

Sans-Culottes: An Eighteenth-Century Emblem in the French Revolution

Michael Sonenscher

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This is a bold new history of the sans-culottes and the part they played in the French Revolution. It tells for the first time the real story of the name now usually associated with urban violence and popular politics during the revolutionary period. By doing so, it also shows how the politics and economics of the revolution can be combined to form a genuinely historical narrative of its content and course. To explain how an early eighteenth-century salon society joke about breeches and urbanity was transformed into a republican emblem, Sans-Culottes examines contemporary debates about Ciceronian, Cynic, and Cartesian moral philosophy, as well as subjects ranging from music and the origins of government to property and the nature of the human soul. By piecing together this now forgotten story, Michael Sonenscher opens up new perspectives on the Enlightenment, eighteenth-century moral and political philosophy, the thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the political history of the French Revolution itself.



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