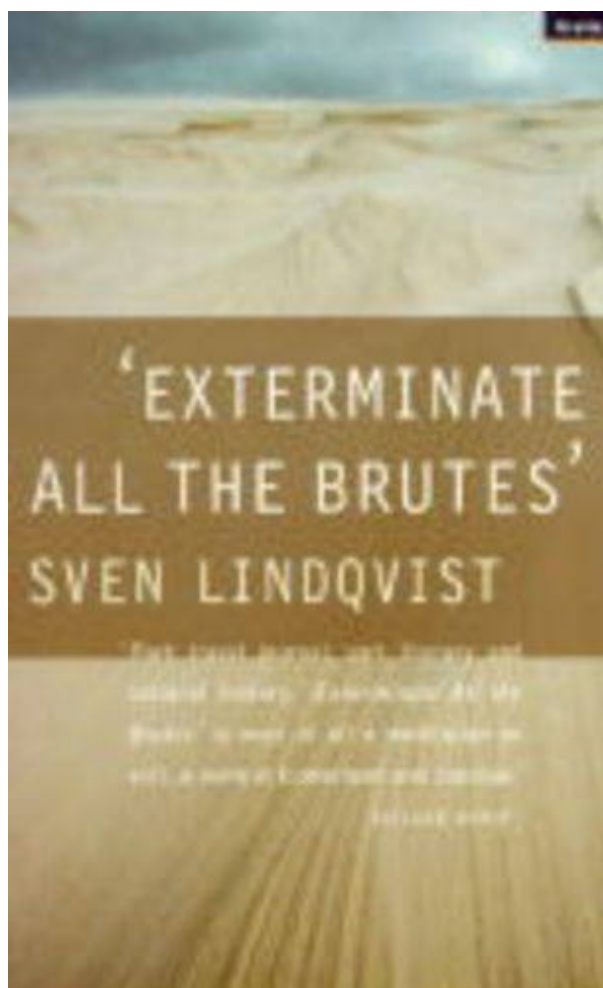
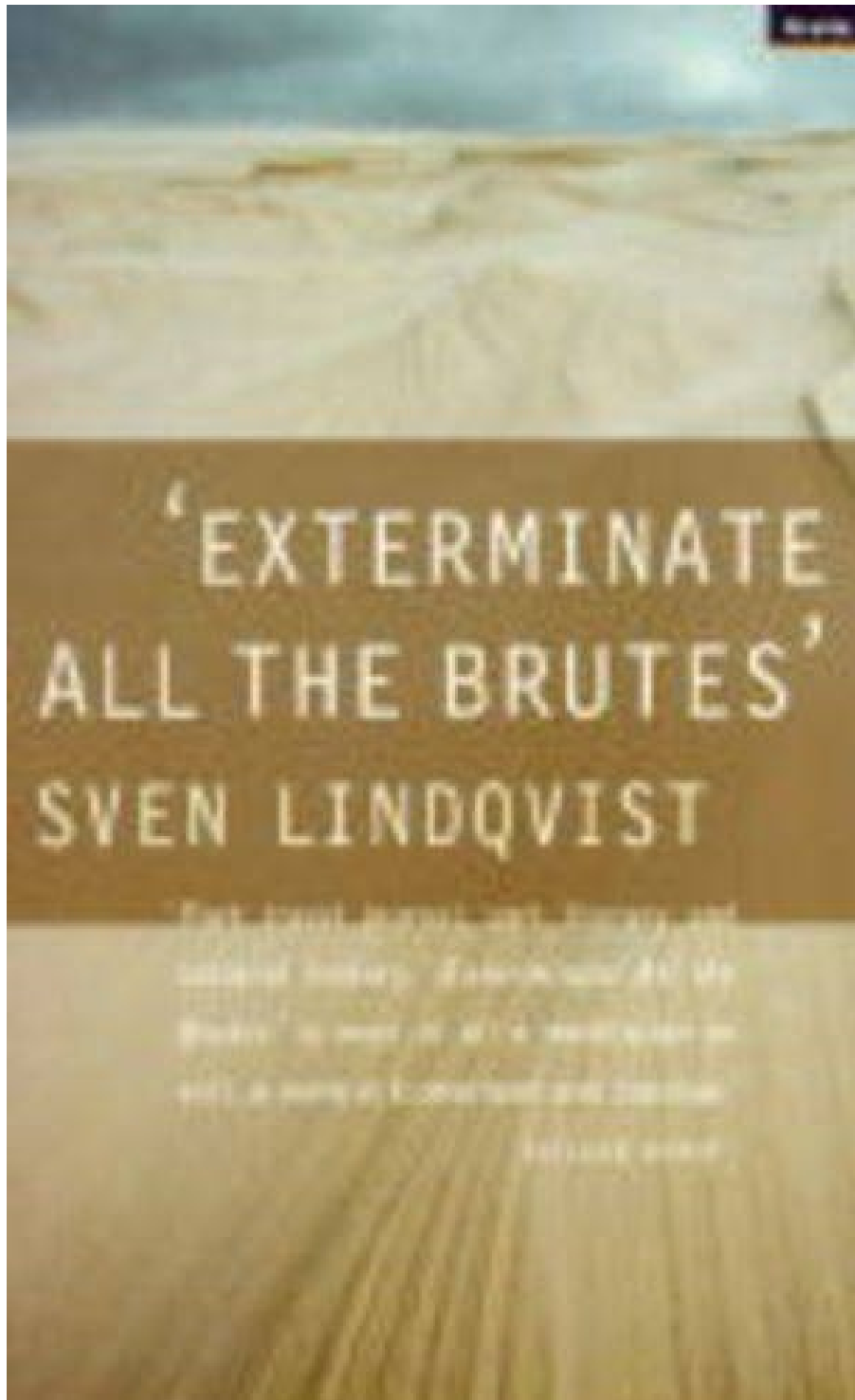


EXTERMINATE ALL THE BRUTES BY SVEN LINDQVIST



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Amazon.com Review

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.

Review

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."

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This is a study of Europe's dark history in Africa, written both in the form of a travel diary and as a historical examination of European imperialism and racism over the past two centuries. Sven Lindqvist draws on newspaper accounts, the writings of European explorers theologians, politicians and historians, from the late-18th century onwards, in his search to make sense of that most terrifying of Conrad's lines: "Exterminate all the brutes." Lindqvist argues that the harrowing racism that led to the Holocaust in the 20th century had its roots in European colonial policy of the preceding century.

- Sales Rank: #2969866 in Books
- Published on: 1996-01-01
- Original language: Swedish
- Number of items: 1
- Binding: Paperback
- 179 pages

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Disturbing and daring

By Sesquilinear

Four stars because too short. Although going through some of the references at the end of the book would extend the amount of reading considerably. Disturbing because the description of atrocities is heartrending for someone who values life and does not cheer at bombs being dropped through the push of a button on children two continents away by functionaries in plush armchairs. Exterminating all the brutes is online, alive and well, thank you. Disturbing because what is described in the book is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of massacres and atrocities. History recorded comparatively few descriptions of atrocities by a few well-meaning souls. The rest lacked the required courage the author mentions, in particular, at the end of the book. The courage to behold the beam that is in thine own eye. Daring to mention "Genocide" in connection with pre-WWII massacres, although the author writes the appropriate lines to exonerate himself - did he lack courage in the face of overwhelming odds? Genocide is ingrained in human nature, but the roots of "scientific" and "good" genocide as conducted by European nations in particular, and discussed in the book, run much deeper. The book could have gained by delving into them. The book is concise, to the point, without prose-padding. This is particularly refreshing. It is a very good read... if you have the courage.

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

Incredibly powerful and relevant still

By Ilya Grigorik

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.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent discussion of the genocide of colonialism.

By Dale Pelton

"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.

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