical agenda has widened to include feminist, sexual liberationist and postcolonial geographies. Thirty years after the first issue of *Antipode* was published, this book examines

the importance of radical ideas and practices in geography today. While there can be no doubt that dissident geographies have had a great impact on the discipline, there remains much more to be done. Inequality and injustice have not disappeared and, in many ways, they remain more pressing than ever. Dissident geographies remain crucially important in attempting to change both the discipline of geography and the world.

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1

The Fire of Liberty: Anarchism and Geography

Anarchism

The Greek word *anarchos* simply means 'without a ruler', and the word anarchy is often used to describe the social disorder, violence and chaos associated with the breakdown of authority and the widespread violation of law. Yet anarchists aspire to the absence of authority as a positive step on the road to building a new society in harmony with itself and with nature. Rather than being a negative term, anarchy is argued to be a positive social development, allowing each individual to blossom without the restrictions and confinements of authoritative power, law and control. By its nature, however, this tradition of dissent is eclectic and rather hard to pin down. Anarchist writers have tended to eschew definitive political programmes or organisational practices, and there has been little co-ordination between anarchist groups. Indeed, as Fauré suggests, anarchists are only really united in their opposition to authority in all its forms, and beyond that, there is enormous diversity within the tradition:

> There may be – and indeed there are – many varieties of anarchist, yet all have a common characteristic that separates them from the rest of humankind. This uniting point is *the negation of the principle of Authority in social organisations and the hatred of all constraints that originate in institutions fuelled on this principle.* Thus, whoever denies Authority and fights against it is an Anarchist. (Fauré, quoted in Woodcock, 1977: 62; emphasis in the original)

Despite its antecedents in all human rebellion, and particularly in the political battles of the English Civil War and the French Revolution, the anarchist tradition only came to self-consciousness in the mid-nineteenth century. Anarchist thinkers such as Pierre Joseph Proudhon, Michael Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin and Elisée Réclus were part of the wider socialist movement, and it was not

until the 1870s that anarchists began to clearly distinguish themselves from marxists in arguments over the state, leadership and the mechanisms necessary to achieve social change. In this chapter we focus on the key ideas of these nineteenth-century anarchists (see Box 1.1), we explore the geography of anarchist organisation and experiment, and we consider the disciplinary implications of anarchist thought as far as geography is concerned. In this regard, it is significant that two of the key protagonists in the history of anarchism were practising geographers. A profound interest in the environment and in the diversity of social formations inspired both the geography and the anarchism of Peter Kropotkin and Elisée Réclus, and in their day, both men were celebrated as scholars of physical and regional geography (see Box 1.2 for details of the life of Kropotkin and Box 1.3 for a summary of Réclus's life and work and his involvement in the Paris Commune of 1871). For our purposes, however, it is frustrating that Kropotkin and Réclus were not able to combine their anarchist ideas with their geographical scholarship as they might do today. Moreover, although a number of authors have sought to spell out the geographical implications of the anarchist writings of Kropotkin and Réclus (see Stoddart, 1975; Galois, 1976; Breitbart, 1975, 1981; Dunbar, 1978, 1981; Fleming, 1988; Cook and Pepper, 1990), there has been little development of anarchism in geographical theory and/or research, leaving us to speculate about what an anarchist geography might be like. To date, anarchism has made its clearest mark on geography by influencing a new generation of academics in the late 1960s and 1970s, inspiring them to question the authority, hierarchies and received wisdoms of the discipline. Such anarchist-inspired rebellion brought forth the new shoots of a radical geography associated with the journal *Antipode*, the development of new research themes, new disciplinary practices and the breakthrough to marxism discussed in Chapter 2. Anarchist ideas have inspired enormous change within the discipline, but as yet, they have spawned only the outlines of a tradition of geographical scholarship and there is plenty of scope for further elaboration.

Box 1.1 Key anarchist thinkers

	Dates	Place of birth	Key writings
William Godwin	1756–1836	Wisbech, UK	*An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice & its Influence on General Virtue & Happiness* (1793)
Max Stirner	1806–1856	Bavaria, Germany	*The Ego and His Own* (1845)

Box 1.1 *continued*

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon	1809–1865	Besançon, France	*What is Property?* (1840); *On the Creation of Order in Humanity* (1843); *The Philosophy of Poverty* (1846); *The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* (1851); *Justice in the Revolution and the Church* (1858); *The Federal Principle* (1863)
Michael Bakunin	1814–1876	Tver, Russia	*Principles and Organization of the International Brotherhood* (1866); *God and the State* (1882)
Leo Tolstoy	1828–1910	Tula, Russia	*War and Peace* (1863–69); *Anna Karenina* (1874–82); *A Confession* (1882); *Resurrection* (1897–98); *What is Art?* (1897-98); *Patriotism and Government* (1900); *The Significance of the Russian Revolution* (1906)
Elisée Réclus	1830–1905	Ste-Foy-la-Grande, France	*La Nouvelle Géographie Universelle* (1878–94) (19 volumes); *Evolution et Révolution* (1898) *L'Homme et la Terre* (1905–08);
Peter Kropotkin	1842–1921	Moscow, Russia	*In Russian and French Prisons* (1887); *The Conquest of Bread* (1892); *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow* (1899); *Modern Science and Anarchism* (1901); *Mutual Aid* (1902); *The Great French Revolution 1789–1793* (1909)
Errico Malatesta	1853–1932	Casterta, Italy	*Fra Contadini (Between Peasants)* (1884); *Anarchy* (1891)
Emma Goldman	1869–1940	Russia	*Anarchism and Other Essays* (1910); *My Disillusionment in Russia* (1923); *My Further Disillusionment in Russia* (1924); *Living My Life* (1931)

Sources: Marshall, 1993; Miller, 1984

Box 1.2 The life of Peter Kropotkin

Prince Peter Alexeivich Kropotkin was born into the Russian aristocracy in 1842. His father was a high-ranking officer in the army, owning property in Moscow and an estate with 12,000 serfs in Kaluga. As was typical of his class, the young Kropotkin attended the military academy called the Corps of Pages from his early teens and he actually served as a Page de Chambre to the new Tsar, Alexander II. It was clear, however, that Peter was growing tired of this environment, and was developing more radical ideas, for in his early twenties he chose a posting with the Cossacks of the Amur in Siberia rather than opting for a safer career. The five years spent in Siberia proved to be a turning point for the developing revolutionary as he encountered a wild and uncharted landscape alongside anarchist ideas amongst the exiles confined to the region. His expeditions in the area proved to be the foundation of his later reputation as a physical geographer, and in particular, Kropotkin developed a new theory about the glaciology and the orography (the layout and alignment of the mountain ranges) of Asia. Moreover, his contact with people who lived without state control and regulation, building their own communities in such harsh conditions, helped to cement his anarchism. As he wrote in his *Memoirs*: 'I lost in Siberia whatever faith in state discipline I had cherished before. I was prepared to become an anarchist' (1962: 148).

Such interests were further stimulated when Kropotkin visited the Swiss Jura in 1872. The watchmakers of the region were famous for their political ideas and their communitarian lifestyles, and they had an enormous influence on Kropotkin's developing anarchism. In addition, this visit to Western Europe brought Kropotkin into contact with the First International and the libertarianism of Michael Bakunin. On his return to Russia, Kropotkin sought out like-minded souls in his homeland, joining the Chaikovsky Circle for two years and sympathising with the peasant-based movement of the Narodniks. As a result of such activity Kropotkin was arrested and imprisoned for the first time in March 1874. Imprisoned in the notorious Peter and Paul Fortress in St Petersburg, he was only able to escape after three years. Exiled, he then moved back to Western Europe where he made new contacts in the UK, Spain, Italy and Switzerland, helping to set up a new anarchist journal called *Le Révolte*. Following his expulsion from Switzerland, Kropotkin was arrested in Lyon in 1882 where he was confined in prison until 1886. The French authorities were petitioned for his release by 15 British professors, the Royal Geographical Society, William Morris and Patrick Geddes, reflecting his international reputation as a scholar and political thinker.

When he was 44, Kropotkin moved to London, where he was to live for another 41 years. Here he was involved in the journal *Freedom*, gave regular lectures across the country and continued to travel abroad. Kropotkin kept up with his writing, although he led an increasingly quiet life – particularly when his support for the First World War alienated him from others in the anarchist movement. For the last three years of his life Kropotkin returned to Russia. The excitement of revolution was soured by his fears over Bolshevik tactics, however, and he died in February 1921 in a village outside Moscow. Over 100,000 attended the funeral of this anarchist thinker and geographer.

Sources: Kropotkin, [1899] 1962; Miller, 1976; Brietbart, 1981; Cook, 1990; Marshall, 1993

Box 1.3 Elisée Réclus and the Paris Commune

Elisée Réclus was born to a religious family (his father was a Protestant Pastor), in a small village in the Dordogne, France, in 1830. Reflecting the profession and interests of his father, he attended Berlin University to study Theology in 1851, although while he was there he attended some of the popular geography lectures delivered by Carl Ritter. This geographical interest was then further fuelled by travels to America and Ireland – where he witnessed the terrible devastation of famine – an experience that fed his growing interest in the socialist movement (see Chapter 5 for more on the Irish Famine). Thus it was that when Réclus returned to Paris in 1857 he had become a geographer and a radical, playing a key role in the Paris Geographical Society, in Bakunin's secret *Brotherhood* and in the First International.

It was not, however, until the dramatic events of the Paris Commune that Elisée and his brother Elie became more clearly identified with the libertarian, or anarchist, wing of the socialist movement. The Commune began on 18 March 1871, when the workers of Paris took over the government of the city, in revolt against the authoritarianism and hardships they associated with the practices of the Second Empire. The Commune allowed a new social order to bloom, as men and women took on new roles and defended the city against the forces of the French army. This island of urban liberty was a reality for 73 days, reinforcing the strength of those who proselytised for social revolution, and giving Réclus the opportunity to test his ideas out in practice.

In the street battles that ended the Commune, however, 25,000 men and women were killed and Réclus, like many others, was imprisoned and then exiled to Switzerland. There, he began to write geography books and travel guides alongside anarchist pamphlets, cementing his role in the international movement. Between 1876 and 1894 he published the 19-volume *La Nouvelle Géographie Universelle* (New Universal Geography), and between 1905 and 1908 the smaller, 6-volume, *L'Homme et la Terre* (Man and Earth). These detailed, comprehensive, geography texts sought to integrate different sources of information about each part of the globe, and politically they were designed to show how the world's resources could be distributed to improve social well-being. Moreover, by challenging those of his profession who colluded with the imperialist carve-up of what is now the developing world, Réclus sought to use geography as a means to improve understanding, and empathy, across borders – eroding the power of the imperialist state by fostering a universal humanitarian spirit between the peoples of each nation and territory. In language which echoes the environmental concerns of our age, Réclus looked at the ways in which people could live in harmony with each other, and in a sustained relationship with the natural world (which he referred to as equilibrium). This holistic approach was later sidelined by other approaches to regional geography, but the themes of his work remain remarkably resonant in the contemporary world.

Réclus moved to Brussels for the last 11 years of his life where he took part in founding the New University, establishing a Geographical Institute there in 1898. Here, he did some unpaid tutoring and lecturing work, continuing with his research and writing from which he supported his family. He died in 1905.

Sources: Dunbar, 1978, 1981; Fleming, 1988

The key tenets of anarchist thought

> It would be misleading to offer a neat definition of anarchism, since by its very nature it is anti-dogmatic. It does not offer a fixed body of doctrine based on one particular world-view. It is a complex and subtle philosophy, embracing many different currents of thought and strategy. Indeed, anarchism is like a river with many currents and eddies, constantly changing and being refreshed by new surges but always moving towards the wide ocean of freedom. (Marshall, 1993: 3)

At the risk of funnelling the currents and eddies of anarchism into too narrow a channel, anarchists can be characterised by their opposition to all authority and their desire for a new social order. Authority, as embodied in institutions such as the church, state, army, factory and family, is argued to restrict human creativity and development, while upholding select social interests. Anarchists have sought to dispense with all such centralised and hierarchical power and have proposed living in small-scale, self-governing communities where decision making is shared (for a good introduction, see Harper, 1987). In this brief introduction to anarchist ideas we look at each part of this equation in turn.

Anti-authoritarianism

> When we ask for the abolition of the State and its organs we are always told that we dream of a society composed of men better than they are in reality. But no; a thousand times, no. All we ask is that men should not be made worse than they are by such institutions! (Kropotkin, from *Anarchism: Its philosophy and ideal*, 1970: 134)

Anarchists believe that centralised, hierarchical institutions play an enormous role in shaping the way people think and behave. By centralising decision making and taking control away from ordinary people, such institutions are argued to stifle the ability of people to think and act for themselves (so, for example, the officers of the local and national state are appointed or elected to take on responsibility for planning, development and environmental protection for you – taking away local control). Indeed, for writers such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Oscar Wilde, society can only advance when people feel able to question authority and tradition, making their own decisions and taking their own course through life:

> The more ignorant man is, the more obedient he is, and the more absolute confidence in his guide ... At the moment that man inquires into the motives which govern the will of his sovereign, – at that moment man revolts. If he obeys no longer because the king commands, but because the king demonstrates the wisdom of his commands, it may be said that henceforth he will recognise no authority, and that he has become his own king. (Proudhon, from *Property is Theft* [1840], quoted in Woodcock, 1977: 65)

> Disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man's original virtue. It is through disobedience that progress has been made, through disobedience and through rebellion. (Wilde, from *The Soul of Man Under Socialism* [1891], quoted in Woodcock, 1977: 72; see Chapter 4 for more on Oscar Wilde)

Anarchists suggest that a hierarchical society in which some people have power and authority over others is rather primitive, restricting the scope of the mental and creative activity of its subjects or citizens. Indeed, many anarchists have argued that such social hierarchy and differentials of power interfere with the 'natural social order' of human society in which people would choose to freely interact in creative co-operation with one another. In his theory of *mutual aid*, for example, Peter Kropotkin drew upon scientific research to suggest that animals, including humans, are naturally co-operative in the interests of self-preservation, and that without the influence of law, power and property, humans would form co-operative, sustainable, communities in which all could take part (see Box 1.4 for a summary of this thesis). Using his own interpretation of evolutionary science, Kropotkin was able to argue that humans are *naturally* social, co-operative and moral beings, as he explained:

> We are not afraid to say 'Do what you will; act as you will'; because we are persuaded that the great majority of mankind, in proportion to their degree of enlightenment, and the completeness with which they free themselves from existing fetters, *will behave and act always in a direction useful to society*; just as we are persuaded beforehand that a child will one day walk on its two feet, and not all fours, simply because it is born of parents belonging to the genus *homo* (Kropotkin, from *Anarchist Morality* [1892], quoted in Kropotkin, [1902] 1987: 10; emphasis added)

Box 1.4 Kropotkin's theory of Mutual Aid

Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* was published in 1902 as a counter to the social Darwinists who argued that competition is the cornerstone of human nature and that capitalism and individualism are an inevitable manifestation of the biological drive to survive. Drawing upon his observations of animal activity and human societies in Eastern Siberia and Northern Manchuria, Kropotkin countered that the survival of any species depended upon co-operation, rather than competition. By supporting other members of their communities, animals would be better able to meet the challenges of their environment and the battle for scarce resources, as he explained:

> Those animals which acquire habits of mutual aid are undoubtedly the fittest. They have more chances to survive, and they attain, in their respective classes, the highest development of intelligence and bodily organisation. (*Mutual Aid*, [1902] 1987: 24)

Box 1.4 *continued*

By living in social groups or 'societies', Kropotkin suggested that animals, such as ants, termites, bees and birds, are better able to survive by pooling their capacity for life:

> Life in societies enables the feeblest insects, the feeblest birds, and the feeblest mammals to resist, or to protect themselves from, the most terrible birds and beasts of prey; it permits longevity; it enables the species to raise its progeny with the least waste of energy and to maintain its members ... it enables the gregarious animals to migrate in search of new abodes. (*Mutual Aid*, [1902] 1987: 60)

Moreover, Kropotkin suggested that further up the food chain, sociability becomes more reasoned and less instinctive, culminating in humans, who have been able to develop language and culture through collectivity and mutual support. Mutuality and community helps a species survive, and this, rather than competition, is argued to be the key feature of human existence.

For Kropotkin, this human sociability and community could be witnessed in the management of communal pastures in Switzerland, in the shared communal traditions of those in the developing world, and in the friendly societies and trade unions found in Britain. Yet by the nineteenth century, it was clear that other processes were also at work and Kropotkin needed to explain the existence of exploitation, war and oppression among people said to be 'naturally moral' and 'biologically disposed' to mutual concern. Kropotkin suggested that the 'natural order' of human life was being erased by the influence of the state and other authorial institutions of social control, as he explained:

> The absorption of all social functions by the state necessarily favoured the development of an unbridled narrow-minded individualism. In proportion as the obligations towards the state grew in numbers the citizens were evidently relieved from their obligations towards each other. (*Mutual Aid*, [1902] 1987: 183)

Kropotkin was thus able to blame the state and its attendant power relations for distorting 'natural' human society and eroding the co-operation and mutuality which would otherwise need to exist. And as an anarchist, Kropotkin pointed to examples of solidarity and collectivity as evidence of our 'true' human nature which could reassert itself in an alternative world:

> In short, neither the crushing powers of the centralized state nor the teachings of mutual hatred and pitiless struggle which came, adorned with the attributes of science, from obliging philosophers and sociologists, could weed out the feeling of human solidarity, deeply lodged in men's understanding and heart, because it has been nurtured by all our preceding evolution. (*Mutual Aid*, [1902] 1987: 229)

The theory of mutual aid was designed to provide a scientific foundation for anarchism, and it has been important in presenting anarchism as more than a naive and idealistic set of ideas. By arguing that the end of the state would allow humans to live as nature intended, in harmony with each other, Kropotkin sought to demonstrate that anarchism had strong biological roots.

Predicated on the view that it is human nature to co-operate, anarchists have thus targeted those institutions which are argued to impose hierarchies of power and control over the 'natural' order of society. In particular, the state and government have been condemned as socially repressive, enforcing laws which stifle individual decision making and action, while also upholding the entrenched interests of those who have power and wealth. Laws to protect private property, to restrict unionisation and to control political organisation are all seen as evidence that the state and its government act to defend existing inequalities, ensuring that the rich and powerful are protected. Rather than act to redistribute wealth, eradicate poverty and improve the living standards of the majority, anarchists argue that governments always end up protecting the wealthy. And this, they suggest, is due to the damaging impact of hierarchical social organisation, whereby those with authority and power will always act, and put pressure on others to act, to defend their privilege and control. In colourful prose, Proudhon articulated this critique of the state and government in his book, *The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*:

> To be GOVERNED is to be at every operation, at every transaction, noted, registered, enrolled, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized, admonished, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished. It is, under pretext of public utility, and in the name of general interest, to be placed under contribution, trained, ransomed, exploited, monopolized, extorted, squeezed, mystified, robbed; then, at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, despised, harassed, tracked, abused, clubbed, disarmed, choked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and, to crown all, mocked, ridiculed, outraged, dishonoured. That is government; that is its justice, that is its morality. (Proudhon [1851], quoted in Miller, 1984: 6)

And in language which reflected the socialist arguments of his day, Errico Malatesta highlighted the powerful interests behind government legislation and its enforcement:

> The basic function of government everywhere at all times, whatever title it adopts and whatever its origins and organization may be, is always that of oppressing and exploiting the masses, of defending the oppressors and exploiters. (Malatesta, from *Anarchy*, [1891] 1974: 20–21)

This critique of the state and government – and the authorial relations represented – is common to all anarchists, even those who are prepared to accept the necessity of other laws or guidelines to shape social affairs. The pacifist anarchist Leo Tolstoy, for example, condemned the laws of government while also proselytising the moral laws distilled in his reading of Christianity:

> The truth is that the state is a conspiracy designed not only to exploit, but above all to corrupt its citizens ... I understand moral laws, and the laws of morality and religion, which are not binding, but which lead people forward

and promise a harmonious future; and I sense the laws of art which always
bring happiness; but the laws of politics are such terrible lies for me ... and
I will never serve *any* government anywhere. (Tolstoy, quoted in Marshall,
1993: 364; emphasis in the original)

Likewise, Michael Bakunin was prepared to recognise the authority associated
with particular skills and knowledge as long as such authority was not based
on power and control over others, as he explained in his volume *God and the
State*:

> Does it follow that I reject all authority? Far from me such a thought. In
> the matter of boots, I refer to the bootmaker; concerning houses, canals or
> railroads, I consult that of the architect or the engineer ... But I allow neither
> the bootmaker not the architect ... to impose his authority upon me. I listen
> to them freely and with all the respect merited by their intelligence, their
> character, their knowledge, reserving always my incontestable right of
> criticism and censure ... I recognise no infallible authority, even in special
> questions; consequently, whatever respect I may have for the honesty and
> the sincerity of such and such an individual, I have no absolute faith in any
> person. Such a faith would be fatal to my reason, to my liberty, and even to
> the success of my undertakings; it would immediately transform me into a
> stupid slave, an instrument of the will and interests of others. (Bakunin,
> from *God and the State* [1883], quoted in Woodcock, 1977: 313)

Echoing the mutualist arguments of Proudhon and Kropotkin, both Tolstoy
and Bakunin distinguish between the social order which is said to come *from
within*, guiding our decision making and our personal conduct, and that
imposed *from without*. Anarchists have acknowledged that the social order
generated by individual action can only be founded upon relationships made
locally through face-to-face contact.

Creating a new social order

> It [communist society] cannot exist without creating a continual contact
> between all for the thousands and thousands of common transactions; it
> cannot exist without creating local life, independent in the smallest unities –
> the block of houses, the street, the district, the commune. It would not answer
> its purpose if it did not cover society with a network of thousands of
> associations to satisfy its thousand needs: the necessaries of life, articles of
> luxury, of study, of enjoyment, amusements. And such associations cannot
> remain narrow and local; they must necessarily tend (as is already the case
> with learned societies, cyclist clubs, humanitarian societies and the like) to
> become international. (Kropotkin, from *Anarchism: Its philosophy and ideal*,
> 1970: 140)

In a society without any centralised control and regulation emanating from the
state or government, social order can only be forged through the co-ordinated
decision making of individuals. Such co-ordination, however, requires consider-
able face-to-face contact to ensure that the actions of each person do not