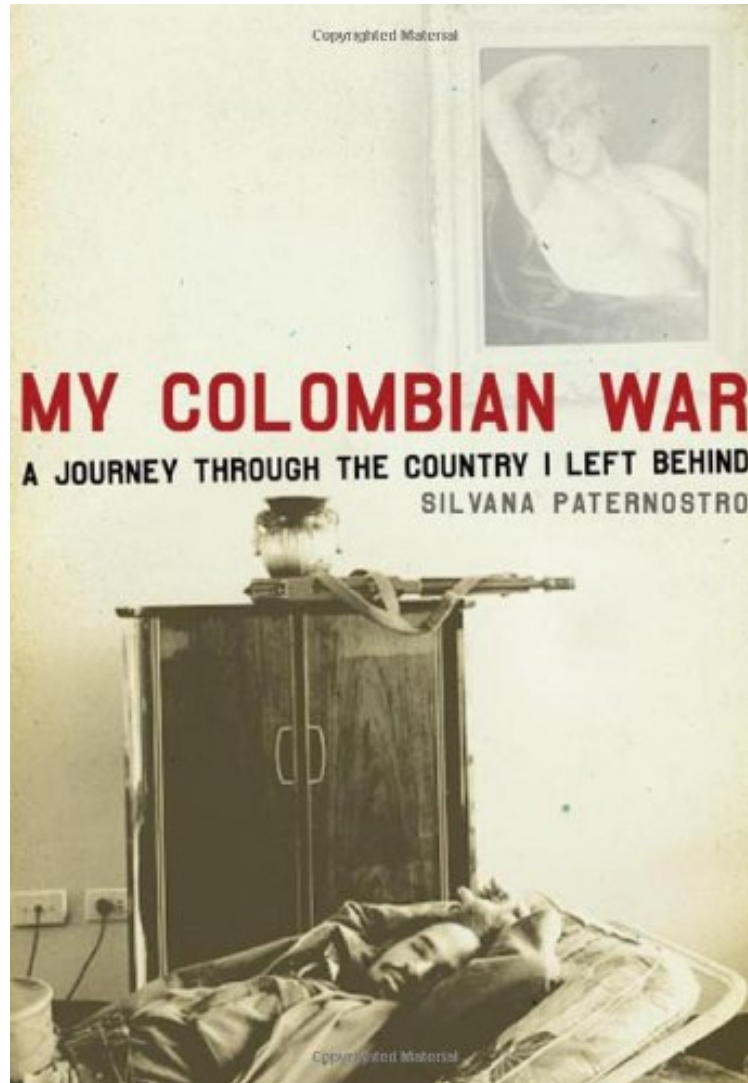


[Download free ebook] My Colombian War: A Journey Through the Country I Left Behind

My Colombian War: A Journey Through the Country I Left Behind

Silvana Paternostro

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Silvana Paternostro : My Colombian War: A Journey Through the Country I Left Behind before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised My Colombian War: A Journey Through the Country I Left Behind:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This is an excellent book for outsiders to understand the mentality of the ...By Sigmund Hoenigsberg-Moretti Reading the reviews I realize that this book is often misunderstood: This is the personal journey of a woman born in a privileged situation that gave her not only the opportunity, but also the obligation, to ignore certain problems of her country. When at some point she decides to face that reality, but especially to explain it, she makes a very personal and candid and accurate account of a country that is defined by civil war, and

uses her own life to illustrate and it. This is an excellent book for outsiders to understand the mentality of the different factions and social classes in the country, and to understand the origin and development of the conflicts within. I especially appreciated 1. the objective historical account - almost impossible in Colombia. 2. the accurate and very personal account of 7 people found the following review helpful. Honest and Brave Memoir and History of an Amazing and Frightening Country By Andrew J. Miller Just finished Ms. Paternostro's book last night (January 2008) and felt that this book really filled a void, at least for me, bridging the distance between historical characterizations of Colombia and what that history actually looks like within the lives of real Colombians. For the most part, this book is filled with fascinating stories - such as the author's description of Simon Trinidad, the businessman and landed elite turned FARC rebel, and how history itself interfered with his interest in moving Colombia ahead - he couldn't possibly create an avenue for peace if the people he was scheduled to meet were murdered the day before his meeting. Or the author's storytelling of Barranquilla's transformation by gringos and Guajiros, who all seemed to persuade these coastal people that living large, richly and dangerously was a more important obligation than improving the future for a larger percentage of the Colombian people. Ms. Paternostro brings to life these unfortunate tradeoffs - of building great plantations and epic lives - funded by efforts, land, or drugs - without building more stable lives for the Colombians that worked on those plantations - are the kinds of decisions that infuriate her. As a criticism, sometimes Ms. Paternostro repeats or reintroduces elements in her book that appear elsewhere in the book, but even those reintroductions serve a larger purpose of developing a more layered, deeper description of what Colombian war and history look like within her own life and family. This is a living history, and it is certainly a worthy one. Ms. Paternostro's attitude towards the subject could be best described as conflicted, but even here I think it's impressive that she finally makes peace with her Colombian war. Ms. Paternostro is a great voice on Colombia and Latin America. I hope she keeps bringing color to a region that deserves the deeper look that she continues to give in her thoughtful writing. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three Stars By secheverri Excellent reading for Colombia's youth!

A timely, evocative account of a reporter's reckoning with her homeland's volatile past

From Publishers Weekly In this disjointed memoir, Paternostro describes her return to war-torn Colombia, which she left in the 1970s as a teenager. A member of a wealthy, landholding family, Paternostro attended American schools and universities and made a career in the U.S. as a journalist, while giving little thought to the country she left behind. Yet the crises of cocaine and civil war draw her professional attention and an assignment from the New York Times allows her to return to her coastal hometown of Barranquilla. Once there, she discovers how much her conservative family's life of privilege is at odds with her own romantic left leanings, and how the danger of being kidnapped is only matched by her countrymen's refusal to acknowledge the civil war around them. All the elements are in place for a fascinating story and yet the memoir lacks essential clarity. Although Paternostro addresses various aspects of Colombian history, she doesn't illuminate them to any great depth, and the lack of a narrative through-line leaves the book adrift. Revealingly, Paternostro writes: I go around without contact lenses; that way I cannot see too much. I think otherwise I would not be able to smile, to talk, to sleep, to stay here. Ultimately, the author's decision not to see clearly leaves the reader as confused as she is. (Sept.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Colombian journalist Paternostro's autobiography chronicles two wars: the bloody, decades-long battle between leftist rebels and the Colombian government and the author's own struggle to embrace her Colombian identity while making a life for herself in the U.S. Raised in a privileged, conservative household in the Colombian coastal town of Barranquilla, Paternostro moved to the U.S. to attend college and later wrote for magazines, including Time and Newsweek. She returned to Colombia to chronicle the waves of violence that hit the country during the latter half of this century, newly aware of the hostilities that daily put her family in danger. Her interviews, interspersed with Colombian history and her own childhood memories, reveal the precariousness of life in that South American country, where selling a kilo of cocaine or maintaining a position of power is, at times, judged more valuable than anyone who might be standing in the way. Boyle, Katherine "A nation's narrative rendered through a personal prism, this evocative work succeeds where many similar efforts fail. The secret? Paternostro herself, a deservedly celebrated journalist, able to deftly interweave past and present and write with a compassion that resists pathos. A child of relative privilege, she left a violently changing Colombia for the States at age 15; decades later she returned as a reporter, and what follows is revelatory. Wrenching interviews with today's Colombians, unflinching descriptions of the horrors wrought by drug cartels and paramilitary groups, and unusual details keenly conveyed amount to a moving, highly memorable take on how a country lost its moorings." The Atlantic