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A Young People's History Of The United States: Columbus To The War On Terror (For Young People Series)



Synopsis

A Young People's History of the United States brings to US history the viewpoints of workers, slaves, immigrants, women, Native Americans, and others whose stories, and their impact, are rarely included in books for young people. A Young People's History of the United States is also a companion volume to The People Speak, the film adapted from A People's History of the United States and Voices of a People's History of the United States. Beginning with a look at Christopher Columbus's arrival through the eyes of the Arawak Indians, then leading the reader through the struggles for workers' rights, women's rights, and civil rights during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and ending with the current protests against continued American imperialism, Zinn in the volumes of A Young People's History of the United States presents a radical new way of understanding America's history. In so doing, he reminds readers that America's true greatness is shaped by our dissident voices, not our military generals.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As this book explains at the beginning, most history books, especially textbooks, look at history from the point of view of power – “kings and presidents, scientists and writers and other noteworthy names. Therefore, much of this history is about the struggle over power – “wars, coups, electioneering and other means of transferring power, whether peacefully or violently. Most of these books make claims to “objectivity” without acknowledging that in fact, they are all, of necessity, biased. Writing history is a matter of what gets written and what gets left out. Who gets to tell the

story and who is silenced. Howard Zinn's *THE PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES*, on the other hand, has no pretensions about objectivity. Zinn states up front that he is writing the history we don't learn in school or read in the newspapers. He is telling the history of the people who have been affected by power and the struggle for power. In the Friedman/Thatcher/Reagan vision of trickle-down economics, Zinn is concerned about those getting trickled on and, more importantly, what those people have done and are doing about it. The original, adult version of this book is over seven hundred pages long. Zinn, along with co-writer Rebecca Stefoff, wanted to bring a more accessible version of the book to younger audiences, hence, *THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES*, which is roughly two-thirds as long with significantly less writing per page. The young people's version pretty much follows the adult version of the book, starting with debunking the myth of Columbus and continuing until about the date of publication, including information on the September 11 attacks, the war on terrorism and the invasion of Iraq.

I have read the original "People's History" and am about to order this version for my 12-year-old son to read. In reading the various reviews here I felt compelled to comment, although my experiences stem from the original title. I find the review about the author's "mean spirited view of America" to be the most entertaining, and how we "should not teach young people such a negative view of America." Or the other reviews with comments about "snarling at references to Washington and Lincoln," and "George Washington being a capitalist elitist who was fighting to keep the poor down thru the formation of a faux- republic government..." Really shows how we Americans love to believe what we like to believe, and especially tend to believe what we are taught by our teachers in school, and by this mighty government that leads us- and deceives us. Come on people; try thinking for yourselves for once- what's the worst that could happen? Still other reviewers call it 'leftist crap;' so entertaining, and somewhat depressing, too, to realize how close-minded so many people are to anything but their own version of the truth. What one reviewer refers to as Zinn's opinions... I cannot even begin to guess at what he thinks he is referring to. There are for the most part nothing but plain and substantiated facts (with listed sources) laid out in this, and in the full version of "People's History," so it is quite hard to believe that someone could make so ignorant a comment. But then it's also hard to believe what many people will do to hide from the truth in their own lives right here in present day as well.

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