

## Debunking Zinn's Lies About Columbus

How the United States educational system could have been corrupted, primarily by one man—namely by Howard Zinn, via his book *A People's History of the United States* and The Zinn Education Project—is something out of a tragic, fictional novel, just as much of Zinn's content is tragically fictional and profoundly flawed.

That several generations of our nation's youths have been inculcated with Zinn's naïve and often-erroneous diatribes is a travesty to our educational system, our youth, our nation's culture, and to the white European race that it haughtily harangues and viciously derides with racial bias. Worse yet, like a virus, it has spread across the country, culminating into a frenzied movement to eradicate Columbus from our minds as the great explorer and "discoverer" that he was, and to erase and replace "Columbus Day" with "Indigenous Peoples Day."

The following is a direct quote off the Zinn Education Project's website:

### Time to Abolish Columbus Day

Too often, even in 2015, the Columbus story is still young children's first curricular introduction to the meeting of different ethnicities, different cultures, different nationalities. In school-based literature on Columbus, they see him plant the flag, and name and claim "San Salvador" for an empire thousands of miles away; they're taught that white people have the right to rule over peoples of color, that stronger nations can bully weaker nations, and that the only voices they need to listen to throughout history are those of powerful white guys like Columbus. Is this said explicitly? No, it doesn't have to be. It's the silences that speak.

Evidently, Howard Zinn and his successors never read or understood the full accounts of history, because every race, nation, or tribe has engaged in conflict and warfare. Every European nation named on the map today never existed two thousand years ago when the Roman Empire controlled all of Europe, Northern Africa, and Western Asia. How did *those nations* come to be? By peaceful, friendly negotiations or being gifted land by benevolent natives? Most surely not. And how many tribes existed in those lands well *before* the Roman conquests? Conquest, and the ugly business of survival, greed, or ambition, has been enacted by all races at one time or another, and has plagued *all* of humanity, including every indigenous tribe.

Therefore, the Zinn practice of having students steal someone else's purse and claim it as their own is an example that could easily be used on any native tribe which warred with their neighbors and settled on their grounds. The Western hemisphere before Columbus' arrival was *not* Paradise.

It is well documented that the Carib natives were savage cannibals, flesh-eating tribesmen who threatened the European white man as much as their own kind. Hostile natives ate the explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano, and as Columbus' son Hernando wrote, when speaking of the native chief who boarded their caravel:

“He then prepared to go ashore, inviting the Admiral to a feast...He then complained about the Caribs, who captured his people and took them away to be eaten, but he was greatly overjoyed when the Admiral comforted him by showing him our weapons and promising to defend him with them.”

This not only confirms Columbus' friendly relations with the more peaceful natives, but also shows his willingness to defend them. And there are many other extant sources by various eyewitnesses to expound upon Columbus' attempts at friendly interactions, as well as the brutality of the Caribs, who warred with other tribes, as eyewitness Dr. Diego Álvarez Chanca stated:

“These people raid the other islands and carry off all the women they can take...whom they keep as servants and concubines. These women say that they are treated with a cruelty that seems incredible. The Caribs eat the male children...and as for the men they are able to capture, they bring home those that are alive to be slaughtered and eat those who are dead on the spot. They castrate the boys they capture and use them as servants until they are men. Then, when they want a feast, they kill and eat them.”

As such, for Zinn and his disciples, such as Bill Bigelow, to make the racist charge that Columbus, and in general, “white people have the right to rule over peoples of color,” is not only a false statement—since white people had indiscriminately killed and conquered millions of their own kind, let alone people of color, just as native tribes had killed their own breed—but such a incendiary remark attempts to liken Columbus and white Europeans to Hitler and his henchmen, who indeed ruled over and slaughtered Jews, Slavs, and gypsies, whom *they* most certainly viewed as inferior subhumans. However, Columbus on several occasions described the natives to his Sovereigns as *not* “stupid— far from it, they are men of great intelligence.” Why such racism against Columbus is allowed to be taught in schools is a serious question that *must* be asked *and* answered.

Naturally, Columbus and his Spanish settlers were not faultless and made mistakes, some being egregious and regrettable, but they were men of their time, a time that believed spreading the Christian faith entitled them to do so by force and a time that saw the birth of the brutal Inquisition, which we must not forget was initiated not by Columbus, but rather by his pernicious overlord, King Ferdinand, and the Crown's cunning and ruthless Bishop Fonseca.

Columbus was given a strict set of rules by his Sovereigns as to how he must execute his expedition, and what commodities he must bring back to resuscitate the Spanish empire's tanking economy, which was seriously in debt. In essence, Columbus was a

pawn of his master, and the acquisition of gold, rare spices, and slaves were all mandatory demands that the Admiral had to comply with in order to maintain his position. For the Admiral was serving a wily king, who once said: “The King of France complains that I have twice deceived him. He lies, the fool; I have deceived him ten times, and more!”

Delving further into extant sources—not rhetoric out of context—we can also see how Columbus was sabotaged by Bishop Fonseca, who, being in charge of the expedition’s treasury, saw to it to send several officers on caravels to undermine the Genoese Admiral/governor, each captain having his own personal vendetta based on jealousy, loathing the fact that an Italian led their Spanish enterprise.

On the very first voyage, Martín Alonso Pinzón, captain of the *Pinta*, had raced home to Spain in an attempt to tell his Sovereigns that *he* made the miraculous discovery, not Columbus, yet failed. Meanwhile, Francisco de Bobadilla was sent to investigate the complaints lodged against Columbus. Upon landing in the New World, Bobadilla saw that the Columbus ruling family had hung two Spanish rebels. Never given the authority to arrest Columbus, Bobadilla did so on his own volition. Not that Francisco had evidence of wrongdoing, as he never cared to find out if Columbus had valid reasons to execute the troublemakers, but rather because he was furious that a Genoese governor had killed two Spaniards. Thus the highly publicized account of Columbus being shipped back to Spain in chains was all based upon the impetuous and biased judgment of Francisco de Bobadilla, who later was reprimanded by his Sovereigns. Queen Isabella immediately released Columbus, both of whom broke down in tears, she with embarrassment and he in utter humiliation.

The historical record is replete with evidence to support the fact that others, such as Roldan, Orvando, and others, were largely responsible for the chaos in the New World, while Bishop Fonseca silently orchestrated from across the Atlantic. Columbus was sabotaged and made to be the scapegoat, while the contentious charges against him—primarily by one major voice, namely the Dominican missionary Bartolomé de Las Casas—have in recent years been debunked in several, very critical areas.

Las Casas’ account in *The Destruction of the Indies*, written some fifty years after the events, had stated that Columbus and the Spaniards—out of brutality and overworking the natives—had decimated the population, from what he perceived to be three million people down to two hundred. Both these numbers, in themselves, have been dismissed as grossly incorrect, while the vast majority of deaths had been caused not by brutality, but by the invisible disease the Europeans had brought with them. Therefore, out of pure ignorance, de Las Casas’ *Destruction of the Indies* has caused the most destruction to the historical record, and to Columbus’ good name, a name that reverberates throughout our great nation.

The Founding Fathers—also flawed men—named their capital the District of Columbia in honor of Columbus. Cities and colleges were named after Columbus, as was the Columbian Exposition of 1892. Meanwhile, that other landmark event in history, the moon landing, included the Apollo 11's command module, which was aptly named Columbia. Interestingly enough, the director of that astonishing mission happened to be Christopher Columbus Kraft Jr. As such, it's clear to see that Christopher Columbus is an integral part of American history and our culture, and is rightfully woven into the very fabric of our progressive civilization.

It's a complex story with many details that have been taken out of context or simply misunderstood, but today's agenda has sadly become a witch hunt, as the Zinn Education Project, and countless students reared on misinformation, have passed sentence without understanding the full historical record and are executing Columbus, as if he alone caused what centuries of military and political leaders in his footsteps caused in the New World. The chaos in the Western hemisphere was largely due to Columbus' rival governors, the unruly Spanish dregs who disobeyed orders, and the successive wave of commanders and conquistadors, all under orders by their rapacious Sovereigns. This mindset of selectively expunging great figures, like Columbus, and exonerating indigenous people from a moral high ground leads down a very precarious path.

For to do so would end up condemning and vilifying almost everyone, including the Founding Fathers, who owned slaves. Taking this a step further, even Jesus would fall under the Zinn Inquisition's jaundiced eye. Most orthodox Jewish sects loathed Jesus intensely for being a dangerous charlatan and rebel, one they even managed to sway Pilate—against his better judgment—to crucify Jesus. Many sects then, and today, believed Jesus to be a blasphemous rouge worthy of execution, and their voices *did* manage to get Jesus crucified. That incident is an indisputable historical fact, not hearsay. Hence, what are we to do about Jesus? Shall we crucify him again, or erase him from history for proclaiming that he was the Son of God, because not everyone then or today agrees with his claim? Where does the witch hunt end?

Or what are we to do about the Bible condoning slavery? Moses—the lauded spiritual leader who freed his enslaved Jewish brethren—permitted his tribesmen to have slaves, some even being Jewish.

Or what are we to do about Albert Einstein? His theory led others to create the Atomic Bomb, which killed tens of thousands of civilians. Like Columbus, who opened the door for others to follow, Einstein—using the Zinn methodology—should also be condemned for hatching an evil concept that led to the annihilation of thousands of Japanese citizens, and continues to shackle the world in fear of a nuclear holocaust.

Once again, we can see how the Zinn methodology is deeply flawed.

Henceforth, curriculums in schools must not judge and condemn historical figures from such a narrow-minded perspective, such as the one endorsed by the Zinn Education Project, which illogically seeks perfection from an imperfect world. In the broader context, it cannot denigrate white Europeans and exonerate indigenous peoples, for at times both had acted like animals, but one animal happened to emerge supreme.

Unfortunately, many today don't know the full Columbus story, which is replete with characters that all played far larger roles in the grand process of conquest. Although Columbus surely made mistakes, he was a subordinate of a duplicitous king and devious bishop. Many others took part in this sweeping story, but Columbus has been the scapegoat for the sins of numerous men in his day and countless others in his wake. This is extremely unfair. That's why it's imperative that students and the public at large are presented with information about Columbus by reputable sources before carelessly passing a death sentence on the greatest explorer to have ever sailed our oceans, one who opened up half the world to European settlers who eventually created the greatest nation on Earth, one dedicated to freedom and advanced technologies that landed mankind on the moon, developed electricity, automobiles, planes, miraculous medical procedures, and global communications via the Internet, which offers instant access to sharing thoughts and information with all peoples on the planet.

The advent of the United States is a blessing, not a curse, and if George Washington is honored as the *Father* of this great nation, then surely Columbus should be honored as the *Grandfather of America*.

Therefore, the Zinn Education Project's attempt to abolish Columbus Day and soil his great name must stop. In a word, it's *Zinnful*. Without Columbus, none of us would enjoy the vastly superior benefits that this illustrious country has bestowed upon *all* of its fortunate citizens. Hence, Columbus and Columbus Day must be celebrated. If indigenous people desire a holiday, which, by the way, they already have in August, let them petition for another separate day on the calendar, but leave Columbus and his special day alone.

There are many sources by fair-minded authors on the subject that could balance out the harmful effects presently in place and ensure that current and future generations of Americans will learn and appreciate the past, with all its warts, and help them to truly understand the complicated world we live in, one not just of black and white (good and bad), but one with numerous shades of gray and heroes who were not flawless, but achieved great things.

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**Rich DiSilvio** is an award-winning author of non-fiction and fiction with several books aimed at students, ranging from grade school to college. The *Tales of Titans* series has already been embraced by history teachers and schools and features a

chapter on Columbus. Meanwhile, DiSilvio's magnum opus, *The Winds of Time*, is an analytical study of the titans who shaped Western civilization, which also features a similar chapter on Columbus. Professors, such as John La Corte and Gilda Baldassari have lauded it, including the noted historian and author H.W. Brands, who said, "Most ambitious, I admire the thought and effort you put into this."