

The Incomplete, True, Authentic, and Wonderful History of May Day

Peter Linebaugh

"May Day is about affirmation, the love of life, and the start of spring, so it has to be about the beginning of the end of the capitalist system of exploitation, oppression, war, and overall misery, toil, and moil." So writes celebrated historian Peter Linebaugh in an essential compendium of reflections on the reviled, glorious, and voltaic occasion of May 1st.

It is a day that has made the rich and powerful cower in fear and caused Parliament to ban the Maypole—a magnificent and riotous day of rebirth, renewal, and refusal. These reflections on the Red and the Green—out of which arguably the only hope for the future lies—are populated by the likes of Native American anarcho-communist Lucy Parsons, the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, Karl Marx, José Martí, W.E.B. Du Bois, Rosa Luxemburg, SNCC, and countless others, both sentient and verdant. The book is a forceful reminder of the potentialities of the future, for the coming of a time when the powerful will fall, the commons restored, and a better world born anew.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Linebaugh is a child of empire, schooled in London, Cattaraugus (NY), Washington, DC, Bonn, and Karachi. He has taught at Harvard University and Attica Penitentiary, at New York University and the Federal Penitentiary in Marion, Illinois. He used to edit *Zerowork* and was a member of the Midnight Notes Collective. He is the author of *Stop, Thief!*, *The London Hanged*, *The Many-Headed Hydra* (with Marcus Rediker), *The Magna Carta Manifesto*, and introductions to Verso's selection of Thomas Paine's writings and PM's new edition of E.P. Thompson's *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*. He lives in the region of the Great Lakes and works at the University of Toledo in Ohio.

ACCOLADES

"There is not a more important historian living today. Period."

—Robin D.G. Kelley, author of *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*

"E.P. Thompson, you may rest now. Linebaugh restores the dignity of the despised luddites with a poetic grace worthy of the master."

—Mike Davis, author of *Planet of Slums*

"Ideas can be beautiful too, and the ideas Peter Linebaugh provokes and maps in this history of liberty are dazzling reminders of what we have been and who we could be."

—Rebecca Solnit, author of *Storming the Gates of Paradise*

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REBECCA SOLNIT



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