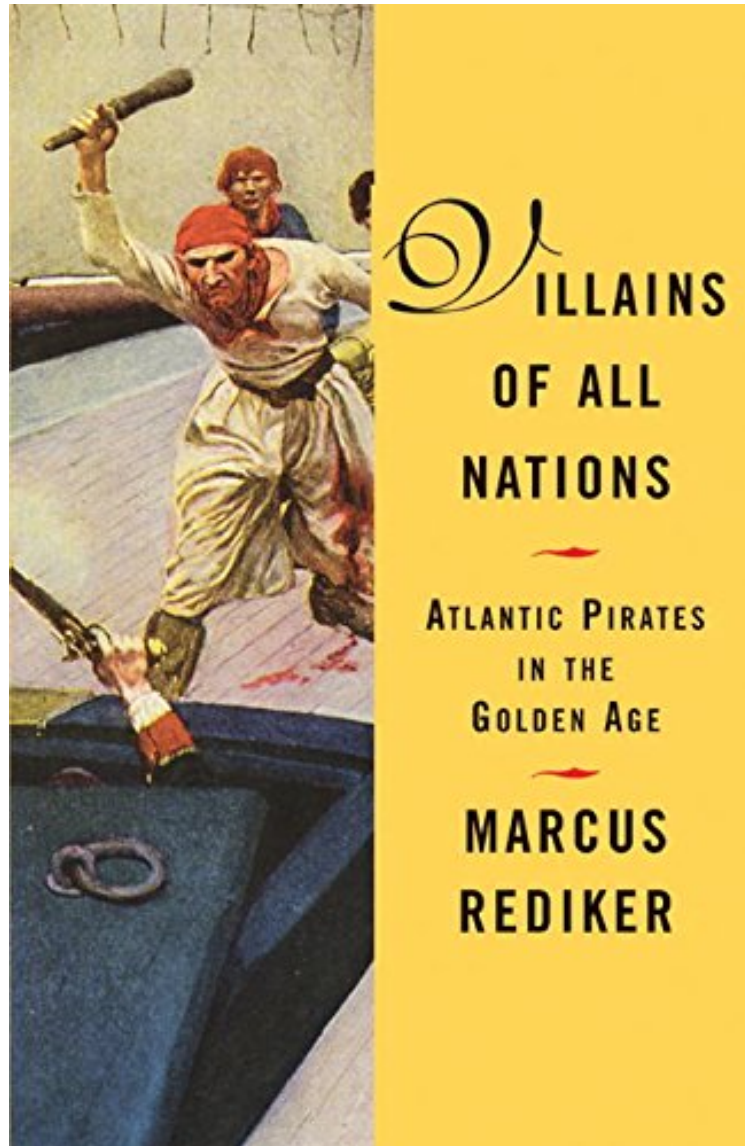


Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age

Marcus Rediker

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Marcus Rediker : Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Thugs on Boats or Democratic Freedom Fighters? By Frank Bellizzi Marcus Rediker describes his book as a "social and cultural history of early-eighteenth century pirates, those outlaws who made the last great moment in the golden age of piracy" (16). That "golden age" was 1716-26, a time when pirates terrorized the Atlantic and generated those enduring cultural images like the Jolly Roger, the black flag

with skull and bones. Rediker is one fine researcher and historian. He also writes well. All that makes for interesting, pleasurable reading. It's true that Rediker's politics seem somewhere to the left of center and that this shows up in his interpretation of and sympathies with pirates. Were they simply thugs on boats? Or is it more accurate to say with the author that pirates of the golden age were really an alternative, collectivist political system that maintained a coherent outlook? I read "Villains of All Nations" with some doubts about Rediker's thesis. Even with my questions, I still like and appreciate this book with its many great stories. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I enjoyed reading this book. By Chris A reexamination of pirates not as marauders, but as freedom seeking plunderers, people who used the ocean to check out of society and follow their own mores. I certainly know more about pirates now than when I first began. I enjoyed reading this book. It was very informative and well-written. I look forward to learning more about the subject. 7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A Beautifully Researched Read. By R.W. Tucker. Marcus Rediker has written what is easily the most fascinating account of piracy to date. Approaching piracy from the perspective of what can only be described as an ethnographer-historian, Dr. Rediker presents us with several mind-blowing proposals: - Pirates had set up egalitarian societies, racially and sexually - Pirates were, for all the bad rap they get, rather reluctant killers - Pirates challenged a status quo that was fundamentally unjust. At first glance, it would appear that Rediker had a difficult job ahead of him. However, through careful research, he begins unraveling the mythology of piracy we receive through popular culture, and challenges our beliefs on each of those points in turn. I literally cannot recommend this book enough. If you are interested in pirates in any academic sense, I refer you to this book. Put down Defoe, before it's too late, and pick this one up. You'll thank me later.

Villains of All Nations explores the 'Golden Age' of Atlantic piracy (1716-1726) and the infamous generation whose images underlie our modern, romanticized view of pirates. Rediker introduces us to the dreaded black flag, the Jolly Roger; swashbuckling figures such as Edward Teach, better known as Blackbeard; and the unnamed, unlimbed pirate who was likely Robert Louis Stevenson's model for Long John Silver in *Treasure Island*. This history shows from the bottom up how sailors emerged from deadly working conditions on merchant and naval ships, turned pirate, and created a starkly different reality aboard their own ships, electing their officers, dividing their booty equitably, and maintaining a multinational social order. The real lives of this motley crew—which included cross-dressing women, people of color, and the 'outcasts of all nations'—are far more compelling than contemporary myth. From the Hardcover edition.

From Publishers Weekly. Rediker (*Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*), a historian of maritime labor, opens his immensely readable study of the "golden age" of piracy (1716-1726) with the spectacle of an execution in which a notorious pirate, unrepentant and seemingly unconcerned to be facing death, reties the knot of his gallows noose with defiant ironic humor. For Rediker, pirates were bold subversives who challenged the prevailing social order and empire building of the five main trading nations. Emphasizing the hardship, injustice and brutality the average sailor faced in his career, Rediker suggests that piracy offered a more egalitarian seafaring life, as well as opportunities for revenge on the ruling class. Rediker uses captives' accounts, among other sources, to show how pirates meted out their own system of justice, torturing captains reputed for their harsh treatment of sailors, yet sparing others known for fairness. He explores pirate dialects, rituals and symbols, and shows how pirates inverted social norms, creating a carnivalesque way of life that featured fraternal solidarity, a precapitalist share system and the wanton destruction of property. A chapter on picaresque women pirates reveals links between their iconic image and Delacroix's painting *Liberty*. Using statistics to show convincingly that by the 1720s piracy posed a real threat to global trade, Rediker describes how nations launched a military-legal campaign against piracy, with cannon battles and gruesome public executions. Rediker uses this apocalyptic close of piracy's golden age to explore its suicidal side. Although Rediker's short study does not tackle later myths of piracy, it provides penetrating background to our enduring cultural fascination with the seafaring outlaws. Illus. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist. The so-called golden age of Atlantic piracy was the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Lawless rebels, including well-known men such as William Fly and Edward Teach—as well as numerous social outcasts, debtors, escaped slaves, and various predatory personalities—used terrorist tactics to prey upon merchant ships from New England waters to the Spanish Main. Rediker's revealing and often surprising work views pirates and piracy within the context of the social, political, and economic milieu of the eighteenth century. He does much to deromanticize pirate life, for these were brutal, sometimes heartless men, and many of them were prime examples of a variety of social pathologies. Yet, as Rediker illustrates, pirates often did create a distinct subculture with its own set of values, codes of honor, and taboos. Rediker is most interesting and provocative in his comparisons between this subculture and the broader, "respectable" society that helped engender it. An informative look at a popular topic. Jay Freeman. Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved. Marcus Rediker knows pirates, and he knows how to tell a story. *Villains of All Nations* is a must read; don't wait for the movie! —Robin D. G. Kelley, author of *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. From the Hardcover edition.