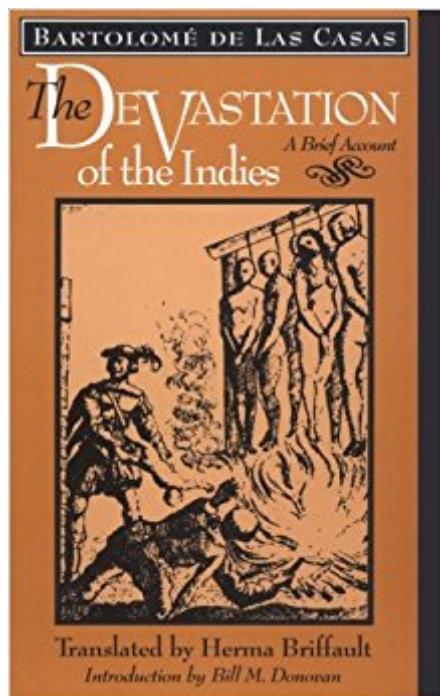


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The Devastation Of The Indies: A Brief Account



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

"Bartolomé de Las Casas's critical account of the impact that the Spaniards had on the new continent has long been recognized as one of the major sources for the study on the interaction between whites and American Indians during the sixteenth century. The present translation of *The Devastation of the Indies* is based on the 1965 edition and appeared for the first time in 1974. The reprint is now accompanied by a penetrating introduction by Bill M. Donovan... All this makes the introduction to a provocative and stimulating essay, preparing the reader for the actual text by Las Casas." (Albrecht Classen Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association)"[Does] justice to the heartfelt message of Bartolomé de las Casas." (British Bulletin of Publications)"The book's sensational effect provides an early example of the power of the press... The topicality of the book is monstrous, has a penetratingly contemporary smell to it. [But] Las Casas is not our contemporary. His report treats of colonialism in its earliest stage; that is, of robbery pure and simple, of unconcealed plundering." (Hans Magnus Enzensberger)

Text: English (translation) Original Language: Spanish

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 BN Publishing.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.

The book smelled really bad. It was such a pain to read something that stinks.

Enjoyed reading.

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.

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.

Great information which makes it an asset to add to your historical collection .

Awesome book. Very enlightening and useful.

A very interesting history of the beginning of European expansion in the New World. It provides a remarkable templet for all that follows.

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