

The Leveller Revolution

The Agreements of the People were a series of written constitutions proposed variously by Levellers, soldiers and citizens for the settlement of the nation at the height of the English Revolution. The essays in this book explore the various Agreements in the context of the constitutional crisis that engulfed England in the late 1640s and 1650s.

"The power of property was brought into creation by the sword", so wrote Gerrard Winstanley (1609-1676) – "Christian Communist, leader of the Diggers movement and bête noire of the landed aristocracy. Despite being one of the great English radicals, Winstanley remains unmentioned in today's lists of "great Britons". John Gurney reveals the hidden history of Winstanley and his movement. As part of the radical ferment which swept England at the time of the civil war, Winstanley led the Diggers in taking over land and running it as "a common treasury for all" – provoking violent opposition from landowners. Gurney also guides us through Winstanley's writings, which are among the most remarkable prose writings of his age. Gerrard Winstanley is a must read for students of English history and all those seeking to reclaim the commons today.

"I neither love a slave nor fear a tyrant." John Lilburne, head of the Levellers and one of the 17th Century's most vivid figures, spelled out to the English the true meaning of democracy. He stopped at nothing to further his cause—whether it meant attacking Cromwell or King Charles I, or "stage managing" his own trial for life as though it were a

play. "...successfully conveys the nature of his personality as well as his ideas...authoritative and illuminating..."--C.V. Wedgwood, Daily Telegraph. The Leveller movement of the 1640s campaigned for religious toleration and a radical remaking of politics in post-civil war England. This book, the first full-length study of the Levellers for fifty years, offers a fresh analysis of the originality and character of Leveller thought. Challenging received ideas about the Levellers as social contract theorists and Leveller thought as a mere radicalisation of parliamentarian thought, Foxley shows that the Levellers' originality lay in their subtle and unexpected combination of different strands within parliamentarianism. The book takes full account of recent scholarship, and contributes to historical debates on the development of radical and republican politics in the civil war period, the nature of tolerationist thought, the significance of the Leveller movement and the extent of the Levellers' influence in the ranks of the New Model Army.

This book reinterprets the Leveller authorships of John Lilburne, Richard Overton and William Walwyn, and foregrounds the role of ordinary people in petitioning and protest during an era of civil war and revolution. The Levellers sought to restructure the state in 1647-49 around popular consent and liberty for conscience, especially in their Agreement of the People. Their following was not a 'movement' but largely a political response of the sects that had emerged in London's rapidly growing peripheral neighbourhoods and in other localities in the 1640s. This study argues that the

Levellers did not emerge as a separate political faction before October 1647, that they did not succeed in establishing extensive political organisation, and that the troop revolt of spring 1649 was not really a Leveller phenomenon. Addressing the contested interpretations of the Levellers throughout, this book also introduces Leveller history to non-specialist readers.

In this audacious recasting of the American Revolution, distinguished historian Gary Nash offers a profound new way of thinking about the struggle to create this country, introducing readers to a coalition of patriots from all classes and races of American society. From millennialist preachers to enslaved Africans, disgruntled women to aggrieved Indians, the people so vividly portrayed in this book did not all agree or succeed, but during the exhilarating and messy years of this country's birth, they laid down ideas that have become part of our inheritance and ideals toward which we still strive today. "This book situates the development of radical English political thought within the context of the specific nature of agrarian capitalism and the struggles that ensued around the nature of the state during the revolutionary decade of the 1640s. In the context of the emerging conceptions of the state and property - with attendant notions of accumulation, labor, and the common good - groups such as Levellers and Diggers developed distinctive forms of radical political thought not because they were progressive, forward thinkers, but because they were the most significant challengers of the newly constituted forms of political and economic power." "Drawing on recent reexaminations of the nature of

agrarian capitalism and modernity in the early modern period, Geoff Kennedy argues that any interpretation of the political theory of this period must relate to the changing nature of social property relations and state power. The radical nature of early modern English political thought is therefore cast in terms of its oppositional relationship to these novel forms of property and state power, rather than being conceived of as a formal break from discursive conventions."--BOOK JACKET.

This study locates the philosophical origins of the Anglo-American political and constitutional tradition in the philosophical, theological, and political controversies in seventeenth-century England. By examining the quarrel it identifies the source of modern liberal, republican and conservative ideas about natural rights and government in the seminal works of the Exclusion Whigs Locke, Sidney, and Tyrrell and their philosophical forebears Hobbes, Grotius, Spinoza, and Pufendorf. This study illuminates how these first Whigs and their diverse eighteenth-century intellectual heirs such as Bolingbroke, Montesquieu, Hume, Blackstone, Otis, Jefferson, Burke, and Paine contributed to the formation of Anglo-American political and constitutional theory in the crucial period from the Glorious Revolution through to the American Revolution and the creation of a distinctly American understanding of rights and government in the first state constitutions.

Why our workplaces are authoritarian private governments—and why we can't see it One in four American workers says their workplace is a

“dictatorship.” Yet that number almost certainly would be higher if we recognized employers for what they are—private governments with sweeping authoritarian power over our lives. Many employers minutely regulate workers’ speech, clothing, and manners on the job, and employers often extend their authority to the off-duty lives of workers, who can be fired for their political speech, recreational activities, diet, and almost anything else employers care to govern. In this compelling book, Elizabeth Anderson examines why, despite all this, we continue to talk as if free markets make workers free, and she proposes a better way to think about the workplace, opening up space for discovering how workers can enjoy real freedom.

War and revolution, economic crises and political conflict are the very stuff of modern history. This guide to the last 100 years of great power conflict, social rebellion, strikes and protests gives us the essential history of the world in which we live. Based on the Timeline TV series this is a rapid and accessible guide for those who want to know how power is exercised, by who, and for what purposes in the modern world. From the rise and fall of great empires in two world wars, the Cold War and the ‘war on terror’ through to the rise of China Timelines describes the shifts in the imperial structure of the world. And it looks at the impact of those changes in the conflict zones of the 21st century, including Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. Finally Timelines looks at moments of popular resistance, from the Russian and Spanish revolutions to the fall of Apartheid in the 1990s and the ongoing socialist experiment that is Hugo Chavez’s Venezuela.

We live in turbulent times. These essays show us how we got here and outline the forces that are going to shape the history of the 21st century.

A document-based sourcebook for the study of the English Revolution. Includes questions and tasks, documentary and visual source material, and practical guidance on historical methodology. Suggested level: senior secondary.

John Lilburne (1615–1657), or 'Freeborn John' as he was called by the London crowd, was an important political agitator during the English Revolution. He was one of the leading figures in the Levellers, the short-lived but highly influential radical sect that called for law reform, religious tolerance, extended suffrage, the rights of freeborn Englishmen, and a new form of government that was answerable to the people and underpinned by a written constitution. This edited book assesses the legacy of Lilburne and the Levellers 400 years after his birth, and features contributions by leading historians. They examine the life of Lilburne, who was often imprisoned and even tortured for his beliefs, and his role as an inspirational figure even in contemporary politics. They also assess his writings that fearlessly exposed the hypocrisy and self-serving corruption of those in power – whether King Charles I or Oliver Cromwell. They look at his contribution to political ideas, his role as a revolutionary leader, his personal and political relations with his wife Elizabeth, his exile in the Netherlands, his late decision to become a Quaker, and his reputation after his death. This collection will be of enormous interest to academics, researchers, and readers with an

interest in the English Civil War, seventeenth-century history, and the contemporary legacy of radical political tradition.

The gripping story of the Levellers, the radical movement at the heart of the English Revolution The Levellers, formed out of the explosive tumult of the 1640s and the battlefields of the Civil War, are central figures in the history of democracy. In this thrilling narrative, John Rees brings to life the men—including John Lilburne, Richard Overton and Thomas Rainsborough—and women who ensured victory and became an inspiration to republicans of many nations. From the raucous streets of London and the clattering printers' workshops that stoked the uprising, to the rank and file of the New Model Army and the furious Putney debates where the Levellers argued with Oliver Cromwell for the future of English democracy, this story reasserts the revolutionary nature of the 1642–51 wars and the role of ordinary people in this pivotal moment in history. In particular Rees places the Levellers at the centre of the debates of 1647 when the nation was gripped by the question of what to do with the defeated Charles I. Without the Levellers and Agitators' fortitude and well-organised opposition history may have avoided the regicide and missed its revolutionary moment. The legacy of the Levellers can be seen in the modern struggles for freedom and democracy across the world.

Radical Parliamentarians and the English Civil War charts the way the English civil war of the 1640s mutated into a revolution, in turn paving the way for the later execution of King Charles I and the abolition of the

monarchy. Focusing on parliament's most militant supporters, David Como reconstructs the origins and nature of the most radical forms of political and religious agitation that erupted during the war, tracing the process by which these forms gradually spread and gained broader acceptance. Drawing on a wide range of manuscript and print sources, the study situates these developments within a revised narrative of the period, revealing the emergence of new practices and structures for the conduct of politics. In the process, the book illuminates the eruption of many of the period's strikingly novel intellectual currents, including assumptions and practices we today associate with western representative democracy; notions of retained natural rights, religious toleration, freedom of the press, and freedom from arbitrary imprisonment. The study also chronicles the way that civil war shattered English protestantism--leaving behind myriad competing groupings, including congregationalists, baptists, antinomians, and others--while examining the relationship between this religious fragmentation and political change. It traces the gradual appearance of openly anti-monarchical, republican sentiment among parliament's supporters. *Radical Parliamentarians and the English Civil War* provides a new history of the English civil war, enhancing our understanding of the dramatic events of the 1640s, and shedding light on the long-term political and religious consequences of the conflict.

In the eyes of Britain's heritage industry, London is the traditional home of empire, monarchy and power, an

urban wonderland for the privileged, where the vast majority of Londoners feature only to applaud in the background. Yet, for nearly 2000 years, the city has been a breeding ground for radical ideas, home to thinkers, heretics and rebels from John Wycliffe to Karl Marx. It has been the site of sometimes violent clashes that changed the course of history: the Levellers' doomed struggle for liberty in the aftermath of the Civil War; the silk weavers, match girls and dockers who crusaded for workers' rights; and the Battle of Cable Street, where East Enders took on Oswald Mosley's Black Shirts. A People's History of London journeys to a city of pamphleteers, agitators, exiles and revolutionaries, where millions of people have struggled in obscurity to secure a better future.

This volume is a systematic study of the politics of five crucial years of the Puritan Revolution, the period between John Pym's death in December 1643 and the execution of Charles I in January 1649. MacCormack examines the Long Parliament and the structures of its parties. He investigates the degree to which the division between parties was religious or political, the character of the leadership of the two major groups, and the transformation of the parties during the five-year period. This is the first full-length, modern study of the Diggers or "True Levellers", who were among the most remarkable of the radical groups to emerge during the English Revolution of 1640-60. It was in April 1649 that the Diggers, inspired by the teachings and writings of Gerrard Winstanley, began their occupation of waste land at St. George's Hill in Surrey and called on all poor

people to join them or follow their example. Acting at a time of unparalleled political change and heightened millenarian expectation, the Diggers believed that the establishment of an egalitarian, property-less society was imminent. This book should be of interest to all those interested in England's mid-seventeenth-century revolution and in the history of radical movements.

The Leveller Revolution
Radical Political Organisation in England, 1640-1650
Verso Books

The second son of a modest gentry family, John Lilburne was accused of treason four times, and put on trial for his life under both Charles I and Oliver Cromwell. He fought bravely in the Civil War, seeing action at a number of key battles and rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, was shot through the arm, and nearly lost an eye in a pike accident. In the course of all this, he fought important legal battles for the rights to remain silent, to open trial, and to trial by his peers. He was twice acquitted by juries in very public trials, but nonetheless spent the bulk of his adult life in prison or exile. He is best known, however, as the most prominent of the Levellers, who campaigned for a government based on popular sovereignty two centuries before the advent of mass representative democracies in Europe. Michael Braddick explores the extraordinary and dramatic life of 'Freeborn John': how his experience of political activism sharpened and clarified his ideas, leading him to articulate bracingly radical views; and the changes in English society that made such a career possible. Without land, established profession, or public office, successive governments found him sufficiently alarming

to be worth imprisoning, sending into exile, and putting on trial for his life. Above all, through his story, we can explore the life not just of John Lilburne, but of revolutionary England itself — and of ideas fundamental to the radical, democratic, libertarian, and constitutional traditions, both in Britain and the USA.

This Handbook offers a comprehensive introduction and thirty-seven new essays by an international team of literary critics and historians on the writings generated by the tumultuous events of mid-seventeenth-century England. Unprecedented events—civil war, regicide, the abolition of monarchy, proscription of episcopacy, constitutional experiment, and finally the return of monarchy—led to an unprecedented outpouring of texts, including new and transformed literary genres and techniques. The Handbook provides up-to-date scholarship on current issues as well as historical information, textual analysis, and bibliographical tools to help readers understand and appreciate the bold and indeed revolutionary character of writing in mid-seventeenth-century England. The volume is innovative in its attention to the literary and aesthetic aspects of a wide range of political and religious writing, as well as in its demonstration of how literary texts register the political pressures of their time. Opening with essential contextual chapters on religion, politics, society, and culture, the largely chronological subsequent chapters analyse particular voices, texts, and genres as they respond to revolutionary events. Attention is given to aesthetic qualities, as well as to bold political and religious ideas, in such writers as James Harrington,

Marchamont Nedham, Thomas Hobbes, Gerrard Winstanley, John Lilburne, and Abiezer Coppe. At the same time, the revolutionary political context sheds new light on such well-known literary writers as John Milton, Andrew Marvell, Robert Herrick, Henry Vaughan, William Davenant, John Dryden, Lucy Hutchinson, Margaret Cavendish, and John Bunyan. Overall, the volume provides an indispensable guide to the innovative and exciting texts of the English Revolution and reevaluates its long-term cultural impact.

A gripping narrative history of the English Revolution and the radical Levellers *The Levellers*, revolutionaries that grew out of the explosive tumult of the 1640s and the battlefields of the Civil War, are central figures in the history of democracy. In this thrilling narrative, John Rees brings to life the men—including John Lilburne, Richard Overton, Thomas Rainsborough—and women who ensured victory at war, and brought England to the edge of radical republicanism. From the raucous streets of London and the clattering printers' workshops that stoked the uprising, to the rank and file of the New Model Army and the furious Putney debates where the levellers argued with Oliver Cromwell for the future of English democracy, this story reasserts the revolutionary nature of the 1642–48 wars, and the role of ordinary people in this pivotal moment in history. The legacy of the Levellers can be seen in the modern struggles for freedom and democracy across the world.

From Machiavelli, Luther and Calvin to Spinoza, the Levellers and Rousseau, the author takes readers through the formation of the modern state all the way to

the Age of Enlightenment, revealing the ideas of liberty, equality, human rights and revolution that emerged from those turbulent times. Original.

'His finest work and one that was both symptom and engine of the concept of "history from below" ... Here Levellers, Diggers, Ranters, Muggletonians, the early Quakers and others taking advantage of the collapse of censorship to bid for new kinds of freedom were given centre stage ... Hill lives on' Times Higher Education In 'The World Turned Upside Down' Christopher Hill studies the beliefs of such radical groups as the Diggers, the Ranters, the Levellers and others, and the social and emotional impulses that gave rise to them. The relations between rich and poor classes, the part played by wandering 'masterless' men, the outbursts of sexual freedom, the great imaginative creations of Milton and Bunyan - these and many other elements build up into a marvellously detailed and coherent portrait of this strange, sudden effusion of revolutionary beliefs.

'Established the concept of an "English Revolution" every bit as significant and potentially as radical as its French and Russian equivalents' Daily Telegraph
'Brilliant ... marvellous erudition and sympathy' David Cauter, New Statesman
'This book will outlive our time and will stand as a notable monument to the man, the committed radical scholar, and one of the finest historians of the age' The Times Literary Supplement
'The dean and paragon of English historians' E.P. Thompson

In *Fire under the Ashes*, John Donoghue recovers the lasting significance of the radical ideas of the English

Revolution, exploring their wider Atlantic history through a case study of Coleman Street Ward, London. Located in the crowded center of seventeenth-century London, Coleman Street Ward was a hotbed of political, social, and religious unrest. There among diverse and contentious groups of puritans a tumultuous republican underground evolved as the political means to a more perfect Protestant Reformation. But while Coleman Street has long been recognized as a crucial location of the English Revolution, its importance to events across the Atlantic has yet to be explored. Prominent merchant revolutionaries from Coleman Street led England's imperial expansion by investing deeply in the slave trade and projects of colonial conquest. Opposing them were other Coleman Street puritans, who having crossed and re-crossed the ocean as colonists and revolutionaries, circulated new ideas about the liberty of body and soul that they defined against England's emergent, political economy of empire. These transatlantic radicals promoted social justice as the cornerstone of a republican liberty opposed to both political tyranny and economic slavery—and their efforts, Donoghue argues, provided the ideological foundations for the abolitionist movement that swept the Atlantic more than a century later.

John Morrill has been at the forefront of modern attempts to explain the origins, nature and consequences of the English Revolution. These twenty essays -- seven either specially written or reproduced from generally inaccessible sources -- illustrate the main scholarly debates to which he has so richly contributed: the

tension between national and provincial politics; the idea of the English Revolution as "the last of the European Wars of Religion"; its British dimension; and its political sociology. Taken together, they offer a remarkably coherent account of the period as a whole.

New insights into the nature of the seventeenth-century English revolution - one of the most contested issues in early modern British history.

In 1646, Richard Overton, a Leveller, penned a political pamphlet which asserted the inalienable rights of the individual, from his cell in Newgate Gaol. Reprinted here is Overton's bold, declamatory pamphlet, with an introduction by Ian Gadd, Professor of English Literature at Bath Spa University.

The Levellers were a crucial component of a radically democratic movement during the civil wars in seventeenth-century England. This was to be democratic at a time when the very idea of democracy conjured up nothing good; with its suggestion of anarchy and the 'levelling' of distinctions in rank and of property, even the holding of women in common. This collection of thirteen fully annotated Leveller writings, including their famous Agreements of the People, is important as a contribution not only to the understanding of the English civil wars, but also of democratic theory. The editor's introduction sets the Leveller ideas in their context and, together with a chronology, short biographies of the leading figures and a guide to further reading, will be of interest to students of the English civil wars, the history of political thought and the history of democratic ideas.

The Levellers sought to restructure the state in

1647-9 around popular consent and liberty for conscience, especially in their Agreement of the People. Following the Levellers, Volume Two examines the later political efforts of Leveller spokesmen like John Lilburne, John Wildman, and Richard Overton, and their followers. Far from ending in the 1649 troop revolts, the Leveller impact continued in the Interregnum climacterics of 1653 and 1659-60, times of acute political and religious unsettlement. Indeed, Leveller ideas resurfaced in Restoration political and religious crises in 1678-83 and again in 1687-8 and flourished in populations that once followed the Levellers. Analysis of London, army, and county Levellers reveals connections to subsequent outbursts of unrest. Sectarian communities in London's peripheral neighbourhoods and nearby counties sustained the Leveller ethos, and ordinary people like those who followed the Levellers remained active in petitioning and protest about political and religious liberties through the Glorious Revolution.

Are mass violence and catastrophes the only forces that can seriously decrease economic inequality? To judge by thousands of years of history, the answer is yes. Tracing the global history of inequality from the Stone Age to today, Walter Scheidel shows that it never dies peacefully. *The Great Leveler* is the first book to chart the crucial role of violent shocks in reducing inequality over the full sweep of human

history around the world. The “Four Horsemen” of leveling—mass-mobilization warfare, transformative revolutions, state collapse, and catastrophic plagues—have repeatedly destroyed the fortunes of the rich. Today, the violence that reduced inequality in the past seems to have diminished, and that is a good thing. But it casts serious doubt on the prospects for a more equal future. An essential contribution to the debate about inequality, *The Great Leveler* provides important new insights about why inequality is so persistent—and why it is unlikely to decline anytime soon.

Ian Gentles provides a riveting, in-depth analysis of the battles and sieges, as well as the political and religious struggles that underpinned them. Based on extensive archival and secondary research he undertakes the first sustained attempt to arrive at global estimates of the human and economic cost of the wars. The many actors in the drama are appraised with subtlety. Charles I, while partly the author of his own misfortune, is shown to have been at moments an inspirational leader. *The English Revolution and the Wars in the Three Kingdoms* is a sophisticated, comprehensive, exciting account of the sixteen years that were the hinge of British and Irish history. It encompasses politics and war, personalities and ideas, embedding them all in a coherent and absorbing narrative.

In a series of debates with Oliver Cromwell in Civil

War England of 1647, the Levellers argued for democracy for the first time in British history. Evolving from Oliver Cromwell's New Model army in Parliament's struggle against King Charles I, the Levellers pushed for the removal of corruption in parliament, universal voting rights and religious toleration. This came to a head with the famous debates between the Levellers and Cromwell at St Mary's church in Putney, London. Renowned human-rights lawyer and author Geoffrey Robertson argues for the relevance of the Levellers' stand today, showing how they were the first Western radical democrats.

Examines the debates of 1647 between Cromwell and his officers about the future of England.

Three and a half centuries after *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain'd* were written, do Milton's epic poems still resonate with contemporary concerns? In *Milton's Leveller God*, David Williams advances a progressive and democratic interpretation of Milton's epics to show they are more relevant than ever.

Exploring two blind spots in the critical tradition – the failure to read Milton's poetry as drama and to recognize his depictions of heaven's political and social evolution – Williams reads Milton's "great argument" as a rejection of social hierarchy and of patriarchal government that is more attuned to the radical political thought developed by the Levellers during the English Revolution. He traces echoes

between Milton's texts and thousands of pages of Leveller writings that advocated for popular rule, extended suffrage, and religious tolerance, arguing that Milton's God is still the unacknowledged ground of popular sovereignty. Williams demonstrates that Milton's Leveller sympathies, expressed in his early prose, conflicted with his official duties for Oliver Cromwell's government in the 1650s, but his association with the journalist Marchamont Nedham later freed him to imagine an egalitarian republic. In a work that connects the great epic poet in new ways to the politics of his time and our own, Milton's Leveller God shows how the political landscape of Milton's work fundamentally unsettles ancient hierarchies of soul and body, man and woman, reason and will, and ruler and ruled.

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