



Plagues and Peoples

By William H. McNeill

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Upon its original publication, *Plagues and Peoples* was an immediate critical and popular success, offering a radically new interpretation of world history as seen through the extraordinary impact--political, demographic, ecological, and psychological--of disease on cultures. From the conquest of Mexico by smallpox as much as by the Spanish, to the bubonic plague in China, to the typhoid epidemic in Europe, the history of disease is the history of humankind. With the identification of AIDS in the early 1980s, another chapter has been added to this chronicle of events, which William McNeill explores in his new introduction to this updated edition.

Thought-provoking, well-researched, and compulsively readable, *Plagues and Peoples* is that rare book that is as fascinating as it is scholarly, as intriguing as it is enlightening. "A brilliantly conceptualized and challenging achievement" (Kirkus Reviews), it is essential reading, offering a new perspective on human history.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

No small themes for historian William McNeill: he is a writer of big, sweeping books, from **The Rise of the West** to **The History of the World. Plagues and Peoples** considers the influence of infectious diseases on the course of history, and McNeill pays special attention to the Black Death of the 13th and 14th centuries, which killed millions across Europe and Asia. (At one point, writes McNeill, 10,000 people in Constantinople alone were dying each day from the plague.) With the new crop of plagues and epidemics in our own time, McNeill's quiet assertion that "in any effort to understand what lies ahead the role of infectious disease cannot properly be left out of consideration" takes on new significance.

From the Publisher

McNeill's highly acclaimed work is a brilliant and challenging account of the effects of disease on human history. His sophisticated analysis and detailed grasp of the subject make this book fascinating reading. By the author of *The Rise Of The West*.

From the Inside Flap

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