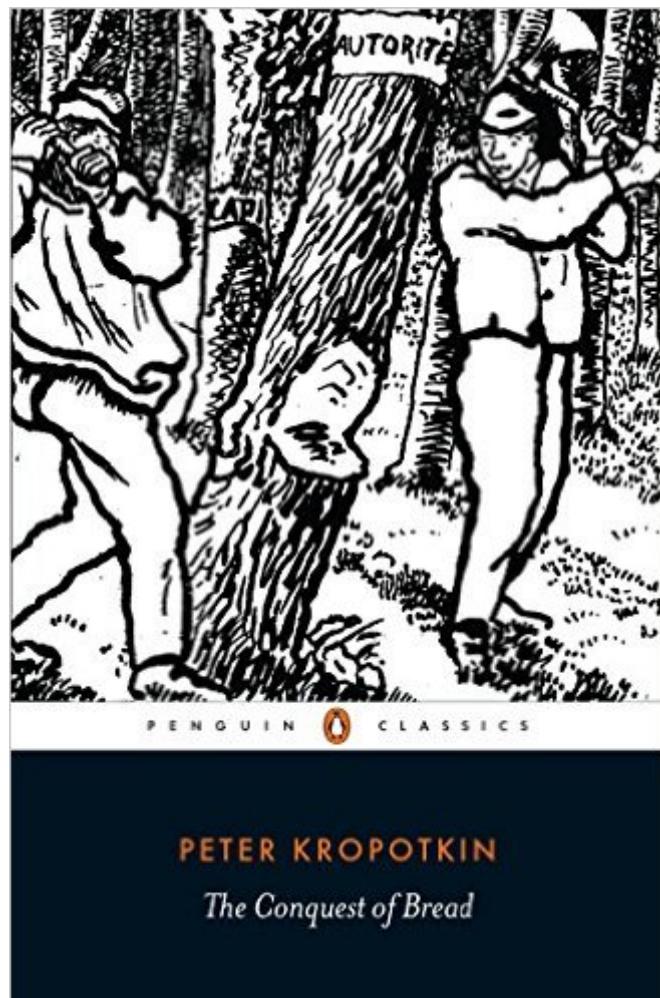


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The Conquest Of Bread (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

"Well-being for all is not a dream." In this brilliantly enjoyable rallying-cry of a book, Kropotkin lays out the heart of his anarchist beliefs—beliefs that surged around the world in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and that have a renewed relevance and poignancy today. Humane and thoughtful, but also a devastating critique of how modern society is organized (with the brutal, narrow few clinging onto their wealth and privileges at the expense of the many). The Conquest of Bread is a book to be argued over, again and again. For more than sixty-five years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,500 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Peter Kropotkin was a Russian prince who lived during times of great flux in his country. He was born to nobility during the "last hurrah" of the tsarist regime. He witnessed the disintegration of that regime through the early decades of the 20th century, and before he died, he watched as the Bolsheviks consolidated their power, substituting one authoritarian system for another. It would have

been easy for Kropotkin to maintain his aristocratic life, which would have brought him tremendous privileges even after the fall of tsarism, but he renounced his title and became one of anarchism's foremost theorists. The Conquest of Bread is one of Kropotkin's contributions to anarchist theory. Kropotkin posits, like Marxists, that the concentration of wealth which is the basis of a capitalist economy is the root cause of poverty. Unlike the Marxists, however, Kropotkin does not suggest a centralized state as the solution to workers' exploitation. His solution is autonomous collectives in which produce what they can and barter for what they need and want. In essence, Kropotkin is suggesting an anarchist market economy. This market is not profit driven, as it would be in a capitalist market, having no regard for the basic needs of the individual. Kropotkin believed, instead, that the productive system is efficient enough to produce not only the needs of the population, but also enough of the luxuries that make life pleasant. What prevents the general enjoyment of these goods is not lack of production or inability to distribute them, but the determination of production by profit motives rather than social consumption motives. Kropotkin's divides his book thematically, looking at basic human needs and wants.

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