



The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics (The Latin America Readers)

Orin Starn, Ivan Degregori, Robin Kirk

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Sixteenth-century Spanish soldiers described Peru as a land filled with gold and silver, a place of untold wealth. Nineteenth-century travelers wrote of soaring Andean peaks plunging into luxuriant Amazonian canyons of orchids, pythons, and jaguars. The early-twentieth-century American adventurer Hiram Bingham told of the raging rivers and the wild jungles he traversed on his way to rediscovering the “Lost City of the Incas,” Machu Picchu. Seventy years later, news crews from ABC and CBS traveled to Peru to report on merciless terrorists, starving peasants, and Colombian drug runners in the “white gold” rush of the coca trade. As often as not, Peru has been portrayed in broad extremes: as the land of the richest treasures, the bloodiest conquest, the most poignant ballads, and the most violent revolutionaries. This revised and updated second edition of the bestselling *Peru Reader* offers a deeper understanding of the complex country that lies behind these claims.

Unparalleled in scope, the volume covers Peru’s history from its extraordinary pre-Columbian civilizations to its citizens’ twenty-first-century struggles to achieve dignity and justice in a multicultural nation where Andean, African, Amazonian, Asian, and European traditions meet. The collection presents a vast array of essays, folklore, historical documents, poetry, songs, short stories, autobiographical accounts, and photographs. Works by contemporary Peruvian intellectuals and politicians appear alongside accounts of those whose voices are less often heard—peasants, street vendors, maids, Amazonian Indians, and African-Peruvians. Including some of the most insightful pieces of Western journalism and scholarship about Peru, the selections provide the traveler and specialist alike with a thorough introduction to the country’s astonishing past and challenging present.

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