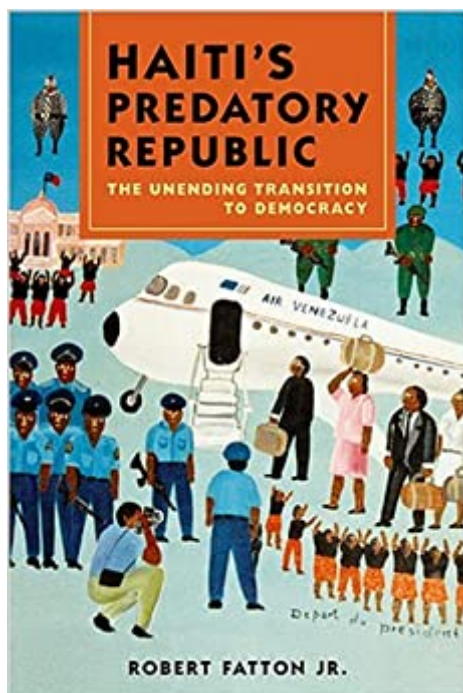


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Haiti's Predatory Republic: The Unending Transition To Democracy



Synopsis

The collapse of the Duvalier dictatorship gave rise to hope among Haitians for a democratic journey to economic development, political renewal and social peace. The reality has not been so sanguine. This text analyzes the vicissitudes of politics in Haiti from the demise of Duvalier to 2001.

Book Information

Paperback: 237 pages

Publisher: Lynne Rienner Pub (April 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1588260852

ISBN-13: 978-1588260857

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 6.2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 2.9 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #783,073 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #71 in Books > History > Americas > Caribbean & West Indies > Haiti #702 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Elections & Political Process > Political Parties #804 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Caribbean & Latin American

Customer Reviews

A Haitian by birth, Fatton (government and foreign affairs, Univ. of Virginia) has written a somewhat pessimistic analysis of politics in Haiti from 1986 to the end of 2001. He sees this period as starting on a positive note with the promise that democracy would succeed and then goes on to examine the numerous changes of government from the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship in 1986 to Jean-Bertrand Aristide's second inauguration as president in December 2001. The author suggests that Haiti's experience shows that for democracy to succeed in any country, there needs to be a balance of power between two competing classes, the bourgeoisie and the workers. The absence of strong political organizations from both classes in Haiti has led to a power vacuum and the consequent failure of democratic institutions. The result is what Fatton calls "predatory democracy," which has the trappings of democracy but functions more like authoritarianism or polyarchy. This book will be of interest to libraries with collections on the Caribbean and general political theory. Mark L. Grover, Brigham Young Univ. Lib., Provo, UT Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Robert Fatton Jr. is professor in the Department of Government and Foreign Affairs at the University

of Virginia. His numerous publications include *Predatory Rule: State and Civil Society in Africa* and *The Making of a Liberal Democracy: Senegal's Passive Revolution*.

This is a good addition to the anti-democracy propaganda section of your research library. Like Abbie Hoffman liked to say, "Steal this Book." Check it out in your library, get the cheapest used version you can. Whatever you do, don't support the institutions that employ Robert Fatton. Of course, that would probably mean becoming a radical tax protestor too; not something that I recommend. Fatton has a long history of enabling the New American Empire's misinformation campaign against the pro-democracy struggle in Haiti. Using rabid reactionary revisionist sources -- like Lynn Garrison: "Voodoo Politics" -- as "source" material, Fatton reconstitutes their mythomaniacal fabrications to make them more suitable for "respectable" research material. The penetration of the historical record by the Intelligence Community is a treacherous subject to study. The massive disinformation effort unleashed on Haiti over the years should have its own Holocaust Museum.

Observers of Haiti's political, social and economic development will be brought to reality by Dr. Fatton's work. "The process of democratization that has marked the modern history of Haiti.... suggest that the transition from authoritarianism to populism was a function of the ascendancy of the civil society and, in particular, popular civil society," says Fatton (pp. 1-2). He argues that the classical model adopted for the democratization of Haiti has many inherent weaknesses. While it may have removed military authoritarianism, it has retained the institutionalized structures of dictatorship, legacies of the State, which are deeply entrenched in the society. Consequently, the Country today, has an unconsolidated, dysfunctional democracy which is characterized by brutality, and the treachery of the bourgeoisie who monopolizes state power and wealth. This is what Fatton deems to be a "Predatory democracy." Dr. Fatton is of Haitian ancestry or Haitian by birth. He appears to write not only for the Haitian people but also as one of them. He is a brilliant intellectual and scholar, not a revolutionary like "Old" Toussaint, Dessalines or Regaud, the lesser. However, his predictive skills as a political scientist are brilliant. I do not share all of Dr. Fatton's views on Aristide, bearing in mind the historical difficulties facing that Country and the obvious geo-political problems of that region. The work is fairly easy to read. I highly recommend it to students and general readers. See also: *Roots of Haitian Despotism* In-*Dependence from Bondage: Claude McKay and Michael Manley: Defying the Ideological Clash and Policy Gaps in African Diaspora Relations* *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*

This book presents a very thorough explanation of the political situation in Haiti since the fall of the Duvaliers. Because it was published in 2002 it obviously does not discuss the most recent events in Haiti, but the book is a very useful tool in understanding what is going on in that country now. The author actually predicted the events of Jan-Feb 2004 as a possibility of what could happen in that country. I give it a 4-star rating because the language is somewhat dense; the book is not for the casual reader.

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