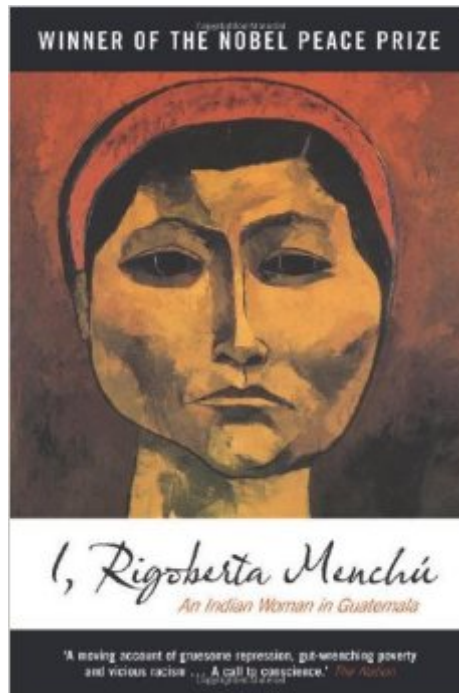


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I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman In Guatemala



Synopsis

Now a global bestseller, the remarkable life of Rigoberta Menchú, a Guatemalan peasant woman, reflects on the experiences common to many Indian communities in Latin America. Menchú suffered gross injustice and hardship in her early life: her brother, father and mother were murdered by the Guatemalan military. She learned Spanish and turned to catechistic work as an expression of political revolt as well as religious commitment. Menchú vividly conveys the traditional beliefs of her community and her personal response to feminist and socialist ideas. Above all, these pages are illuminated by the enduring courage and passionate sense of justice of an extraordinary woman.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"I, Rigoberta Menchu" is one of those books which seems to be overshadowed by controversy. A Quiche Mayan woman of Guatemala, Rigoberta Menchu told her story orally to anthropologist Elisabeth Burgos-Debray in Paris in 1982. Burgos-Debray transcribed the story and published in Spanish in 1983; Ann Wright's English translation appeared in 1984. The book, which both gave a voice to the Native American culture of Guatemala and exposed the brutality of Guatemala's civil war, became an international sensation. Menchu received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992. Anthropologist David Stoll later uncovered evidence of inconsistencies within Menchu's story. Conservative cultural activists interpreted Stoll's research as discrediting Menchu's story. For example, David Horowitz blasted Menchu as a "liar" and further condemned "I, Rigoberta Menchu" as "one of the greatest hoaxes of the 20th century." Many derided such attacks on Rigoberta as politically motivated and intellectually dishonest. I think that "I, Rigoberta Menchu" has, perhaps,

been misunderstood and misused by people on both sides of the left/right political divide. And so, for that matter, has the work of David Stoll. While he is sharply critical of the book in his own work, "Rigoberta Menchu and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans," Stoll also corroborates parts of her story. In fact, at the end of his own book Stoll praises "I, Rigoberta Menchu" as a Guatemalan "national epic" (p. 283). Because of all of the accusations and counter-accusations being thrown around by people with conflicting political and intellectual agendas, it is daunting to even approach "I, Rigoberta Menchu."

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