



Massacre: The Life and Death of the Paris Commune

John Merriman

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The Paris Commune lasted for only 64 days in 1871, but during that short time it gave rise to some of the grandest political dreams of the nineteenth century—before culminating in horrific violence.

Following the disastrous French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, hungry and politically disenchanted Parisians took up arms against their government in the name of a more just society. They expelled loyalists and soldiers and erected barricades in the streets. In *Massacre*, John Merriman introduces a cast of inimitable Communards—from *les pétroleuses* (female incendiaries) to the painter Gustave Courbet—whose idealism fueled a revolution. And he vividly recreates the Commune's chaotic and bloody end when 30,000 troops stormed the city, burning half of Paris and executing captured Communards en masse.

A stirring evocation of the spring when Paris was ablaze with cannon fire and its citizens were their own masters, *Massacre* reveals how the indomitable spirit of the Commune shook the very foundations of Europe.

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