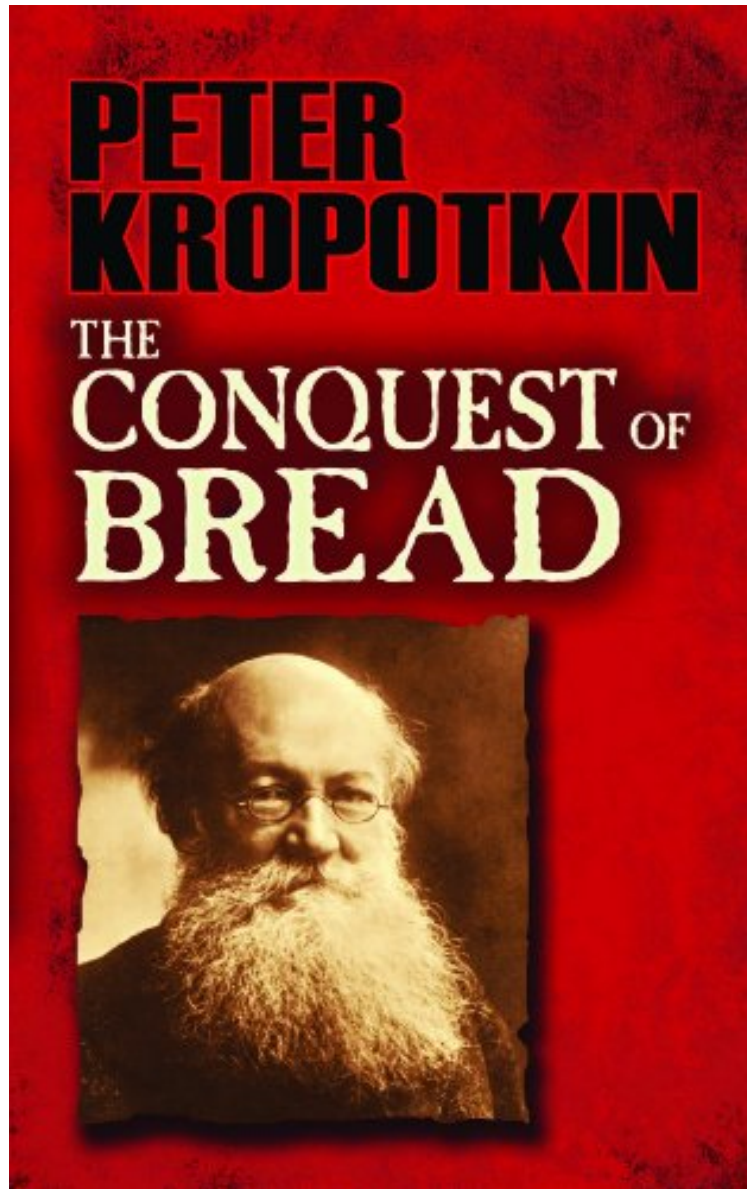


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## The Conquest of Bread (Dover Books on History, Political and Social Science)

*Peter Kropotkin*

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**Peter Kropotkin : The Conquest of Bread (Dover Books on History, Political and Social Science)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Conquest of Bread (Dover Books on History, Political and Social Science):

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Born a Russian prince, Peter Kropotkin (1842ndash;1921) rejected his title and wealth to spend his life in pursuit of social justice and equality. His last major work, *The Conquest of Bread*, surveys economic methods for the satisfaction of human needs. The 1892 treatise also outlines the revolutionary path to his vision of utopia: an anarchist communist society. Kropotkin criticizes the effects of feudalism and capitalism, noting that both systems exacerbate poverty and promote privilege, even in times of abundance. Citing the human propensity toward voluntary cooperation, he proposes the establishment of free, self-sufficient anarchic communes and outlines practical considerations of production and distribution. The author supports his theories with examples from the French rebellions of 1789, 1848, and 1871, and his reasoning anticipates aspects of twentieth-century revolutions in Russia, Germany, and Spain. At a time when many thinkers employed the new Darwinian concept of "survival of the fittest" to justify their capitalist and imperialist goals, Kropotkin pointed out the historic patterns of humanity's best success under cooperative circumstances. A century later, his economic analysis remains fresh and relevant.

**THE MAN (1842-1921):** Prince Peter Alexeivitch Kropotkin, revolutionary and scientist, was descended from the old Russian nobility, but decided, at the age of thirty, to throw in his lot with the social rebels not only of his own country, but of the entire world. He became the intellectual leader of Anarchist-Communism; took part in the labor movement; wrote many books and pamphlets; established *Le Revolte* in Geneva and *Freedom* in London; contributed to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*; was twice imprisoned because of his radical activities; and twice visited America. After the Bolshevik revolution he returned to Russia, kept himself apart from Soviet activities, and died true to his ideals. **THE BOOK:** *The Conquest of Bread* is a revolutionary idyl, a beautiful outline sketch of a future society based on liberty, equality and fraternity. It is, in Kropotkin's own words, "a study of the needs of humanity, and of the economic means to satisfy them." Read in conjunction with the same author's "Fields, Factories and Workshops," it meets all the difficulties of the social inquirer who says: "The Anarchist ideal is alluring, but how could you work it out?" **Language Notes**Text: English, French (translation) **About the Author**PETER KROPOTKIN (1842-1921) came from a major aristocratic Russian family but turned his back on it to embrace a life of imprisonment and exile in pursuit of his beliefs. His major works are *The Conquest of Bread* and *Mutual Aid*. His funeral was marked as the last permitted gathering of anarchists in the USSR. **DAVID PRIESTLAND** (introducer) is the author of *Red Flag* and *Merchant, Soldier, Sage*. He teaches at St Edmund's Hall, University of Oxford.