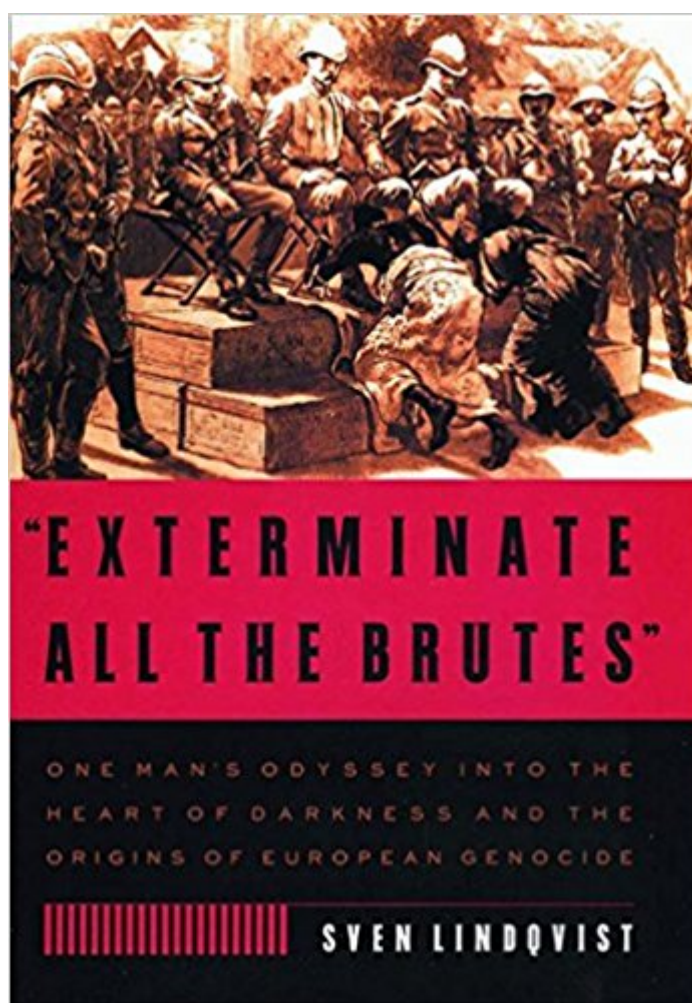


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"Exterminate All The Brutes": One Man's Odyssey Into The Heart Of Darkness And The Origins Of European Genocide



Synopsis

"Exterminate All the Brutes" is a searching examination of Europe's dark history in Africa and the origins of genocide. Using Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" as his point of departure, Sven Lindqvist takes us on a haunting tour through the colonial past, interwoven with a modern-day travelogue. Retracing the steps of European explorers, missionaries, politicians, and historians in Africa from the late eighteenth century onward, the author exposes the roots of genocide in Africa via his own journey through the Saharan desert. As Lindqvist shows, fantasies not merely of white superiority but of actual extermination—"cleansing" the earth of the so-called lesser races; deeply informed European colonialism and racist ideology that ultimately culminated in Europe's own Holocaust. Chosen as one of the Best Books of 1998 by the New Internationalist, which called it "a beautifully written integration of criticism, cultural history, and travel writing, underpinned by a passion for social justice," "Exterminate All the Brutes" is a powerful reckoning with the past and an indispensable contribution to the literature of colonial Africa and European genocide.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sven Lindqvist, a traveler and historian, paints a broad-brush history of European colonialism, especially in Africa. Drawing his title from Joseph Conrad's fable Heart of Darkness, he turns up 19th-century newspaper accounts of British massacres of wounded Sudanese rebels after the siege of Omdurman, of German concentration camps in what was once called Southwest Africa, of a Belgian captain who decorated his flower beds with the heads of recalcitrant plantation workers.

These incidents were not unusual, Lindqvist writes. Neither were they thought especially brutal by their perpetrators, for, he argues, colonialism was guided by a doctrine that placed Europe at the top of the evolutionary ladder and regarded non-Europeans as a separate species bound for extinction--a doctrine that found its ultimate expression in the Holocaust. This is an occasionally gruesome and always provocative study.

Praise for Sven Lindqvist and "Exterminate All the Brutes": "A book of stunning range and near genius. . . . The catastrophic consequences of European imperialism are made palpable in the personal progress of the author, a late-twentieth century pilgrim in Africa. Lindqvist's astonishing connections across time and cultures, combined with a marvelous economy of prose, leave the reader appalled, reflective, and grateful." •David Levering Lewis "In spare but powerful prose . . . Lindqvist manages to weave together an impressive variety of themes [to] point to the continuity between prejudices and acts separated by continents and centuries." •The Washington Post "Lindqvist's disturbing, brilliant work of historical sleuthing deserves to be taken up in a thousand classrooms." •Rob Nixon, Voice Literary Supplement

Interesting take on the holocaust.

Exterminate All the Brutes is brief and disturbing; Sven Lindqvist unveils the realities and moral convictions we have almost completely repressed. Just as the author suggests, the book shatters the image we have of ourselves, but even more importantly, it is distressing how relevant his ideas and Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' are in the world today - again. The title of the book is taken from Joseph Conrad's 1902 classic novel - Heart of Darkness. In it, the main character, Kurtz, goes to Africa to bring progress and culture to the uncivilized continent. He is dispatched to Africa as an ivory procurement agent, and as the story develops the reader is confronted with the unreal brutality of the colonial rule. Conrad's work intertwines the themes of 'light of civilization' and 'darkness of barbarism' and makes reader realize the hollowness of these phrases as Kurtz surrounds himself with chaos and mayhem. Sven Lindqvist develops this theme as he traces the imperial history of European colonialism and condenses it to a single sentence: "Exterminate all the brutes." European world expansion, he claims, and the employed tactics of extermination are the truths we like to forget. Preferring to externalize we look at the Holocaust as a historical aberration, a smear on the path of progress and enlightenment brought to the world by the Western societies. However, as the author points out, just as all of Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz, it would also be the

European habits and political precedents that would lay the foundation for the atrocities of the Second World War. What was done in Africa, would be repeated in Europe - we know this, what we lack is the courage to face what we know and draw some conclusions. The book culminates by pointing to the Holocaust, but one doesn't have to look far to see the same principles being applied in the world today; 'Heart of Darkness' is applicable to every nation, culture and ideology.

'Exterminate All the Brutes' is an incredibly powerful book.

"Exterminate All The Brutes" provides prodigious information about forgotten episodes of imperialism and the damage the great European powers have caused to the culture of Africa. Sven Lindqvist makes a strong case that the Nazi extermination programs were rooted in the legacy of European repression of the people in their colonial empires.

The brutality of the human species and the anarchy that power delivers is discovered researched and revealed. A true revelation.

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Fantastically insightful. A triple travel guide physical, literary and ideological.

Great condition

Everyone should read this book. Helps with perspective on the imperial forces of history and the mark their heinous acts have left on our global society

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