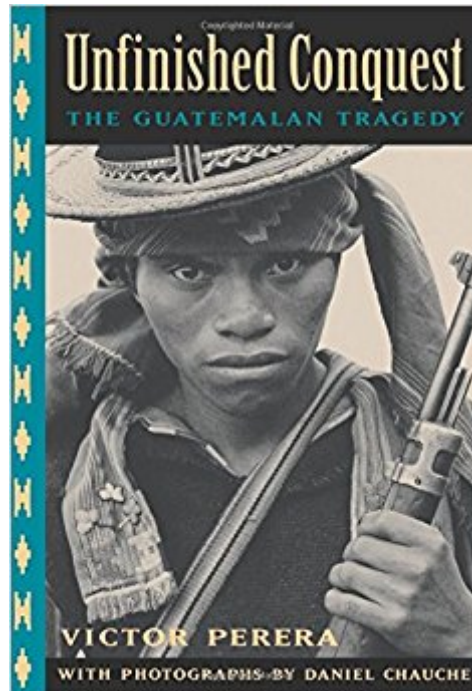




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Unfinished Conquest: The Guatemalan Tragedy



Synopsis

Spanning the years of civil war in Guatemala, *Unfinished Conquest* portrays an embattled country facing the third cycle of a conquest that began when the conquistadors arrived in the sixteenth century. As personal narrative weaves with reportage and oral testimony, we meet the victims, champions, and villains of a society torn apart by violence and injustice.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This engrossing combination of reportage, personal narrative, oral testimony and ethnographic investigation focuses on four Guatemalan towns which have been the object of an ethnic extermination campaign by the military. More than 65,000 Guatemalans of Mayan descent have died in this conflict since 1978. Perera (*The Last Lords of Palenque*), a native Guatemalan living in the U.S., examines the relationship between the campaign and the country's political leadership, the destruction of natural resources, and the Mayan-Christian religious practices of those under assault. Included is an analysis of the activities of radical Catholic priests and human-rights groups in a land of torture and killing, and observations on the growing Protestant evangelical movement which has already converted more than a third of the nominally Catholic indigenous population. Perera's layered narrative, set in a land of earthquakes, volcanoes and massacres, reads like a medieval morality tale. Photos. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Despite the slight flurry of interest inspired by the award of the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize to Mayan

Indian Rigobarta Menchu, the press is again ignoring the ongoing genocide of the Guatemalan people by state-sponsored terrorism. In an insightful historical analysis, Guatemalan writer Perera describes how the breathtakingly beautiful home of the Mayas has been torn apart by heinous abuses of human rights. The civil war, really a peasant agrarian movement against large interests aided by the United States and Israel in the guise of fighting communism, is destroying a culture so strong that it survived the brutality of the Spanish Conquest almost intact. Highly recommended for lay readers as well as scholars. --Louise Leonard, Univ. of Florida Libs., Gainesville Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In Guatemala in 1985 I had the wonderful fortune one morning to meet this author for breakfast. I lived and traveled extensively in Guatemala and believe that of all the books I have ever read on the political and social issues that control this country and people....this book, by far portrays the most accurate and most sensitive insight to understanding the country's civil war and its indigenous people. Although written by a journalist...the book offers the deeper understanding of an anthropologist or social scientist. It should be read by anyone interested in traveling in living in this beautiful, but wrongly, wrongly oppressed country.

I had to put this book down a number of times because the violence described was so awful, and it kind of scared me before traveling to Guatemala (even though I've traveled a lot in Mexico, with its own history of violence). Once in Guatemala, though, I loved having had that historical information, and I wasn't scared at all, as the people were extremely friendly. It was nice to have that empathy for the painful history they had experienced. The author did a good job sharing data from his many interviews and his own personal experiences.

A good history of Guatemala's civil war that is not boring to read. While the viewpoint seems to be that the communist rebels had a just cause, they are given as much blame for the violence that ensued.

Victor Perera is a native Guatemalan who took the better part of 6 years to write this book. This book is chock full of great information gathered from hundreds of interviews. Perera doesn't waste time trying to interpret the events he writes about, instead he lets the participants and witnesses speak for themselves. He interviews everybody for this book from wealthy landowners, government officials, military personnel, Catholic and evangelical clergy and mostly the Mayan people who have

suffered from 30 years of civil war. He then fills in the cracks with historical background. His writing is very precise and specific, his descriptions paint a very vivid picture of the oppression and genocide that continues to take place. The book begins with his visits to the garbage dump slums of Guatemala City and proceeds to other hot spots of violence. The core of the book is those chapters about the Ixil Triangle area where as many as one third of the local Mayan population was killed, disappeared or forced to flee the country.....socks

The terrible situation that happened to this Central American nation is very well documented in this book. The author, Mr. Perera, writes with a lot of insight and first hand knowledge since he lived in Guatemala for several years. The book is full with interviews the author did with local people such as soldiers, politicians, ladinos, Mayas and just the average person in the street. The author is not afraid to let the reader see what is the real situation in Guatemala and is not afraid to point fingers to the real culprits. This book is a very good work that identifies the problems of not only the Mayans as a people but also the problems and corruption that politicians have brought on its own people. Great work!

This wide-ranging book, written beautifully and knowledgeably, is a pleasure to read and a must for anyone interested in Guatemalan (or Central American) history and/or Mayan culture. Mr. Perera does not take particular pains to hide his sympathies (clearly pro-environmental protection, pro-indigenous people's rights) but the intelligence of his writing and the mastery and breadth of the subject matter make this the most articulate, beautiful, informative statement of those views I've read. What a disappointment to learn that this powerful voice was silenced not long after this book by a stroke and his subsequent death. Read this book!

AND I BELIEVE That everything that this "people" have done to the poor of the world, is going to come back at them to bite them right in their behind! "THIRD WORLD COUNTRY" STANDS FOR MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT.

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