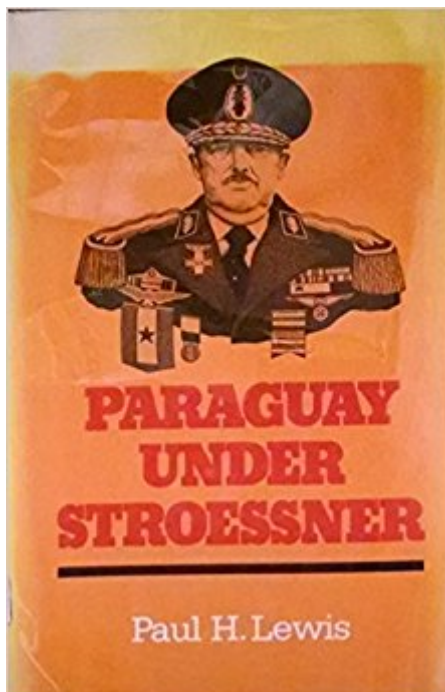


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Paraguay Under Stroessner



Book Information

Hardcover: 267 pages

Publisher: The University of North Carolina Press; 1st Edition edition (December 1, 1980)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0807814377

ISBN-13: 978-0807814376

Package Dimensions: 9 x 6.1 x 1.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #4,066,383 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #68 in [Books > History > Americas > South America > Paraguay](#)

Customer Reviews

This book formed part of the investigation I made after being incarcerated by Stroessner's principal henchman, Pastor Coronel, when I wrote the book "El Reino del Terror", published on in 2016. Contrary to the majority of those jailed and tortured during Stroessner's dictatorship, I was lucky in eventually succeeding to escape. I had been jailed for an innocent question during an event that Stroessner hosted, under the pretext of being a terrorist. The fate of thousands others weren't as lucky as mine. You may read about this, Alfredo Stroessner's oppressive rule and the United States' (read: Kissinger's) intervention in South America through the Condor Operation.

The Stroessner era, as much as most of the 20th century Paraguayan history, has been highly distorted. As a consequence, over two generations of Paraguayans lacked of real information on General Stroessner regime and on those that preceded the General's one. I was born under Stroessner and was almost 18 years old when he was overthrown. I remember being taught in high school the accomplishments of General Stroessner, how good he was and what a peaceful Paraguay had become thanks to his effectiveness and infallibility as a leader. I still remember seeing, as a child, enormous plaques hanged all over the country reading "Stroessner, peace and progress". I don't remember, though, being told the high price the country and its inhabitants had to pay for living in Stroessner's peace or knowing real facts about his government. Undoubtedly, Professor Lewis with this magnificent book helps fill out the gap I was referring to. Also he contributes to show us Paraguayans, from a very objective perspective, the reversal of the reality we've been taught and that was far from accurate. Even though this book was finished long before

the Stroessner regime ended, it is one of the best analyses ever written on this period of the Paraguayan history.

Paul Lewis wrote this book in 1980, almost a decade before Stroessner was overthrown after 35 years of rule, the longest in the Western Hemisphere and fourth longest in the world. Lewis devotes a large portion of the book to the history of Paraguay, which is fascinating, and he also explains the politics in Paraguay and how dictatorships have ruled the country almost since independence, continuing on to an explanation as to how Gen. Alfredo Stroessner took over in 1954, and has held power through 1980. Paul Lewis also writes about the transformation of the Paraguayan economy, and how surprisingly there was economic improvement due to the conservative policies of Stroessner, and heavy foreign aid. He also explains Paraguayan culture, and why the country is still heavily isolated from the rest of the world. This is the only book to explain Stroessner's Paraguay in detail. It is unfortunate, because Stroessner is still one of the few major world leaders without a biography. I would like to see Professor Lewis do a follow up on his fine book, perhaps a full biography of the man who shaped Paraguay for over three decades. Nevertheless, Paraguay Under Stroessner is an excellent and exhaustively researched book, and should be on the bookshelf of anyone interested in Paraguayan history.

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