

Words of a Rebel

Peter Kropotkin • Preface by Elisée Reclus

Translated and Edited by Iain McKay

Peter Kropotkin remains one of the best-known anarchist thinkers, and *Words of a Rebel* was his first libertarian book. Published in 1885 while he was in a French jail for anarchist activism, this collection of articles from the newspaper *Le Revolté* sees Kropotkin criticise the failings of capitalism and those who seek to end it by means of its main support, the state. Instead, he urged the creation of a mass movement from below that would expropriate property and destroy the state, replacing their centralised hierarchies with federations of self-governing communities and workplaces.

Kropotkin's instant classic included discussions themes and ideas he returned to repeatedly during his five decades in the anarchist movement. Unsurprisingly, *Words of a Rebel* was soon translated into numerous languages—including Italian, Spanish, Bulgarian, Russian, and Chinese—and reprinted time and time again. But despite its influence as Kropotkin's first anarchist work, it was the last to be completely translated into English.

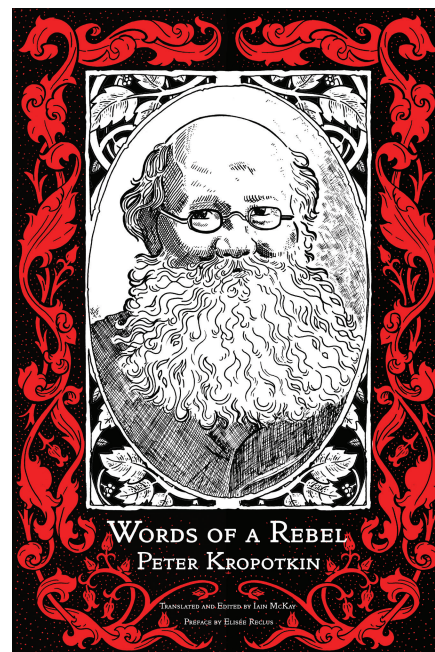
This is a new translation from the French original by Iain McKay except for a few chapters previously translated by Nicolas Walter. Both anarchist activists and writers, they are well placed to understand the assumptions within and influences on Kropotkin's revolutionary journalism. It includes all the original 1885 text along with the preface to the 1904 Italian as well as the preface and afterward to the 1919 Russian editions. In addition, it includes many articles on the labour movement written by Kropotkin for *Le Revolté* which show how he envisioned getting from criticism to a social revolution. Along with a comprehensive glossary and an introduction by Iain McKay placing this work within the history of anarchism as well as indicating its relevance to radicals and revolutionaries today, this is the definitive edition of an anarchist classic.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921) was the foremost theorist of the anarchist movement. Born a Russian Prince, he rejected his title to become a revolutionary, seeking a society based on freedom, equality, and solidarity. Imprisoned for his activism in Russia and France, his writings include *The Conquest of Bread; Fields, Factories, and Workshops; Anarchism, Anarchist-Communism, and the State; Memoirs of a Revolutionist; and Modern Science and Anarchism*. New editions of his classic works *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* and *The Great French Revolution, 1789–1793* will be published by PM Press to commemorate his life and work on the centennial of his death.

Iain McKay is an independent anarchist writer and researcher. He was the main author of *An Anarchist FAQ* as well as numerous other works, including *Mutual Aid: An Introduction and Evaluation*. In addition, he has edited and introduced *Property Is Theft! A Pierre-Joseph Proudhon Anthology; Direct Struggle Against Capital: A Peter Kropotkin Anthology; and Kropotkin's 1913 book, Modern Science and Anarchy*.

Elisée Reclus (1830–1905) was a renowned French geographer, writer, and anarchist. He produced his nineteen-volume masterwork *La Nouvelle Géographie universelle, la terre et les hommes* ("Universal Geography"), over a period of nearly twenty years (1875–1894), which was coedited by John P. Clark and Camille Martin into *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity: Selected Writings of Elisée Reclus* (PM Press, 2013). In 1892 he was awarded the prestigious Gold Medal of the Paris Geographical Society for this work, despite having been banished from France because of his political activism.



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