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Ronald Fraser

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SPANISH PENINSULAR WAR

RONALD FRASER

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Ronald Fraser : Napoleon's Cursed War: Popular Resistance in the Spanish Peninsular War, 1808-1814 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Napoleon's Cursed War: Popular Resistance in the Spanish Peninsular War, 1808-1814:

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during the Peninsula War. One cannot understand what is guerrilla warfare until they read this work and understand where the modern term "guerrilla warfare" originated from. The author conducted extensive research in finding out the detailed methods of warfare the Spanish insurgents used such as urban operations, ambushes, and attrition. The author produces many valuable estimates of French and Spanish casualties that one would have difficulty in contradicting. I found this book to be exceedingly thorough, detail oriented, and a wealth of information on the subject of guerrilla warfare and the Peninsula War. 5 stars all the way. 11 of 13 people found the following review helpful. A BRILLIANT HISTORY By Terry Kelly This masterful history of Spanish Resistance during the Peninsula War has many echoes today in Iraq and Afghanistan. Napoleon was regarded as the carrier of Enlightenment values and the French Revolution. In Spain the majority saw him as a proto-colonial conqueror. I first read the book in Spanish, but to have it now in its original language is a real treat. In Spain, the book has received a warm welcome as the following reviews indicate: The (Spanish) myths and euphoric visions of the war give way (in this book) to an infinitely more complex reality which only the historian's patient assembly of witnesses' evidence can provide. Ronald Fraser's tenacity and acumen reconstruct a world which other specialists have barely glimpsed, concentrating instead exclusively on the statements of the great and rejecting the real experiences of Spaniards beset by the miseries of the war. In short, this is an excellent book with which to begin the new academic historiographical year. --Professor Carlos Martínez Shaw, *El País* [Babelia], 21/10/06 For the first time Ronald Fraser describes for us the ordinary people of 1808, to whom we (Spanish historians) have so often referred, and whose moods and emotions we now experience directly... These are the protagonists of this book: the people who suffered the war's hardships and who, whether they won it or lost, were considered mere cannon fodder. The work marks a fundamental milestone in the conflict's historiography. --Professor Ricardo García Cárcel, *ABC (de las artes y de las letras)*, 23/09/06 The principal merit of this work lies in the creation of new historical sources, compiled from fragments of information, and the new data bases which, like the work of a goldsmith, permit Fraser to describe how simple people of every walk of life experienced - or rather suffered - the ravages of the war. Like Goya in *The Disasters of War*, Fraser has engraved in the written word the spirit and sacrifices of the popular anti-Napoleonic resistance, a precursor of the anti-fascist resistance of the (Spanish) Civil War. Professor Andreu Mayayo, *El Periódico de Catalunya*, 08/03/06 Their English equivalents are eagerly awaited 4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A COMPELLING, BRILLIANTLY WRITTEN HISTORY By D. Weber Ronald Fraser's account of Napoleon's six year war against Spain and the resistance of the Spanish people is a path breaking history, a joy to read, and should be snapped up by readers interested in studies of the unnamed, 'anonymous' men and women who suffer war, resist seemingly impossible odds, and shape history. Thorough his meticulously researched exploration of what became Napoleons Vietnam, Fraser vividly brings to life the suffering, struggles and resistance of the Spanish people. In doing so, he reconfigures historical understanding of that conflict. Fraser has long been regarded as a national treasure in Spain, recently honored at a national conference for his classic book on the Spanish civil war, *The Blood of Spain*. Fraser conducted over 300 interviews with protagonists from all sides of the civil war to produce that book which stunningly captured the feel of the war and, as Studs Terkel pointed out, "is as close to the truth as we'll ever get." My own historical interest is in the Americas, yet Fraser has long inspired me in his work with oral history. He continues to do so with this compelling history of resistance in the Peninsular War. *Napoleon's Curse* has been rightfully acclaimed in Spain as a "superb complement" to his earlier work. This is a lyrically written book by a master historian.

In this definitive account of the Peninsular War (1808–14), Napoleon's six-year war against Spain, Ronald Fraser examines what led to the emperor's devastating defeat against the popular opposition—the guerrillas—and their British and Portuguese allies. As well as relating the histories of the great political and military figures of the war, Fraser brings to life the anonymous masses—the artisans, peasants and women who fought, suffered and died—and restores their role in this barbaric war to its rightful place while overturning the view that this was a straightforward military campaign. This vivid, meticulously researched book offers a distinct and profound vision of "Napoleon's Vietnam" and shows the reality of the disasters of war: the suffering, discontents and social upheaval that accompanied the fighting.

"Fraser has re-created a world, barely glimpsed by previous historians, of the Spanish popular resistance and suffering during the anti-Napoleonic war ... An excellent work."—Carlos Martínez Shaw, *El País* "Napoleon's Cursed War marks a fundamental milestone in the war's historiography, both past and future. It is a superb complement to Fraser's classic *Blood of Spain*, of 'history from below.'"—Ricardo García Cárcel, *ABC* "Fraser has breathed life into a historic era... The real protagonist of his work is the people and their tragedy."—Luis Ribot, *El Mundo* "Like Goya in *The Disasters of War*, Fraser has engraved in the written word the spirit and sacrifices of the popular anti-Napoleonic resistance, a precursor of the anti-fascist resistance of the [Spanish] Civil War."—Andreu Mayayo, *El Periódico de Catalunya* From the Back Cover Praise for *Blood of Spain*: "Mr Fraser is an excellent traditional historian ... not so much concerned with the grandees and memoir writers on either side as with 'ordinary people,' whose voices in history are usually silent." -Raymond Carr, *New York of Books* About the Author Ronald Fraser is the leading oral historian of

twentieth-century Spain. He is the author of several books, including *In Hiding*, *In Search of a Past*, *Blood of Spain* and *Napoleon's Cursed War*.