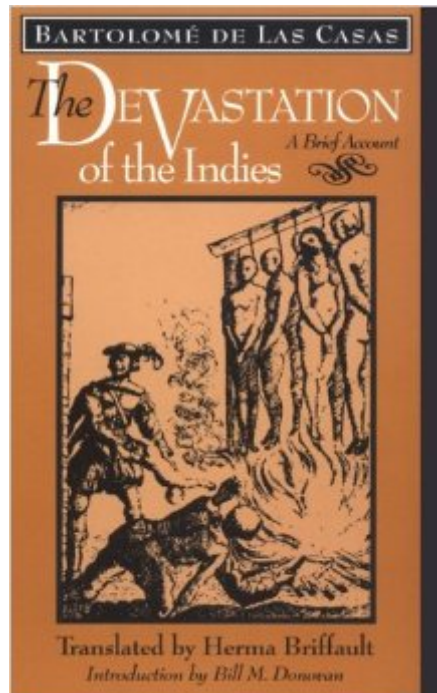


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The Devastation Of The Indies: A Brief Account



Synopsis

Five hundred years after Columbus's first voyage to the New World, the debate over the European impact on Native American civilization has grown more heated than ever. Among the first--and most insistent--voices raised in that debate was that of a Spanish priest, Bartolome de Las Casas, acquaintance of Cortes and Pizarro and shipmate of Velasquez on the voyage to conquer Cuba. In 1552, after forty years of witnessing--and opposing--countless acts of brutality in the new Spanish colonies, Las Casas returned to Seville, where he published a book that caused a storm of controversy that persists to the present day. *The Devastation of the Indies* is an eyewitness account of the first modern genocide, a story of greed, hypocrisy, and cruelties so grotesque as to rival the worst of our own century. Las Casas writes of men, women, and children burned alive "thirteen at a time in memory of Our Redeemer and his twelve apostles." He describes butcher shops that sold human flesh for dog food ("Give me a quarter of that rascal there, " one customer says, "until I can kill some more of my own"). Slave ship captains navigate "without need of compass or charts, " following instead the trail of floating corpses tossed overboard by the ship before them. Native kings are promised peace, then slaughtered. Whole families hang themselves in despair. Once-fertile islands are turned to desert, the wealth of nations plundered, millions killed outright, whole peoples annihilated. In an introduction, historian Bill M. Donovan provides a brief biography of Las Casas and reviews the controversy his work produced among Europeans, whose indignation--and denials--lasted centuries. But the book itself is short. "Were I to describe all this, " writes Las Casas of the four decades of suffering he witnessed, "no amount of time and paper could encompass this task."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Hans Magnus Enzensberger reviewed de las Casas's book, I'm sure, but not this particular translation. I got this on Nov. 30, 2012, and inside the back cover it says "printed Nov. 27, 2012." I looked for the name of the translator, and it says "New Translation: Sara Gordons." It's published by BNPublishing.net, a company of which I'd never heard (but I don't hold that against them.) Everything about it says this is a vanity press, and that Sara Gordon paid to have it printed and distributed. There is a short, virulently anti-papist introduction, unattributed; there are mistakes in the text that involve grammar and punctuation that bespeak hasty and editor-free publication. I'm not an expert in Spanish, but I am qualified to translate German to English, so I know the difficulties involved. I also know how very different competent translations can be from incompetent ones. It just seems that there should be more information about this book and about its translator than is given in its description, because it is indeed a rather spare book.

This book is a short version of The Conquest of New Spain. In the Brief account, de las Casas explains the violence and injustice in which the natives were being treated by the spanish conquistadores. De las Casas writes this account to show the king in Spain the way the army was trating the indians. It also shows the courage of the clergy to protect the rights of the oppressed. De las Casas became the first bishop of Chiapas, the same area in conflict today in southern Mexico where the Church keeps fighting for justice for the poor.

Bartolome was a priest in the new world and the book in an attempt to show the abuses that the Spaniards committed against the indians and the damages done in the name of God and the King. This book is a historiography, but well written and a quick read. It presents a new facet of the conquest and is a direct contrast to the writings of Cortes.

If you want the truth and not the cover-up promoted by textbooks and armchair writers, this is it. Factual and gruesome at times, this book tells the true story of how the Europeans conquered the Americas by theft, rape and pillage.

Oh My God, this book, first published in 1552, is simply heartbreaking, sadening!! Nobody can read this book without crying. I have not heard anything that comes even close in its grotesque, except

perhaps Hitler's slaughter of Jewish people. The evil, brutal cruelty perpetuated on West Indians by Spanish explorers is just undecipherable. Imagine walking into a butcher shop that sells human flesh for dog food. Listen to a customer in that shop asking, 'Give me a quarter of that rascal there, until I can kill some more of my own.' The rascal is a native person, kill for dog food in his/her own country. Evil; the title "The Devastation of the Indies," does not even come close to conveying the horror of it all. Author de Las Casas represents the enduring power of humanity; an individual effort against an entire country on behalf of an entire people. This book should be required reading everywhere in the world. Globalization is a flawed concept if these things go unreported. It is just unbelievable that people like me should discover this story by chance. Just sickening, deeply repugnant is all I can say. Amavilah, Author National Wealth Accounting and Baseball Player Exports: Economic Implications for Performance ISBN: 978-3838330099 Economic Versus Non-Economic Dimensions of the Well-being of Nations. ISBN: 9783838320984 Modeling Determinants of Income in Embedded Economies. ISBN: 1600210465 Quotable Arthur Schopenhauer. ISBN: 9781430324959

This is from a person who was a reliable witness to the horrible treatment done to the people in South America and throughout Central America by Europeans. A tough read but vital to knowing the evil men do each other.

This book is by far one of the most descriptive eye witness accounts of early Europeans and the devastation they left upon indigenous people of color throughout the world.

I work in conjunction with a whole bunch of doctorally trained professionals to help indigent Latino families in East Harlem. Not one of the Clinicians had the slightest idea who De Las Casas was, and yet every one of our clients not only knew of him, but evinced reverent respect for the achievements and writings of this Saintly man. So I went and bought my colleagues ten copies of this book to devastate them out of their complacent ignorance. This book reads like a novel (better!) and you kind of wish it was really fiction, because the truth says so much about the nature of false piety and excused sadism. The translator is to be commended on making this so riveting. What I suppose is so sad is that this is not the tyranny of one dictator, but the perversion of what is a beautiful ideology of love into one of hate, superiority and destruction. Yet and all, the courage of this man, and a very few others, gives hope for the human race. Definitely a great work!

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