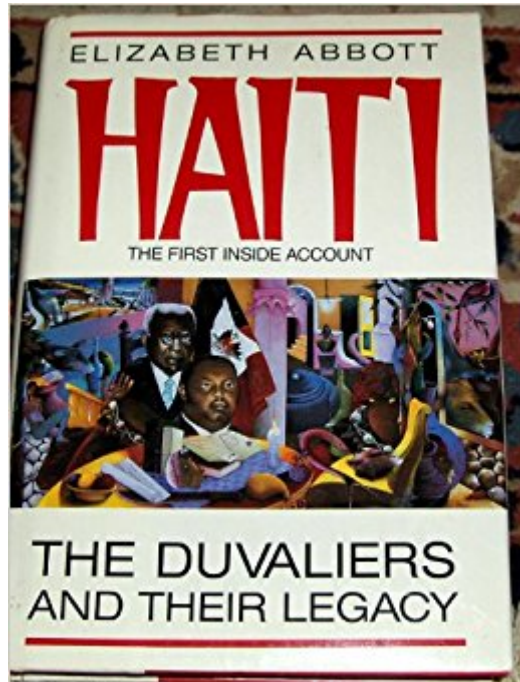


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Haiti: The Duvaliers And Their Legacy



Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Written by the senior editor of the Haiti Times (and sister-in-law of Baby Doc's successor, General Henri Namphy), this is the most intimate and revealing examination to date of the Duvalier years. Based largely on interviews with former officials, intellectuals, voodoo priests and ordinary folk, Abbott provides a shocking view of conditions in the Black Republic from the 1957 election of Duvalier pere to the exile of his son, Jean-Claude, in 1986, and up to the installation of President Leslie Manigat two years later. For the most part, it is a nightmarish chronicle of corruption, greed and relentless slaughter, climaxing in an account of "Blood Sunday" (29 November 1987) when the dreaded Tonton Macoutes reemerged to sabotage Haiti's first free election in 30 years. Abbott traces the transformation of Francois Duvalier from puritanical country doctor to mad despot, the rise of the Macoutes gangs under Madame Max Adolphe and their political rivalry with the Haitian army, and the bizarre, lackadaisical reign of Jean- Claude Duvalier, including details of the reckless squandering of public funds by his wife Michelle. Photos. Author tour. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Great narrative on the Duvalier history...a tad thick to read, but given the topic, understandable. A great resource.

ONE OF THE MOST EXCELLENT BOOK ON RECENT HISTORY OF HAITI

Great addition to my Haiti library. Flows smoothly. Historical but reads like a novel. Thanks.

came in a lot better condition than described

I am a Haitian man in my late 20's. I was a few days shy from my 8th birthday when Jean-Claude Duvalier (aka BABY DOC) fled the country. I remember in my neighborhood the joy, excitement and happiness on everyone's face that morning and the endless replay of a song called "L'Année Pa Ou Ann Solèy La" (meaning "WHEN I DON'T SEE THE SUN" in reference to a Haiti based radio station called RADIO SOLEY (SUN RADIO) that was shut down by Duvalier's macoutes.) Back then, I was a kid and couldn't understand very well why so much excitement. Growing up, I've heard so many stories about both Duvalier (PAPA DOC: the father AND BABY DOC: the son). My parents and some older people in my neighborhood used to talk so much about the Duvalier... and some of the accounts were so different (as some portray Papa Doc as a savior, a man with good heart and a vision for Haiti while others only badmouth him or simply say he was a dictator and was responsible for the fate of Haiti today). After reading "FORT-DIMANCHE: DUNGEON OF DEATH" by Patric Lemoine and "DUVALIER & THE TONTON MACOUTES" a few months earlier, my craving to learn more about 2 of the most tyrannic presidents who had ruled my country for 29 years altogether has prompted me to buy this book. I can say this book is more detailed than the book called DUVALIER & THE TONTON MACOUTES... Not only "HAITI: THE DUVALIERS & THEIR LEGACY" gives an accurate and complete account of the 2 dictators, but the author also took time to go back to the Blacks and Mulattoes conflict that existed way before Haiti became independent in 1804 and that still exists. The author also explains the political events and turmoil that took place before PAPA DOC and how those circumstances influenced him before and during his presidency. This book is definitely a MUST-READ for anyone who wants to learn about politics in Haiti and all Haitians who were born after the Duvalier regime and all Haitian-Americans who want to learn more about Haitian politics, about the Duvaliers and more....about HAITI.

I was reminded while reading this book of listening to an excited acquaintance with an extensive and astonishing tale to tell; my attention was never lost but the temptation to stop at various points for elaboration was overwhelmed by the fast flowing story. This is by no means a bad thing. Having previously read a book on the Duvaliers, and finding it overly sanitized, this book was the right one to cure that sentiment. The skeleton is provided by a framework of Haiti's history from colonization to the exile of its first elected post-Duvalier president; the meat comes from individual tales garnered from interviews, from the horrible tortures of Duvalier victims to the decadent self-absorbed

excesses of "Baby Doc" and his family which led to his ouster. The tales are so engaging that I found myself feeling the emotions reflected in the anecdotes, something a history book rarely successfully accomplishes. Even though the ultimate end of the story was already known, the personalized details lead the reader suspensefully along, eagerly wondering exactly HOW events will unfold. The book loses the one star only because the dizzying array of places and names may tend to confuse those unfamiliar with Haitian history or geography. In that vein, I would suggest either prior to (or concurrently) reading this book, consulting another general Haitian history book so as not to slow down digesting the narrative in this one. Also, in the book's bibliography in the back, there is a LONG list of interviewees--most of whom figure prominently--along with a one or two sentence biographical sketch which I would have used extensively in sorting out some of this confusion while I read this book, had I not known it was there until after I was finished! Content-wise, this book is 5 star. It provides insight into the origins of Haitian social and political mentalities, and a highly personal view of the depravities and decadence of the Duvaliers that could not be otherwise (or better) illustrated.

I found myself unable to put this book down. It was clearly written and having lived through much of the history, (from what I read in the news papers), very accurate. Towards the end, the book seemed a little bit biased and one sided in regards to former president Aristide. It seemed Abbott was more interested in listing his faults and why he was deposed, rather than his accomplishments. Nevertheless, the book brought light into some of the most puzzling and harrowing events that occurred during that period in Haiti. It is definitely a must read for students of Haitian history.

This was the first book on Haiti that I read, and there is a lot of detail here. The author really spares no detail in recounting the regimes of the Duvaliers. I must admit that I may have gotten lost in the midst of it all, but I enjoyed every bit of it. That's not quite true. There were many parts of this book that I very much did not enjoy, but this was due to the facts of history and the clarity with which they were presented. I remember feeling enraged as I read (in detail) the exploits of many of the people involved and sorrow at the plight of many of the individuals whose stories are told here. For an in depth look at the Haiti of the Duvaliers, this is the book.

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