

When Russian thinkers such as Kropotkin, Famynstin, Kozo-Polyanski, and the controversial figure Mehrezkowsy introduced their ideas on mutual aid and symbiogenesis, they did so by drawing parallels between the natural world and human societal organizations. By doing so, they battled ideas put forth by liberal social contract theoreticians that man's natural state is one where everyone is at war, or social Darwinist ideas that portray existence as a struggle where only the fit survive. These scholars instead emphasized the benefits that arise from mutualist, commensal and synergist cooperation, both in nature and in society. In this talk, we investigate on the one hand how both narratives underlie the emergence of different research programs within the genealogy of the biological sciences, and on the other, we investigate how science itself can be understood not only to evolve by means of natural selection but through universal symbiogenesis and mutual aid.