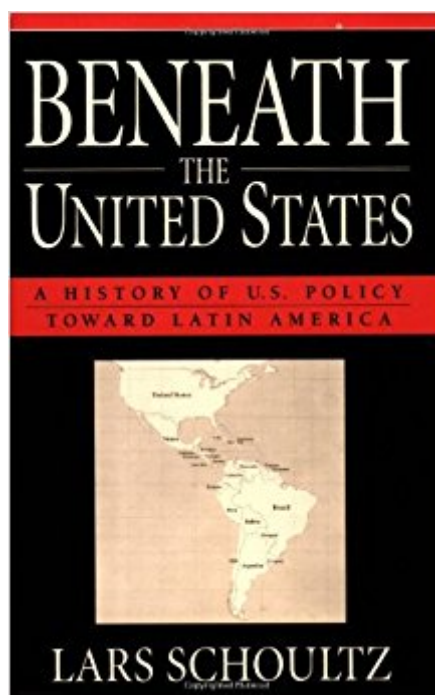


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Beneath The United States: A History Of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America



Synopsis

In this sweeping history of United States policy toward Latin America, Lars Schoultz shows that the United States has always perceived Latin America as a fundamentally inferior neighbor, unable to manage its affairs and stubbornly underdeveloped. This perception of inferiority was apparent from the beginning. John Quincy Adams, who first established diplomatic relations with Latin America, believed that Hispanics were "lazy, dirty, nasty...a parcel of hogs." In the early nineteenth century, ex-President John Adams declared that any effort to implant democracy in Latin America was "as absurd as similar plans would be to establish democracies among the birds, beasts, and fishes." Drawing on extraordinarily rich archival sources, Schoultz, one of the country's foremost Latin America scholars, shows how these core beliefs have not changed for two centuries. We have combined self-interest with a "civilizing mission"--a self-abnegating effort by a superior people to help a substandard civilization overcome its defects. William Howard Taft felt the way to accomplish this task was "to knock their heads together until they should maintain peace," while in 1959 CIA Director Allen Dulles warned that "the new Cuban officials had to be treated more or less like children." Schoultz shows that the policies pursued reflected these deeply held convictions. While political correctness censors the expression of such sentiments today, the actions of the United States continue to assume the political and cultural inferiority of Latin America. Schoultz demonstrates that not until the United States perceives its southern neighbors as equals can it anticipate a constructive hemispheric alliance.

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Customer Reviews

This excellent study breaks new ground in a field so cluttered that one usually harbours very low expectations of originality, style and fresh scholarship. Schoultz, a political scientist hitherto best known for his study of human rights, has written a lucid history that derives much of its strength precisely from its understanding of the conservative and expansionist presumptions of those who have formulated and implemented US policy towards the rest of the continent since independence. This, though, is not an understanding assumed with the ease that one generally finds in texts on this topic; here it is based on meticulous research of primary documentation...Schoultz's knowledge of the sources comes through in the excellent use of quotation within a briskly written and delightfully jargon-free prose. He is understandably interested in politics before all else, but there is enough economics here to satisfy the non-expert...Of the plethora of single-volume studies of this vital subject, Lars Schoultz's is easily the best. (James Dunkerley History)

In his valuable history of United States policy towards Latin America, *Beneath the United States*, Lars Schoultz demonstrated how three interests have determined the content of that policy for more than 200 years: the need to protect US security, the demands of domestic politics, and the drive to promote US economic development. While time and circumstance affect the exact mix of reasons behind the overall policy, these three interests are permanent. (George Victors Times Literary Supplement)

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[*Beneath the United States*] is a thorough and comprehensive guide to US/Latin American relations and the sometimes tedious US policies involved. Schoultz writes clearly and in depth with fresh insight and provocative views. Above all the book demonstrates the US attitude of superiority towards Latin American both overt and covert, and how this attitude must change if a constructive hemispheric alliance is ever to be achieved. Amazingly extensive research digging deep into the rich archival sources available is apparent throughout the book and this is what will most probably make it the standard one-volume work in the

field. (British Bulletin) Beneath the United States is a rich historical examination of US foreign policy toward Latin America from the early 1800s to 1996... The volume stands apart from other works in the field in that the unifying theme throughout is the well-documented argument that US policy makers consistently have treated their southern neighbors as inferiors. Of course, Schoultz also includes the more standard explanation for US behavior--national interest based on security, domestic, and economic issues--but it is the abundance of quotations by US officials, and even a few presidents, referring to Latin Americans in a condescending manner that really drives home the point... The historical narrative style makes this volume eminently readable. It is replete with fascinating details that are often overlooked, such as the opportunity to annex the Dominican Republic in 1869. Recommended for all college and university collections. (L. Boudon Choice) This book is about racism and the ideas of racial superiority that justified the whole process of U.S. expansionism... [It] is not, therefore, a conventional history. It is as much about the ideas of those taking part in events as the events themselves... Schoultz provides an excellent exposure of [the United States's] hypocrisy, double-dealing and avariciousness, especially in the chapters dealing with the attempted annexation of Cuba and the subsequent neocolonisation of the island... Highly recommended. (Steve Wilkinson Morning Star) Beneath the United States serves as a good overview of official U.S. attitudes toward Latin American countries from the time of their independence to the more recent U.S. support of insurgent forces in Latin American countries in an effort to install regimes receptive to perceived U.S. economic and security interests. Many specific incidents are covered, giving this work some reference value to anyone needing to know something about a particular affair, although it is meant to be read as a complete history... The book reads easily, and could even be described as entertaining. (Mark A. Thomas Journal of Government Information) Written with a sharp sense of humour, Lars Schoultz's Beneath the United States is a strong criticism of US policy towards Latin America for almost 200 years. Schoultz's work integrates the most popular interpretations of US policy and gives them order and coherence by arguing that US hegemony, implemented in a variety of styles, was ultimately shaped by the belief of Latin American cultural inferiority... It is a book about misperceptions, narrow definitions and ethnocentrism that accurately depicts training and sensitivity deficits about Latin America in the minds of most US policy-makers... Schoultz's work is essential reading for students of US foreign policy and US-Latin American relations for it provides a powerful and barely used argument about the (recurring) failure of US policy towards its southern neighbours. Beneath the United States contributes to the advancement of knowledge by making it clear that the literature about US policy towards Latin America still has many hypotheses to prove. (Ana Covarrubias Latin American

Studies)A splendid and important book--exhaustively researched, cogently and eloquently written, at once passionate and thoughtful...Schoultz's approach works both as intellectual history and as diplomatic history. (John Coatsworth, Harvard University)Superb work. Schoultz presents complicated historical material clearly, with excellent writing and organization, and humor. This should become the standard one-volume work in the field. (Walter LaFeber, Cornell University)

A splendid and important book--exhaustively researched, cogently and eloquently written, at once passionate and thoughtful...Schoultz's approach works both as intellectual history and as diplomatic history. --John Coatsworth, Harvard University --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The most transcendental book of foreign policy that I have read in my life and believe me it is a lot of them. I am a Nicaraguan and this book is extremely accurate. It is a must to anyone studying the turbulent, violent, fair and unfair relationships between the United States of America and Nicaragua in particular and Latin America in general. Very well documented and supported in facts and not the myths of the leftists intellectuals very prone to US bashing. It describes us as we were, as we are and as we will be. Explain lots of historical and transcendental happenings y a very clear and concise manner. It worth every dollar that you pay for it.Highly recommended.

A Window in to my Country`s and Central America`s history since before I was borne, very interesting so far since I`m not done reading yet.Ana

Lot's of new history that was never taught or skimmed over at lower education levels.That being said it's a slow read.

Purchased for a college class.

If you've read this book, you just might be a Latin Americanist. It's a legal and historical, rather than a current events, version of what the Wikileaks clowns did.

Great book What else can I say? This is a great purchase a one of a kind theme from a unique author, this is more than awesome.

I'm writing my dissertation on U.S. foreign policy 1898-1941 and Schoultz's book is the best survey of U.S.-Latin American relations that I have found. Truly excellent scholarship without an ideological agenda.

Disclaimer: I took a class with Lars Schoultz and I enjoyed his class very much. Schoultz told my class that this book was the culmination of his career's work. It does not seem like he simply churns out books and this is one of many hastily-written books. This is a painstakingly researched and written book. I think it shows and it was very enjoyable and informative reading. I'd highly recommend it to anyone wanting to learn an important aspect of U.S. policy.

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