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9. Le thème hussite dans la littérature tchèque du XIX<sup>e</sup> s. (Tyl, Jirásek, Beneš-Třebitský, Čech etc.) a fait naître un culte de l'hussitisme, ce qui a produit aussi des effets politiques.
10. J. Tazbir, *Państwo bez stosów*, Warszawa 1967.
11. Des imprimés cyrilliques paraissent même à Cracovie. Vide : A. Brückner, *Dzieje kultury polskiej*. I, Kraków 1931, p. 635-638.
12. J. Maciszewski, *Szlachta polska i jej państwo*. Warszawa 1969.
13. R. Łuzny, *Pisarze kręgu Akademii Kijowsko-Mohylańskiej a literatura polska*. Kraków 1966.
14. T. Ostojić, *Istorija srpske književnosti*. Beograd 1923, pp. 115-119.
15. M. Urošević, *Srpska književnost u XVIII veku*. Beograd 1957, pp. 169-231.
16. I. Šišmanov, *Uvod v istorijata na bǎlgarskoto vǎzraždane*. Dans : *Bǎlgarija, 1000 godini 927-1927*. Sofija 1930, II, pp. 304-305.
17. Le rôle de la littérature polonaise dans le romantisme des pays slaves fut énorme, même là où le russophilisme politique dominait. Vide : M. Szykowski, *Polská účast v českém národním obrození*. I-III. Praha 1931-1947 ; J. Magnuszewski, *Mickiewicz wśród Słowaków*. Wrocław 1956 ; Le même, *Polski romantyzm a literatury zachodniosłowiańskie*. « Z polskich studiów slawistycznych », 1963, II ; Dj. Živanović, *Srbi i poljska književnost*. Beograd 1941 ; J. Wierzbicki, *Z dziejów chorwacko-polskich stosunków literackich w wieku XIX*. Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1970 ; T.S. Grabowski, *Mickiewicz wśród Słowaków*. « Pamiętnik Słowiański », VI, 1956 ; E. Georgiev, *Bǎlgarsko-polski literaturni vrǎzki v epohata na bǎlgarskoto vǎzraždane*. « Godišnik na Sofijskija universitet, Filolog. fak. », LI, 1955.

**MANUEL GONZALEZ PRADA AND PRINCE PETER  
KROPOTKIN — ARISTOCRATS TURNED ANARCHISTS**

by

BOHDAN PLASKACZ

The influence of Russian writers in the thought and literatures of Latin American countries is an intriguing subject in itself, aside from the urgency that it assumes in view of the growing Soviet influence in that area and the appeal that communist ideas have to some Latin American intellectuals.

One of the earliest influences in the last years of the past century was Tolstoy. His ardent admirer, the Peruvian woman-novelist Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera devoted a critical essay to him.<sup>1</sup> Tolstoy and Gorky are often mentioned in connection with the development of the agrarian novel in Latin America. The popularity of Dostoyevsky between 1920 and 1930 was one of the stimulating factors in the growth of the psychological novel in Latin American literature. A number of Soviet writers have been popular with the younger generation of Latin American writers of socialist leanings. In his survey volume of Latin American literature, Luis Alberto Sánchez<sup>2</sup> mentions Gogol, Dos-

toyevsky, Tolstoy, Gorky, Korolenko, Kuprin, Fedin, Gladkov, Leonov, and Fadeyev among the Russian writers who have had an influence on several Latin American writers. Unfortunately, the subject of literary relations and intellectual influences between Russia and Latin America is treated in a fragmentary manner in Latin American sources and is often restricted to the mention of names. There is a vast field for investigation that may prove rewarding.

The bibliographies on Prince Peter Kropotkin and Manuel González Prada are abundant, establishing the former as the principal theoretician of international anarchism and the latter as one of the greatest essayists of Latin America, champion of the rights of Peruvian Indians and spiritual father of the socialist movement of the following generation, known as APRA. But the source of González Prada's anarchist ideas scarcely has received any attention. The Uruguayan critic Alberto Zum Felde<sup>3</sup> believes that the ideological anarchism of González Prada has been established more than sufficiently and there is no need to insist on it. On the other hand, José Carlos Mariátegui,<sup>4</sup> speaking from his Marxist standpoint, laments the fact that upon the failure of the Radical Party, which he had intended to create, González Prada gave his allegiance to the "remote and abstract utopianism" of Kropotkin and that in the dispute between Marxists and Bakuninists he joined the latter.

Before we approach the study of González Prada's anarchism and try to relate it to the work of Kropotkin, a comparison with other prominent political writers of the day in Latin America may be in order. Argentina's Juan Bautista Alberdi was basically an intellectual, a rationalist, and a legislator preoccupied with demographic problems of his country. He shares with González Prada a negative attitude toward Spanish heritage and the colonial past of America but the two are men of different temperaments. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, on the other hand, impresses us with his vigorous personality and the fundamentally literary qualities of his *Facundo*. A self-taught man, he lacked the solid scientific and humanistic preparation of Prada. The "scourge of tyrants" — Ecuadorean essayist Juan María Montalvo — perhaps has the most elements in common with Prada. Grandiloquent and passionate, a master of invective, Montalvo always is mindful of the literary perfection of his work. On the other hand, José Enrique Rodó, who exerted some influence on González Prada, differs from the latter in the philosophical character of his work and a total lack of social preoccupation. Both writers share an idealistic motivation. Finally, the viciousness of González Prada's attacks against the established order and his total rejection of the Spanish colonial heritage make him appear akin to Chile's José Victorino Lastarria and, perhaps even more so, to Francisco Bilbao. González Prada's anarchism, however, is a unique phenomenon in the intellectual history of Latin America, and it deserves special attention.

There is a clear filiation between the anarchist views of González Prada, expressed in a number of essays,<sup>5</sup> and the principal theoretical works on anarchism written by Kropotkin. There also is a similarity of background. In the words of George Woodcock, "Peter Alexeivich Kropotkin was born into the highest rank of the Russian aristocracy. The Kropotkins had been princes of Smolensk, in Western Russia, and the family tradition claimed that once their ancestors had ruled the Principality of Kiev and were descended from the dynasty of Rurik, which had governed Russia before the Romanovs."<sup>6</sup> He had open to him a distinguished career, first as an officer in the Tzarist army, and then as a scientist and secretary of the Russian Geographical Society, but he rejected it.

Manuel González Prada also was born an aristocrat; his was an old lineage of Spanish colonial landlords. He was baptized by the archbishop of Lima and a bishop was his godfather. His mother was a fervent Catholic. By definition Don Manuel should have been a conservative. He became an anarchist and champion of the Peruvian working class by his own choice. More than anything else he denounced the Spanish colonial tradition and the Catholic Church. There was nothing in his background that could be interpreted as frustration or a revenge complex if one discounts an idealistic opposition to all forms of injustice. Nevertheless he became an avowed atheist, firmly convinced of the truth of positivist doctrines.<sup>7</sup>

Both men renounced a privileged position in their respective societies and chose a life of hardship, exile and persecution out of a deep sense of justice and duty toward the oppressed; they both share an idealistic motivation.

González Prada spent the years between 1891 and 1898 in Europe, first in Paris, and then in Spain. By that time Kropotkin had published, in French or English, most of his theoretical treatises on anarchism: *Mutual Aid*, *The Conquest of Bread*, *The State — Its Historic Role*, *Modern Science and Anarchism*, and *Fields, Factories and Workshops*. González Prada mentions a Spanish translation of this latter book prepared by the Spanish anarchist Fermín Salvochea, to whom Prada devoted an essay upon his death. González Prada's extensive readings included the prominent social thinkers of the epoch. Together with Barrès, Guyau, Bakunin, Blanqui, Marx, Tolstoy, Proudhon, and hundreds of other writers, we find the name of Kropotkin mentioned many times on the pages of González Prada.

To what extent, then, do the writings of the Peruvian essayist reflect the anarchist theories of Kropotkin?

In an essay entitled *Anarquía*, González Prada corrects the current misconceptions with regard to anarchism and gives his own definition of the anarchist ideal as an unlimited freedom and the greatest possible welfare of the individual, with the state and private property abolished. In his conception, the

anarchist sees a brother in every man ; not an inferior brother on whom to bestow charity, but an equal brother to whom he owes justice and protection. The anarchist admits no one's sovereignty, not even that of the people, which González Prada considers to be the most absurd of all. To him a truly emancipated man does not cover the power in any form, or accept authority over anybody except himself.<sup>8</sup>

So far González Prada stays within the general tenets of the anarchist doctrine. He shows, however, an undeniable filiation with Kropotkin when he touches upon the subject of misinterpreted Darwinism, which some had used to justify despotism and rule by a minority, and he borrows directly from the Russian his concept of mutual aid, which constitutes the core of Kropotkin's theory and his most valuable contribution to the biological sciences and to sociology. Prada's statement that "science contains anarchist affirmations and that mankind is oriented in the direction of anarchism" makes one think of Kropotkin's books *Mutual Aid* and *Modern Science and Anarchism*, in which the latter expounds the historical and scientific foundations of anarchism.<sup>9</sup>

The concept of justice in González Prada's definition of anarchism, his considering every man as an equal brother, stems directly from Kropotkin's analysis of the evolutionary tendencies of human societies.<sup>10</sup> Transferring the method of natural sciences to the sphere of human relations and the life of societies, though always conscious of the different ground on which he stands, Kropotkin is convinced that coercion and punishment are doomed to disappear and that the indispensable condition for justice is equality. To him "Justice implies the recognition of Equality," and the absence of morality in certain periods of the life of societies is explained by the lack of social equality.<sup>11</sup> González Prada's postulate of "an equal brother" sounds like an echo of the above formulation of justice by the Russian anarchist. So also Prada's affirmation made in *Our Indians*,<sup>12</sup> an essay written in 1904, that barbarity reigns where the struggle for life is proclaimed a social law, that there is no civilization where there is no justice, and that the epitome of morality, both individual and social, consists in having transformed the struggle of man against man into a mutual agreement for life, would not be a stranger on the pages of Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*, published two years earlier. The similarity of ideas is supported by common terminology and the origin of Prada's concept of mutual aid is obvious.

González Prada was a firm believer in the "positive science," whose eloquent apology he made in his famous discourse of Politeama delivered in 1888. However, he was too independent a mind and too much of a rebel to accept the positivism of Comte in its integrity. He rejects the dogmatism of Comte and, in agreement with his scientific and anti-metaphysical attitude, that part of Comte's teaching which had come to be known as "Religion of

Humanity." But defending the scientific character of anarchism, González Prada states explicitly that the anarchists do not reject Comtian positivism; they only divest it of its God-Humanity and of its semi-theological and neo-Catholic residue.<sup>13</sup> It is significant, however, that of all his numerous writings Prada should have voiced his criticism of Comte in an essay devoted to anarchism and that in it he should have spoken of a "new Christianity without Christ."<sup>14</sup> Several years before, Kropotkin wrote a paper in which he severely criticized Comte's positive philosophy in its part dealing with morality.<sup>15</sup> Unable to explain the origin of moral sense in man and the influence of this sense in human societies, Comte replaced God with Humanity, spelled with a capital letter. Kropotkin is surprised by Comte's inability to see the pre-human origin of the moral sense in man, that same origin that he ascribes to sociability and society itself. Morality, argues Kropotkin, is nothing else but a further evolution of the mutual aid instinct evolved in animal societies long before the appearance of man, and he explains Comte's failure to recognize this obvious fact by the tribute that the French thinker paid to his Christian education.

It is difficult not to notice a certain parallel in the critique to which the Russian and the Peruvian subject Comte's "Religion of Humanity."

Kropotkin envisages the future anarchist society as a community of men where the relations of individuals are regulated by mutual agreement, where there is no ruling authority, no government of man by man. An analysis of the historical vicissitudes of mankind shows to him that so far no society has existed in which the anarchist postulates have been fully realized, though he discovers such principles at work in all societies. Thence his affirmation that anarchism represents a certain ideal of society, an ideal that by necessity arises in the mind of those who criticize the social institutions of the present. But Kropotkin cautions against confusing ideal with utopia, conceived as something that cannot be realized. To him anarchism lies within the realm of the attainable, and he sees partial realizations of the anarchist ideal in the life of medieval cities and in the manner in which Russian peasants settled Siberia. Kropotkin's concepts always are the result of a painstaking analysis of observable facts; he advocates and practices the transfer of the methods of natural sciences to the sphere of human relations. And here we find another point of contact between him and the Peruvian anarchist, but also an essential difference. To González Prada anarchism is a faraway luminous point toward which humanity advances on an impassable road. He does not preclude the possibility of its remaining forever the dream of a philanthropist; he has the great satisfaction of having dreamed and he wishes mankind would always have such pleasant dreams.<sup>16</sup> In comparison with the cool detachment and objective analysis of Kropotkin the scientist, González Prada is basically a romantic who, despite frequent proclamations of allegiance to positivist teachings, has not succeeded

in fully freeing himself from the romantic attitudes of the preceding generation of Latin American writers. He postulates the possibility for the existence of an anarchist society with no sovereign other than the individual on the grounds of the perfectibility of human nature. His assumption that there is a greater distance between the prehistoric savage and modern man than between the latter and the individual of the future anarchist society lies entirely in the sphere of wishful thinking.

Dissimilarities of this sort are to be expected in the case of two men of a different temperament and background. With Kropotkin, anarchism was an organic outgrowth of the observations and reflections that he made as a young man on a scientific assignment in Siberia, where he could compare the functioning of the cooperative principle in peasant communities with the inefficiency of the state machinery, whereas González Prada saw in the anarchist theory primarily a weapon with which to attack the mainstays of the fundamentally colonial society of his native Peru. It is natural that he should have assimilated first of all the negative part of the anarchist doctrine and that he used it as catchy slogans rather than in the form of an orderly exposition.

Anarchism categorically rejects the state, authority in any form, and private property. The question of the state especially is central to anarchist theory, since it marks the dividing line between anarchists and socialists, the latter having opted for the retention of the state as a tool by which to implement a socialist society.

It is on this question of the state that we find another point of contact, or rather a direct filiation, between Kropotkin and González Prada. In 1904 the Peruvian essayist wrote two short articles entitled *The State* and *The Authority*<sup>17</sup> respectively, in which he parallels very closely the ideas that Kropotkin had expressed the year before in his much more extensive pamphlet *The State, Its Historic Role*. Following his favorite stylistic technique of comparison by contrast, González Prada makes a virulent attack on both the state and the church: nothing has been changed by the fact that the politicians have substituted God-State for Goddess-Church, since priests and public men are animated by the same spirit.<sup>18</sup> Before, morality without religion was inconceivable; now, just as inadmissible is order without laws and the individual without authority. The individual has been degraded to the point of being converted into a body without soul unconditionally subjected to the power of the state.<sup>19</sup>

Identical ideas are found in the above mentioned pamphlet of Kropotkin, to whom the state is a monstrous force responsible for the abolition of the union within the city and the union between cities. He chides the state for having replaced the federative principle by the principle of submission and



discipline, to the extent that submission has become the very substance of the state, without which it stops being what it is and becomes a federation.<sup>20</sup> Kropotkin deplors the fact that the spirit of voluntary servitude has been instilled into the minds of the youth in order to perpetuate the subjection to the state. The monster that has perverted the natural sciences assumes in his imagination the form of a dual idol: Church-State. Kropotkin complains that "libertarian philosophy is suffocated by pseudo-Roman and Catholic State philosophy,"<sup>21</sup> and González Prada echoes him by saying that classical Rome bequeathed to us God-State, while medieval Rome imposed on us Goddess-Church.<sup>22</sup> The image of the triple alliance of soldier, priest, and executioner evoked by Kropotkin<sup>23</sup> reappears repeatedly on the pages of González Prada, sometimes in the slightly changed variant of "barracks, state office, and convent."<sup>24</sup>

Both men exalt the individual. To Kropotkin the individual and the state are locked in a deadly struggle, as a result of which either new life will bud following an energetic initiative of the individual and society will be reconstituted on a libertarian and anti-state basis, or the state will crush the individual and lead mankind to its annihilation in the constant wars for the possession of power. González Prada, on the other hand, elevates the individual above all powers and hierarchies, including the parliamentary majority and the enslavement to the concept of a homeland. To him authority in particular has a corrupting influence, and he suggests that authority rather than misfortune should be used as a touchstone for a person's integrity. For this reason alone the individual must hate authority in all forms. A man of good, a truly free man has no desire to command; neither does he wish to obey.<sup>25</sup>

Though González Prada declares that anarchism is neither religious nor anti-religious, he is in fact violently anti-religious, anti-Christian and, especially, anti-Catholic for a number of reasons. The main source of the atheist attitudes in anarchism in general, and in González Prada in particular, is to be found in the positivist teachings of Comte. Prada's definition of religion as a rudimentary science of ignorant peoples and a fantastic interpretation of the universe fits perfectly into Comte's scheme of the three stages in the evolution of societies, corresponding to the first stage, which the French positivist designates "theological." In accordance with his combative style, the anti-religious ejaculations of the Peruvian essayist assume the form of propagandistic slogans; he ridicules the man who kneels in a temple because he worships his own ignorance. To González Prada, those who consider the theologian a sage resemble the man who fails to recognize a fundamental difference between a physician and a witch doctor or between an astronomer and an astrologer.<sup>26</sup>



Kropotkin also is an atheist but his statements on religion are free from progantistic overtones ; in this as in other matters, the Russian anarchist displays his quiet intellectuality.

It is important to keep in mind the anti-religious and anti-metaphysical attitude of the two men, because it leads us to another question where there seems to exist a direct link between Kropotkin and González Prada, namely that part of the philosophy of Kant in which he endeavours to explain the origin of moral feeling in man. Kant's formulation of the "categorical imperative" as the foundation of morality and its elevation to the status of an obligatory principle of behaviour if it can be conceived as a law capable of universal application does not satisfy natural scientist Kropotkin. To him every word in this definition is nebulous and incomprehensible.<sup>27</sup> Kropotkin strongly objects to those who equate his rejection of Kant's "categorical imperative" and of law with a repudiation of morality, and he returns to his fundamental assertion that justice is impossible without equality ; the "categorical imperative" has no meaning for a slave owner in application to his slaves, since he cannot consider them his equals.<sup>28</sup>

González Prada is just as outspoken in his repudiation of Kantian ethics. Closely paralleling Kropotkin's argument, he corrects the common misconception that the emancipation from established beliefs and written laws would mean a return to barbarity. But there is an essential difference of ultimate motive : whereas to Kropotkin Kant's categorical imperative is unacceptable because of its lack of scientific rigour and whereas he rejects it in the name of equality, to González Prada it is incompatible with his conception of individualism. The individual is absolute ; his morality consists in acting according to his concept of life and the universe, and no one has the right to remind him of the unavoidable nature of certain obligations. To Kant's "categorical imperative" González Prada opposes a flexible moral principle that changes with time and the individual.<sup>29</sup>

The extreme individualism of the Peruvian essayist is in clear contrast with the social and collectivist orientation of Peter Kropotkin. It may be explained by the Hispanic heritage of the former, but it also very clearly points in the direction of the German individualist anarchist Max Stirner. It is that individualism of González Prada that accounts for his interpretation of various points of anarchist doctrine that is at variance with the views held by Kropotkin. One of these regards the origin of the anarchist movement.

Kropotkin believes that anarchism, like socialism and all other social movements, originated among the people. The masses have always practiced mutual aid and have created the social institutions that were necessary to make life in common possible. He is particularly careful to make clear that anarchism is not

the result of scientific research or a corollary of a system of philosophy, but a movement that arises from life itself.

González Prada, on the contrary, stresses the role of the individual. He admits that great works always were achieved by collective forces, but he ascribes the initiative to individuals, to the conscious effort of a brain. Mankind may not need shepherds or guides, but it does need beacons to illuminate its path. This, however, is not an argument in favour of the retention of their leading role by the traditionally privileged classes; González Prada advocates a new rejuvenated leadership that will come from the midst of the popular masses. Nevertheless, speaking about Reclus, Faure, Grave, and Kropotkin himself, González Prada insists that anarchism did not rise among the proletariat as a movement of social vindication, but rather was laboriously developed by a few men outside the mass of the people. It is a movement that comes from above. True, González Prada hastily adds that the fact of having had the initiative does not bestow upon the initiators the right to constitute an elite that would appropriate the mission of enlightening and governing others. Still it seems that there is a fundamental difference in outlook between the two men, rather than a shift in emphasis, in what regards the relations between the individual and the collective. Kropotkin has harsh words for the so-called "pure individualists" epitomized by Max Stirner. To him the "self-assertion of the individual is remote from real life"<sup>30</sup> and, most important of all, it offends his feelings of equality. Besides, he fears that the individualists are too close in spirit to those whom mankind "owes the state, the church, modern legislation, and all other forms of oppression."<sup>31</sup>

There are numerous points of contact between the Russian theoretician of anarchism and the Peruvian essayist; in many instances there is sufficient evidence of Kropotkin's direct influence on González Prada. The latter's discrepant views are ascribable to his highly individualistic character and to the influences received from other currents of European anarchism. There is a profound difference in the general tone of the literary production of the two men: Kropotkin is a scholar for whom anarchism is the result of observations and studies on the life and evolution of society. González Prada, though not lacking a solid scientific and humanistic formation, is above all a man of action, who uses anarchist slogans as a weapon in the political struggle of his country.

The common elements in the anarchist ideology of Peter Kropotkin and Manuel González Prada have been considered as an instance of cultural rapport between Russia and a Latin American country.

## NOTES

1. Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera, *El Conde León Tolstoy*.
2. Luis Alberto Sánchez, *Proceso y contenido de la novela hispanoamericana*, Madrid, Gredos, 1953.
3. Alberto Zum Felde, *Índice crítico de la literatura hispanoamericana, El ensayo y la crítica*, Mexico, Guaranía, 1954, p. 272.
4. José Carlos Mariátegui, *Siete ensayos sobre la interpretación de la realidad peruana*, Lima, 1928.
5. Published posthumously as a collection under the title of *Anarquía*, Santiago, Ercilla, 1936.
6. George Woodcock & Ivan Avakumović, *The Anarchist Prince*, London-New York, Boardman, 1949, p. 13.
7. Zum Felde studies this aspect of Prada's personality at some length, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-278.
8. *Anarquía*, pp. 16-18.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Peter Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchism*, London, Freedom Press, 1923, p. 65.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Manuel González Prada*, México, Imprenta Universitaria, 1945, p. 87.
13. *Anarquía*, p. 18.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
15. *Modern Science and Anarchism*, pp. 18-21.
16. *Anarquía*, p. 19.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 38-43.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Peter Kropotkin, *The State, Its Historic Role*, London, Freedom Press, 1903, p. 31.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
22. *Anarquía*, p. 153.
23. *The State, Its Historic Role*, p. 41.
24. *Anarquía*, p. 154.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
27. *Modern Science and Anarchism*, pp. 8 and 74.
28. *Anarquía*, p. 157.
29. *Modern Science and Anarchism*, p. 69.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
31. *Ibid.*