



An Essay on Crimes and Punishments (International Pocket Library) (International Pocket Library)

By Cesare Beccaria, Adolph Caso

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On Crimes and Punishments by Cesare Beccaria was a best seller throughout the American colonies. It was known by all of our Founding Fathers, and used in the deliberations of the Continental Congress as well as in the deliberations of the Constitution Convention. John Adams quoted from the book in 1768, and in 1770 in the case of the Boston Massacre. Thomas Jefferson, on the other hand, used Beccaria's book almost entirely for the Bill On Proportioning Crimes and Punishments. It was used with the abolition movement, in practically all cases relating to capital punishment, and most recently in two separate US Supreme Court decisions. Beccaria's great admirer, Sean L. Green, says it best: "On Crimes and Punishments is one of the greatest treatises in the democratic tradition, a testament to human freedom and social justice. For students of law or political theory (of which I am one) this is an excellent account of some of the fundamental principles of democratic society and jurisprudence. Anyone who holds public office should be forced to read this book at gunpoint."

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Editorial Review

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From the Back Cover

Penal laws, so considerable a part of every system of legislation, and of so great importance to the happiness, peace, and security of every member of society, are still so imperfect, and are attended with so many unnecessary circumstances of cruelty in all nations, that an attempt to reduce them to the standard of reason must be interesting to all mankind. Its is not surprising, then, that this little book hath engaged the attention of all ranks of people in every part of Europe.

About the Author

Jurist and economist, Cesare Beccaria wrote his international best seller, Essay On Crimes and Punishments, when he was about 26 years old. It was a best-seller in the American colonies, and owned and read by Washington, Jefferson, Adams, and many more. John Adams willed his copy to his son, and that edition is re-printed herewith. The back cover of the book contains a list of Beccarian principles that were incorporated in the US Constitution with its Bill of Rights. The US Bil on Proportioning Crimes and Punishments was shaped by Jefferson and taken directly from Beccaria.

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