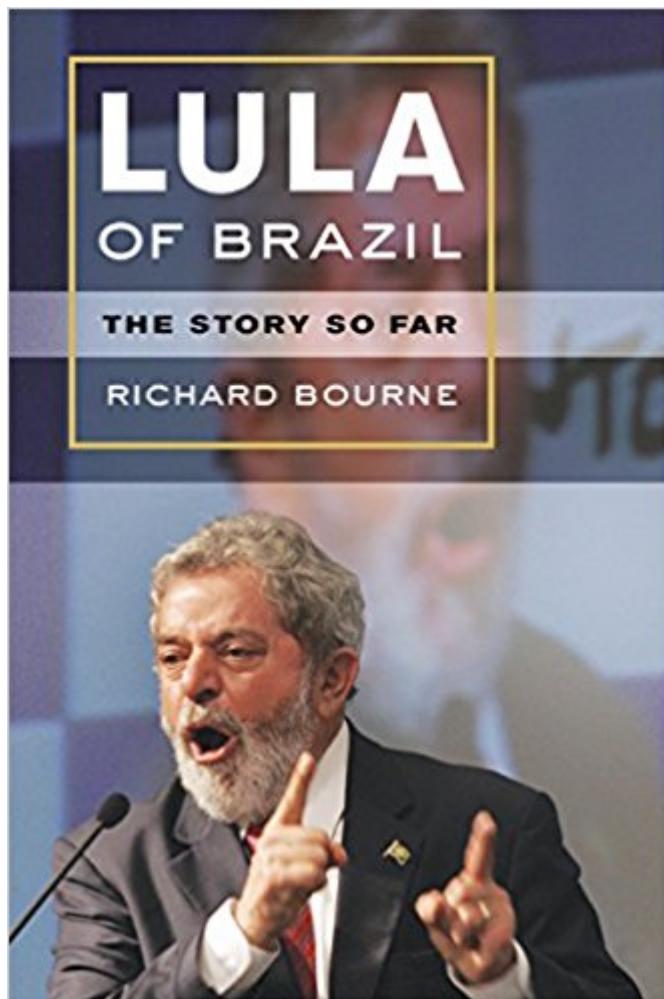


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Lula Of Brazil: The Story So Far



Synopsis

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's dramatic life story has captured the imagination of millions, and his progressive politics have brought hope and excitement to Brazil and the world. This compelling work is the first major English-language biography of the metalworker who became president of Latin America's largest and most powerful country. In a clearly written, vividly detailed narrative, Richard Bourne describes Lula's childhood hardships in an impoverished family, his days as a revered trade unionist, and the strike movement that brought down Brazil's military dictatorship. The book chronicles Lula's campaigns for the presidency, his first term in office beginning in 2002, a major corruption scandal, and his reelection in 2006. Throughout, Lula of Brazil connects this charismatic leader's life to larger issues, such as the difficulty of maintaining a progressive policy in an era of globalization. Brazil's contemporary history, parallels with other developing countries and other world leaders, the conservatism of Brazilian society, and other themes provide a rich backdrop for assessing the struggles, achievements, and failures of this major figure on both the Brazilian and the world stage.

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Customer Reviews

'President Lula is perhaps the most elusive figure to have reached the top of Brazilian politics, and Richard Bourne's fine study of the man and his background is a well-researched and illuminating report. This is a trenchant, warts-and-all account of Lula's career.' Richard Gott 'Richard Bourne has produced a clear-eyed and eminently readable biography; this book is a fine introduction to the

politics of modern Brazil.' Hugh O'Shaughnessy 'A much-needed full-length portrait of the latest South American political phenomenon. Timely reading for anyone seeking to understand Brazil's newest experiment in democracy.' Thomas E. Skidmore, author of Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy 'Essential reading for anyone interested in Latin America's new left and the emergence of Brazil as a regional power, and maybe in the future a world power.' Nelson Franco Jobim --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"A much-needed full-length portrait of the latest South American political phenomenon. Timely reading for anyone seeking to understand Brazil's newest experiment in democracy." Thomas E. Skidmore, author of Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy "President Lula is perhaps the most elusive figure to have reached the top of Brazilian politics, and Richard Bourne's fine study of the man and his background is a well-researched and illuminating report. This is a trenchant, warts-and-all account of Lula's career, charting his rise from leftist, trade union activism to moderate statesmanship of a familiar Brazilian pattern. In spite of damaging incidents of political corruption, analyzed here in critical detail, Bourne explains convincingly how Lula's unusual popular touch, coupled with his astute manipulation of the existing political system, enabled him to outshine his rivals and win two election victories." Richard Gott, author of Cuba: A New History and Hugo ChÁvez and the Bolivarian Revolution "Lula is the most important leader of the new, democratic Latin American left, in stark contrast with old-style caudillos who pretend to be something new. This biography traces Lula's long road to power back to his poor origins in the backlands of Northeastern Brazil to the periphery of SÃ£o Paulo, South America's industrial powerhouse, where he became the main union leader in the fight against the military dictatorship. Then he created the PT (Workers' Party) and changed the history of the Latin American left. It is an essential reading for anyone interested in Latin America's new left and the emergence of Brazil as a regional power, and maybe in the future a world power." Nelson Franco Jobim, journalist and lecturer

A well written text on a subject that one often fails to find in English: the contemporary history of Brazil. Lula, from a "poorest of the poor" family, travels to Sao Paulo (the economic center of the country, the New York of Brazil) along with his mother, brothers and sisters. Struggles to barely finish grade school and rises through the ranks of labor in the automobile industry, one of the world's largest. He becomes the country's most popular labor organizer and then the president of the Auto Workers Union - from there he attempts an unsuccessful run for the Brazilian presidency

three times and on the fourth he achieves it in 2002. The world expects that he would take the country so much to the left, eventually destroying the gains made by his predecessor, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the one Brazilian president who was able to tame the storied, long time inflation of Brazil. Lula, surprised all when he charged a course of austerity in managing the economy and Brazil has, under his leadership gone from a third world banana republic to an emerging economy along with China and India. This is a must read for anyone interested in Brazilian history. A country of so many "firsts", "bests" etc but never a serious contender for a better life for its people. Though Lula's presidency seems to have been tinged by serious corruption charges, he appears to near the end of his second and final term unscathed - close to 85% approval rating is anything but miraculous.

This is a great book if you want a concise, well-written biography of Lula that reflects the recent history of Brazil. This account is sympathetic yet critical, containing an entire chapter on the scandals that hit Lula's administration and his political party, Partido dos Trabalhadores ("Workers' Party"), in 2005. Brazil is the world's fifth largest country, both by geography and population, and one of its top ten economies. Yet as I set out to become familiar with its recent history (the last 30 years or so), I found relatively little written in English. While there are half-dozen well-known histories or social commentaries (Joseph Page's *The Brazilians* (1995) comes to mind), aside from the academic press, books on Brazil published in the last decade seem to focus disproportionately on either jiu-jitsu or music. While there is nothing wrong with these topics, where are the English-language books on Brazilian current events? There are few. Happily, Richard Bourne's biography of Lula steps in to this gap. In some respects, Lula is Brazil's Obama: his election demonstrates that Brazil's democratic process has overcome the country's class divide. Lula is the only president in Brazil's history to lack a college degree; he dropped out of school at 14 to support his family. His policies and programs as a leader are informed by such experiences, like his aggressive expansion of predecessor Fernando Henrique Cardoso's anti-hunger Fome Zero ("Zero Hunger") campaign, including Lula's creation of a program called Bolsa Familia ("Family Stipend") which pays poor families if they send their children to school and get them vaccinated. At the same time, Lula has maintained fiscal and monetary policies that have placated the global financial community, garnering him criticism from his own party members and longtime political allies, while cementing a reputation for being Brazil's version of a "Third Way" political centrist. Bourne is a senior fellow of the Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit, a non-governmental think tank he helped form at the University of London. His working life has been spent considering and writing on public policy

and politics (including a book on another Brazilian leader, Getúlio Vargas]). Bourne brings this broad intellectual sensibility to his biography of Lula, turning the personal story of a leader's rise into the most recent chapter of Brazil's rapid modernization. Lula becomes an iconic figure, and Bourne's biography establishes that Lula's Workers' Party is unique for having broad cohesion across the country, due to its deep roots among labor leaders and liberation theology intellectuals alike. I was particularly impressed by the quality of Bourne's writing, which is well-organized, concise, and fluid. His copious end notes are informative without being pedantic, and he includes a useful bibliography. If I had to criticize: I did find it difficult to keep track of the initialisms for all the Brazilian political parties (PMDB, PSDB, PSD, PSB, PSF, PT, PTB, PSB, PFL, PP, PPS, etc.) so I spent a lot of time flipping back to the index; also, I think a map of Brazil with relevant locations indicated would be helpful. But these are minor complaints for a work that gets so many things right. While some biographies focus on a subject's personality to the point of becoming psychological profiles, Bourne's biography knits Lula's personal story into the context of his times, so that his story reflects the changes Brazil undergoes as it emerges from more than twenty years of military rule, trying to maintain democracy while balancing the internal demands of a largely poor populace against the forces of economic globalization. Bourne's book is excellent, and fills a genuine need for those seeking coverage of Brazilian current events in English. Bravo!

The most corrupt politician of the world. This guy has been involved in the worst scandals of Brazil, like the Mensalão, viz., a stipend paid to Legislators to favor his party. Deserves to be jailed.

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