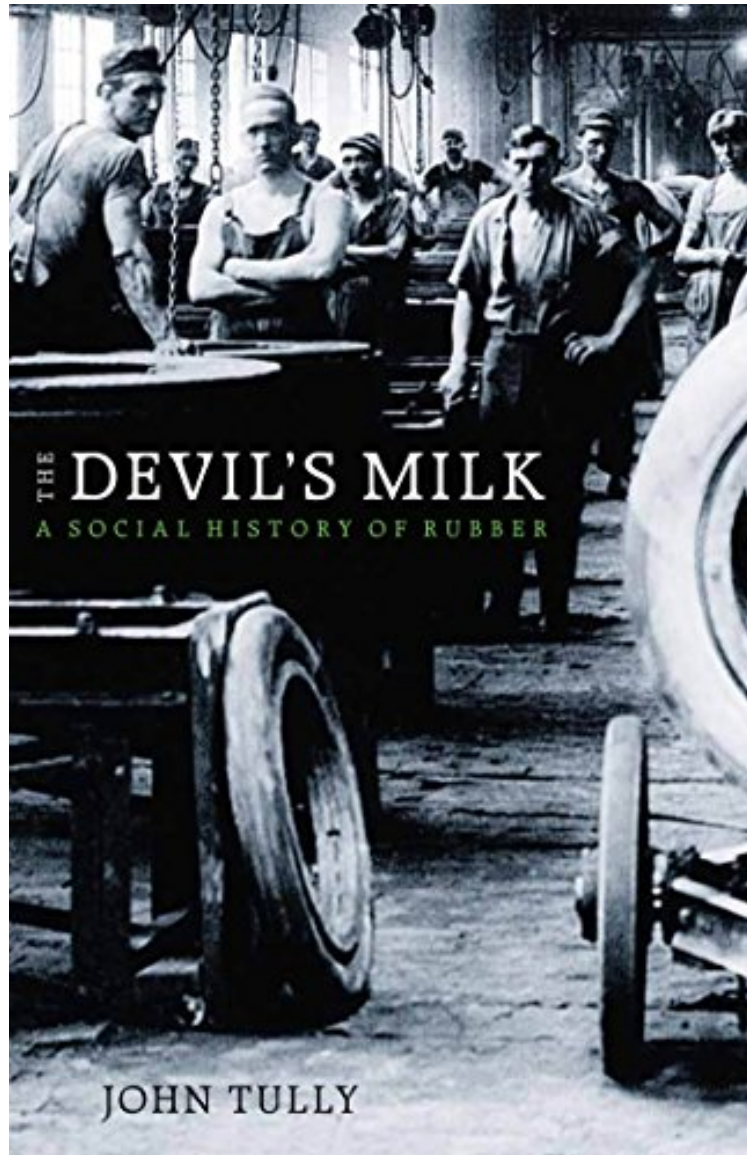


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The Devil's Milk: A Social History of Rubber

John Tully

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John Tully : The Devil's Milk: A Social History of Rubber before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Devil's Milk: A Social History of Rubber:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Don't take rubber for grantedBy CustomerI live in a world of rubber plantations, sugar cane and cattle on the southern coastal plain of Guatemala. To avoid the noontime sun, I jog in the quiet shade of a nearby rubber plantation. So I thought I should learn more about this crop that is expanding rapidly in this country. And learn I did! After reading this amazingly researched book, I will never again take this commodity or these plantations for granted.The book begins with the end products, manufactured by an exploitative industry

beginning with the Industrial Revolution. Nevertheless, we are indebted to this industry for numerous technological improvements that have shaped our lives by readily providing everything from tires to condoms. The race by the Germans and the Allies to produce synthetic rubber on a massive scale during the second World War because natural rubber was no longer easily accessible, makes fascinating reading. The author describes the high price in human misery that desperate tappers from the to Africa, as well as those kept under terrible conditions of debt bondage in the rubber plantations of southeast Asia and Liberia have paid so that modern civilization could progress and make war. I was reminded of similarly cruel conditions that formerly characterized other crops such as sugar cane plantations in Tropical America, cotton and turpentine in the old (and not so old) South and perhaps even America's cheap fruits and vegetables produced with the sweat of migrant laborers. The book only covers the period until shortly after the end of the second World War in detail. Fortunately, conditions in most rubber plantations have improved since then. At least in Tropical America, rubber is now mostly a crop planted on medium sized farms employing local labor for which they have to compete with other crops. Often plantations are an environmental improvement over the degraded pastures that they replace. Now as I jog along the rubber trees, I think of how much we owe to all those in the past who have made it possible for the "devil's milk" to make our lives easier. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An incredible account of the extremes of hardship endured by ...By The McMahon Family Trust An incredible account of the extremes of hardship endured by those who worked in the rubber plantations and of the absolute extortion used by the owners and government agencies for whom rubber was such an important commodity. A first class account of man's inhumanity to many for pure greed. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Akron is a treasure By Lane Smerglia I'm really enjoying this book! Fascinating and engaging. The citizens of Akron should read this book to better understand their city.

Capital, as Marx once wrote, comes into the world "dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt." He might well have been describing the long, grim history of rubber. From the early stages of primitive accumulation to the heights of the industrial revolution and beyond, rubber is one of a handful of commodities that has played a crucial role in shaping the modern world, and yet, as John Tully shows in this remarkable book, laboring people around the globe have every reason to regard it as "the devil's milk." All the advancements made possible by rubber—industrial machinery, telegraph technology, medical equipment, countless consumer goods—have occurred against a backdrop of seemingly endless exploitation, conquest, slavery, and war. But Tully is quick to remind us that the vast terrain of rubber production has always been a site of struggle, and that the oppressed who toil closest to "the devil's milk" in all its forms have never accepted their immiseration without a fight. This book, the product of exhaustive scholarship carried out in many countries and several continents, is destined to become a classic. Tully tells the story of humanity's long encounter with rubber in a kaleidoscopic narrative that regards little as outside its range without losing sight of the commodity in question. With the skill of a master historian and the elegance of a novelist, he presents what amounts to a history of the modern world told through the multiple lives of rubber.

"Think of our industrial structure as a living thing, the skeleton of which is composed of metal and cement, the arterial system of which carries a life stream of oil, and the flexing muscles and sinews of which are of rubber." - Paul Litchfield, Former President of Goodyear "What people did to rubber was interesting, but more interesting still was what rubber did to people." - Vicki Baum, Novelist About the Author Dr. John Tully is lecturer in politics and international studies at Victoria University in Melbourne Australia. He is author of four books: Cambodia Under the Tricolour: King Sisowath and the "Mission Civilisatrice, 1904–1927; France on the Mekong: A History of the Protectorate in Cambodia, 1863–1953; A Short History of Cambodia: From Empire to Survival; and a novel, Death Is the Cool Night.