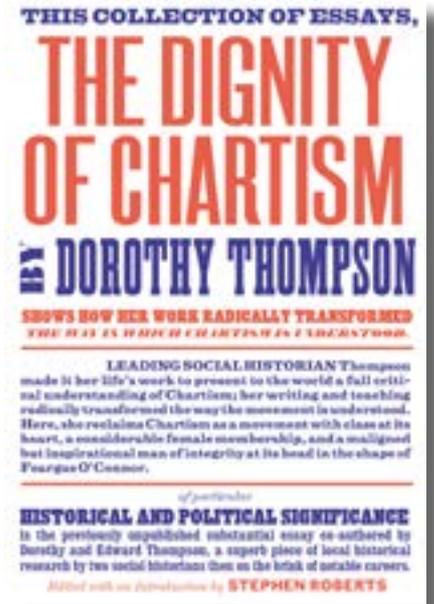




The Dignity of Chartism

By Dorothy Thompson
Edited by Stephen Roberts



“Dorothy Thompson emerges as a complex and lucid philosopher of social change in these writings, which also chart the evolution of the post-war British left’s thinking about both its future and its past.”
Paul Mason

“Dorothy Thompson will forever be remembered alongside the great Chartist movement she so brilliantly brought to vital, creative life”
Marcus Rediker

• *The Dignity of Chartism* is available for excerpt, review and feature.

The Dignity of Chartism is a new major collection of essays by leading social historian Dorothy Thompson, whose work radically transformed the way in which Chartism is understood. Reclaiming Chartism as a fully-blown working-class movement, Thompson intertwines her penetrating analyses of class with ground-breaking research uncovering the role played by women in the movement.

Throughout her essays, Thompson strikes a delicate balance between down-to-the-ground accounts of local protests, snappy portraits of high-profile Chartist figures as well as rank-and-file men and women, and more theoretical, polemical interventions. Of particular historical and political significance is the previously unpublished substantial essay co-authored by Dorothy and Edward Thompson, a superb piece of local historical research by two social historians then on the brink of notable careers.

“Your warehouses and your homes will be given over to the flames,’ warned the Irish Chartist, Thomas Devyr. The demands of the Chartists exceeded parliamentarianism; they demanded the repeal of the New Poor Law, the repeal of the Act of Union with Ireland, and a whole new way of life. With the political demands of the Charter came also arming, drilling, and the possibility of insurrection. It was a working-class movement with enduring accomplishments like national trade unions, municipal building societies, and local co-operatives. Dorothy Thompson is Chartism’s pre-eminent historian. She writes in a careful, passionate, and welcoming style giving pride of place to the voices in hymn, oratory, diary, and newspaper of the men and women who struggled against the child-consuming factory, the complacency of Victorianism, and empire induced starvations. Those voices arose in the era of Liberalism. They need to be heeded still. How can Chartism in its Biblical righteousness, in its Shakespearean grandiloquence, in its unremitting class consciousness, in its internationalist generosity, in its Jacobin militance, in its balance of moral and physical force revive in our times of neo-liberalism?”
Peter Linebaugh

Dorothy Thompson taught in the School of History in the University of Birmingham, where she wrote a series of highly regarded books about Chartism and other topics in nineteenth-century British history—among them, *The Early Chartists*, *The Chartists*, *Outsiders: Class, Gender and Nation* and *Queen Victoria: Gender and Power*.

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