

Source B: Bartolome de Las Casas, On the Destruction of the Indies, 1540's

The Dominican friar Bartolome de Las Casas : As a young man, Las Casas had sailed with one of the first Spanish expeditions to the West Indies in 1502. A humane, sensitive priest, he was soon repelled by his countrymen's treatment of the native peoples of the New World. He eventually became Bishop of Guatemala and devoted himself to reforming Spanish colonial policies-for which he was recognized as the "Protector of the Indians."

The Indies were discovered in the year 1492. The year following, Spanish Christians went to inhabit them.....

Among these gentle sheep...the Spaniards entered...like wolves, tigers, and lions which had been starving for many days, and since forty years they have done nothing else..... than outrage, slay, afflict, torment, and destroy them....We are assured that our Spaniards, with their cruelty and execrable [very bad] works, have depopulated and made desolate [deserted] the great continent, and that more than ten kingdoms, larger than all Spain...although formerly full of people, are now deserted through tyranny [abusive power], by the infernal [relating to hell] deeds and tyranny of the Christians... by unjust, cruel, and tyrannous wars... by slaying all those who might aspire to...liberty or to escape from the torments that they suffer...

The reason why the Christians have killed and destroyed such infinite numbers of souls is solely because they have made gold their ultimate aim, seeking to load themselves with riches in the shortest time...These lands, being so happy and so rich, and the people so humble, so patient, and so easily subjugated [enslaved]...

...all the millions above mentioned have died without faith and without sacraments [sacred rites]. And it is...admitted...by all...that the Indians throughout the Indies never did any harm to the Christians: they even esteemed them as coming from heaven, until they and their neighbors had suffered the same many evils, thefts, deaths, violence, and visitations at their hands...