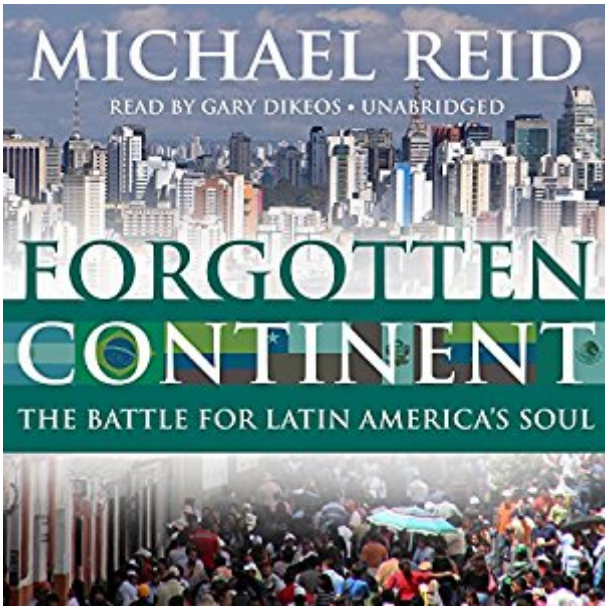
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Forgotten Continent: The Battle For Latin AmericaÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s Soul



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Synopsis

Latin America has often been condemned to failure. Neither poor enough to evoke Africa's moral crusade nor as explosively booming as India and China, it has largely been overlooked by the West. Yet this vast continent, home to half a billion people, the world's largest reserves of arable land, and 8.5 percent of global oil, is busily transforming its political and economic landscape.This book argues that rather than failing the test, Latin America's efforts to build fairer and more prosperous societies make it one of the world's most vigorous laboratories for capitalist democracy. In many countries-including Brazil, Chile, and Mexico-democratic leaders are laying the foundations for faster economic growth and more inclusive politics, as well as tackling deep-rooted problems of poverty, inequality, and social injustice. They face a new challenge from Hugo ChÃƒÆ'Ã Â¡vez's oil-fuelled populism, and much is at stake. Failure will increase the flow of drugs and illegal immigrants to the United States and Europe, jeopardize stability in a region rich in oil and other strategic commodities, and threaten some of the world's most majestic natural environments.Drawing on Michael Reid's many years of reporting from inside Latin America's cities, presidential palaces, and shantytowns, this book provides a vivid, immediate, and informed account of a dynamic continent and its struggle to compete in a globalized world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Book: I got the book and CDs to listen to in my car. The author, a long time resident of the region, research this subject well and present a good history of the economic and political development of

Latin America since the early 1800's. The book stops at 2008 so it does not have the recent events with Hugo Chavez. It would be interesting to see the second edition. Overall, it is a good primer for persons with a new interest in the region.CD: Well produced with an excellent bilingual reader.

I believe the book was a great overview of the entire.continent. Where it lacked for me was in the area of the us Mexico border, I felt it could have expanded this issue a little.more. Great read prior to.any trip down south.

I enjoyed how Michael showed the challenges that South American countries face and how it was important to the U.S. until the end of the Cold War and than became the "Forgotten Continent".

This book has a lot of interesting informaiton about the sad situation in the economies of Latin America for a number of decades in the past with a message of some encourgement for the situation in more recent years. This book came out some years ago so it is not really all that current.

Enlightning. Best general presentation I've read.

This highly readable book is an excellent background to the history of politics and economics that shaped C21 Latin America. As a background to working, studying or travelling there, it is a fascinating read.

Written by my husband, to whom I gave this book as a gift:Thanks to his clear, straightforward, thorough and objective writing, Michael Reid not only captured my attention, but left me feeling like an expert on Latin American history, politics, and economy. This book is an excellent blend of the dry facts of Latin America's economies combined with the much more interesting stories of dictators and democracy, culture and history, and the unique differences of the many countries that us North Americans tend to simplify as a single entity.I read the book as a US citizen married these twenty years to a Venezuelan, so I was particularly curious in Reid's writing on Bolivar and Chavez. I think he treats both in an objective manner, using Chavez as a reference point for comparison to other Latin countries that have found more sustainable and equitable solutions to their problems. Unfortunately for Venezuela, the original promise of change that Chavez embodied, is shown by Reid to be just another example of a destructive, dead end path of Populism. Similarly, Reid manages to tell the stories of Fidel, Che,and Evo, as well as Peron, Allende, Pinochet,and the many

other singular characters so important in Latin America today and yesterday.Reid builds his story with a concise and focused review of Latin American history - both the region as a Colonial whole, and the individual nations in their unique cultural, historical and geographic settings. The reader will be well informed for Reid's last few chapters where he analyzes the present for the Latin countries, including the near future outlook. Reid introduces most chapters with stories of individuals, both famous and average, in their national and economic settings - an effective means of engaging the reader with the rest of the chapter content. Ultimately Reid concludes this excellent book with a relativiely positive outlook for democracy and increasing equality throughout the region, and thanks to his numerous citations, I found myself wanting to read more about Simon Bolivar, Che Guevara, and Latin American history. Like the review I originally read in the magazine, Americas (published by the Organization of American States), I strongly recommend this book to any and all who have an interest in Latin American history, politics, and/or culture.

It is very sad that we in Latin America have to learn more about the history and current affairs of our continent from foreign writers. Our own literature is full on panegirists of the left that even confronted with the sham that is Cuba and its totalitarian regime that has failed in providing a better life for its masses still try to sell us the idea that revolution and marxism is the way to go for our development. Living in Ecuador, currently under the XXI Century Socialist regime of Correa and having everyday to hear his endless tirades and propaganda and knowing that most of what he sells is untrue and that populism is probably the main cause of our backwardness this book was very refreshing to me.You have to look at the good examples such as Chile and even Colombia or Peru are currently developing their nations based on a democratic and open market model of development. We are capable people in this continent, we are passionate and hard workers and with a capable state apparatus we can achieve a good life and development but we are also gullible and still expect a miracle from an iluminated leader that magically transforms our societies and can achieve development with social equity but without sacrifices. This explains how Chavez, Correa, Morales, Ortega, the Kirchner couple have achieved power through their badly executed and corrupt social investment and redistribution schemes and that is why potentially rich countries such as Venezuela and Argentina are declining instead of moving forward.I hope every educated person in Latin America have the opportunity of reading this book so at least they can glimpse the truth from other perspective. For me it was an eye oppener and I live this reality every day.

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