

PEOPLE'S HISTORY BOOK SERIES

Restoring the role of ordinary people in their own history

RATIONALE

It is well known that most history is written from the standpoint of the victor. History is viewed from the perspective of the rich and powerful, and the actions of small numbers of people, generally white men, are seen to dictate the course of world affairs. History of this kind continues to dominate both academic and popular literature, despite challenges from historians who have tried to write history from different perspectives, including that of ordinary women and men. Whether it was E.P. Thompson in England or Howard Zinn in the United States, this 'history from below' is noted, at times even celebrated, but ultimately put back on the shelf while historians return to writing books and articles that lead more easily to research funding and professorial appointments.

But there are deeper reasons for the neglect of what we are calling 'people's history'. It is quite simply easier to write about Prime Ministers, great industrialists and their ilk. They often write memoirs, leave their papers to archives or, in the case of U.S. Presidents, create their own libraries to house all the data they wish to make public from their career. Writing history from below is a challenge because the historical record is scattered and largely neglected. But it is a challenge worth taking up.

This Pluto Press series is both an attempt to view history from the perspective of ordinary people, and also an exploration of how the actions of common women and men, as individuals or through forms of collective organization, influence the course of history. Books published in the series will focus on the masses of humanity rather than the designated heroes, or villains, of world civilization. Our books seek to shine a light on that which, as a feminist historian once said of women's history, has been hidden from history.

READERSHIP

These books are aimed at a wide readership both inside and outside the university system. Within academia, these books could be used in upper undergraduate courses or postgraduate seminars. Readers outside academia, particularly those involved in political activism, should be drawn to the lively way in which social movements are shown as forces driving historical change.

STYLE

Potential authors are encouraged to remember that they will be writing for an audience beyond their own academic peers or political colleagues. Although the works should hold to the best traditions of scholarship, they also need to be able to capture the interest and imagination of a wide range of readers. Academic referencing should be kept to a minimum and should take the form of endnotes (no parenthetical referencing). Academic jargon should be avoided completely.

FORMAT

Manuscripts should be within a range of 60,000 and 80,000 words so that the books are not cost prohibitive or formidably long. Some books in the series will be illustrated with black and white photographs and maps. It is the author's responsibility to provide camera-ready artwork.

POSSIBLE TOPICS

- The General Strike of 1926
- The Cuban Revolution
- The Collapse of the USSR
- English Workers in the Industrial Revolution
- The Great Depression in the USA
- The Spanish Revolution and Civil War
- South Asian independence struggle
- South African Liberation movement

THE PUBLISHING PROCESS

Pluto Press is a highly respected radical, scholarly press. Pluto is based in London, and distributes its books throughout the world. In the US, Pluto is distributed by the University of Chicago Press who display Pluto titles at major American conferences.

Authors are invited to develop book proposals in consultation with the series editors. Finished book proposals will be sent out for peer review and will be evaluated by the editorial board at Pluto Press before the author is offered a publishing contract.

After signing a contract with Pluto Press, an author's finished manuscript will be reviewed by a series editor or another reviewer who may offer suggestions for further strengthening the text. Once the manuscript has been approved by the series editors and the commissioning editor at Pluto, it will be copy edited by a professional copy editor. Following copy editing, the manuscript will be typeset by Pluto and the typeset pages will be proof-read by a professional proof-reader.

Authors are consulted on cover design, marketing blurb and other matters related to the presentation of the book. Authors are encouraged to take a very active role in publicising their books alongside the highly experienced sales, marketing and publicity team at Pluto Press.

CONTACT

For further information or to submit proposals, please email David Castle, Senior Commissioning Editor at Pluto Press (davidc@plutobooks.com) or Series Editor, William A. Pelz (iwch@juno.com).