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The Portland Red Guide: Sites & Stories Of Our Radical Past



Synopsis

A historical guidebook of social dissent, Michael Munk's *The Portland Red Guide* describes local radicals, their organizations, and their activities in relation to physical sites in the Rose City. With the aid of maps and historical photos, Munk's stories are those that history books often exclude. The historical listings expand readers' perspectives of the unique city and its radical past. The *Portland Red Guide* is a testament to Portland's rich history of working-class people and organizations that stood against repression and injustice. It honors those who insisted on pursuing a better justification for their lives rather than the quest for material wealth, and who dedicated themselves to offering alternative visions of how to organize society. The *Portland Red Guide* uses maps to give readers a walking tour of the city as well as to illustrate sites such as the house where Woody Guthrie wrote his Columbia River songs; the office of the Red Squad (the only memorial to John Reed); the home of early feminist Dr. Marie Equi; and the downtown site of Portland's first Afro-American League protest in 1898. This new edition includes up-to-date information about Portland's most contemporary radicals and suggests routes to help readers walk in the shadows of dissidents, radicals, and revolutionaries. These stories challenge mainstream culture and testify that many in Portland were, and still are, motivated to improve the condition of the world rather than their personal status in it. *~*

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Praise for the first edition of *The Portland Red Guide: Sites & Stories of our Radical Past*: "A

roller-coaster ride through Portland's radical past. Who knew that being on the losing side of just about everything could be so much fun?"

• Phil Stanford, Portland Tribune columnist, author of Portland Confidential "Michael Munk did a terrific job of researching local leftist and labor struggles usually ignored by conventional historians and the commercial media."

• Gene Klare, columnist, Northwest Labor Press. Former reporter, pre-strike The Oregonian and the Portland Reporter "Whoop! Whoop! I'm impressed by how many names from Portland's past have not made it into our official histories and public memorials. Some were good friends of mine. Local history is too often overlooked."

• Bud Clark, former Mayor of Portland, 1985-1992 "Michael Munk is the Lewis and Clark of Portland's radical past, leading his readers on a voyage of discovery through a long-lost and wonderfully evocative historical terrain. I only wish the Red Guide had been around in the days when I was one of those Portland radicals he writes about with such knowledge (and affection)."

• Maurice Isserman, author of If I Had a Hammer: the Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left "What fun to learn all the ordinary places have a not-so-ordinary history. Some will call The Portland Red Guide subversive, others will welcome it as the sweet breeze of revelation, but all will have to admit it adds a fascinating new layer to appreciating Portland. Even those Portlanders who think they know their city's past will likely find themselves shocked at the wealth of radical Portland history related in this volume. One hopes it becomes as ubiquitous as cell phones in Portland pedestrians' hands."

• Sandy Polishuk, author of Sticking to the Union: An Oral History of the Life and Times of Julia Ruuttila "Going to these addresses can bring to mind what has gone before and perhaps, encourage more resistance today. I had no idea so much has happened in Portland. And reading the names of people who struggled and whom I worked with brought up lots of memories."

• Sandra Ford, former wife of Black Panther Party leader Kent Ford I love this book! It has maps! It has pictures! It talks about how crazy and wonderful the history of Portland is. Whether it's Emma Goldman, the pioneering feminist and anarchist, giving a lecture on lesbianism in 1915 at the Portland auditorium, two blocks away from my house, and getting arrested and hauled off to jail, to Woodie Guthrie living on SE 92nd in the summer of 1941 and writing all the songs for the Bonneville Power Administration, to the internment of Japanese-Americans during the war. It also talks about writers like John Reed, the Oregonian journalist who is buried in Red Square.

Michael Munk was born in Prague in 1934. He graduated from Reed College and the University of

Oregon, and received a Ph.D. in politics from New York University in 1974. Munk taught political science for twenty-five years at SUNY, Roosevelt, and Rutgers University. Since then, he has researched local political history and has been published in the Oregon Historical Quarterly, the Pacific Northwest Quarterly, and Science & Society. His column, "Our Radical Past," was a monthly feature in the Portland Alliance for several years. Most recently, his article "John Reed: Political Provocateur" appeared in Portland Monthly, and "McCarthyism Laid to Rest?" was published in Reed Magazine. He recently spoke at the Northwest Labor History Association Conference and presented "The Experience and Legacy of McCarthyism in Oregon" at McMenemy's, Edgefield.

Wow, why didn't we have books like this in school? This is an excellent and fun read. You can jump around and feel you are learning the real and hidden history of a major city. So much that is censored in our official histories. But this book could use another update and even maybe recruit suggestions from locals with good memories and archives while they are still around.

Received quickly and at good price.

In the late 19th century, Portland, Oregon was often referred to as the Boston of the West Coast. It was supposedly proper, a little strait-laced, seeking respectability. In the decades ahead a rumble of radicalism coursed through the city even if historical accounts somehow managed to ignore them. That's no longer the case. Michael Munk in his second edition of *The Portland Red Guide* has compiled a treasure trove of information about Portland's radical past and up to the present. All the people, places, and events you never heard about in school, mainstream newspapers, or most history books get a nod in Munk's comprehensive guide. Munk helps locals and visitors alike get a sense of both time and place by linking radical acts and people to specific sites throughout Portland. Organized chronologically by decades and by neighborhood, readers can pursue their own walking tours on foot or while ensconced in a local cafe. Munk notes that most of the sites are not architecturally significant. Those edifices usually reflect the privileged, not the "ordinarily impoverished losers." But to stand where the Portland Wobblies, as members of the radical union Industrial Workers of the World were called, regularly met harkens the time when radical change seemed imminent. Visit the site of the former Gipsy Smith Tabernacle where homeless, jobless men demanded, and finally received, shelter during the unemployment crisis of 1913-1914, and you are reminded the struggle for economic justice was

even more severe one hundred years ago. Readers will also be introduced to Portland's radical pantheon from attorney, poet, and philosophical radical C.E.S. Wood, union organizer Agnes Thecla Fair who threw herself under a streetcar in despair, journalist and rabble rouser Julia Ruuttila, Native American Amy (Oma) Woodcock Singer who protested fascist ships in Portland, and Dirk DeJonge who was jailed for protesting vigilante violence during the 1934 maritime strike. I had hoped to read about LGBTQ radical activity in Portland's early days and into the recent decades, but I found little clearly linked to the city. Although the radical Dr. Marie Equi is profiled in Munk's book, he notes that she lived with a woman "assistant," Harriet Speckart, for several years. Yet a great many people of her time knew that she was actually in a long-term, same-sex relationship with Speckart, heiress to the Olympia Brewery. For her relatively open life, Equi deserves to be known as a radical and as a lesbian. The Portland Red Guide is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in the hidden history of Portland, the West Coast, and radicalism. The book is great for an off-the-beaten-track walking tour of the city and for a good read far beyond the city's boundaries. Michael Helquist, MARIE EQUI, Radical Politics & Outlaw Passions

Michael Munk's field book, The Portland Red Guide, reminds me of Howard Zinn's A People's History of the United States. Both books are chock full of moments when you realize the historical stories you've been told don't include everyone. I frequently read nonfiction and often read historical books, and Munk's title is right up there with the best of them. Plus, The Portland Red Guide is written as a sort of field guide, so you can travel throughout Portland, walking in the footsteps of the radicals who helped to shape the city. It's a book anyone with even a moderate interest in Portland will enjoy thumbing through, while history buffs will want to sit down and devour the whole thing.

The Portland Red Guide is "a modest start toward a more respectful public understanding and rehabilitation of a neglected part of Portland's common heritage." Ph.D. in Political Science Michael Munk compiles an alternative history to the one commemorated on local street signs, buildings, neighborhood names and park benches exalting the dynasties of fur impresarios, land grabbers, timber barons and industry magnates. Munk

details the Portland area's radical past, from 19th century
"Utopians and Marxists" to "Wobblies and
Socialists" (1900-1930), "Unions and Commies" (1930s),
"McCarthyism and Cold War" (WWII-1960),
"Peaceniks and Civil Rights" (1960 -1973), on up to the state of
"Identities and Protests" movements circa 2010. As the chapter
titles suggest, there is a good deal of overlap between the radical movements of one era and the
next -- one of the most interesting features of the guide is its ability to trace the connection between,
say, the Progressive Party's 1948 "Bachelors for
Wallace" campaign (organized, no less, by a communist) and the Mattachine
Society for gay rights. The Portland Red Guide effectively presents an alternate version of far right
wing history as well, as Munk chronicles the establishment's opposition to
radicalism. One of Munk's best resources for radical history, he reports, was the
files of the Portland Police Bureau's notoriously underhanded Red Squad. Despite
some technical flaws, The Portland Red Guide is an important effort that seeks to ask who gets to
write our history, "Who Gets to Name?" Every city should have one.
For, as Munk invokes, "Until the lions have their historians, tales of hunting will
always glorify the hunter - African Proverb."

I picked up the Portland Red Guide as one of many Portland travel books I've browsed through
since moving here. I found that the "radical" history of Portland was just as interesting to me as a
transplant as the more traditional and current travel books that outline restaurants, book stores, and
other tourist attractions. It's made exploring through the area fun as I put together what I read about
significant moments in the book to their physical locations. It's nostalgic and probably not something
the everyday tourist would seek out, but for a transplant it has really helped me see and understand
some of Portland's history and its trajectory. Overall enjoyable and enlightening!

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