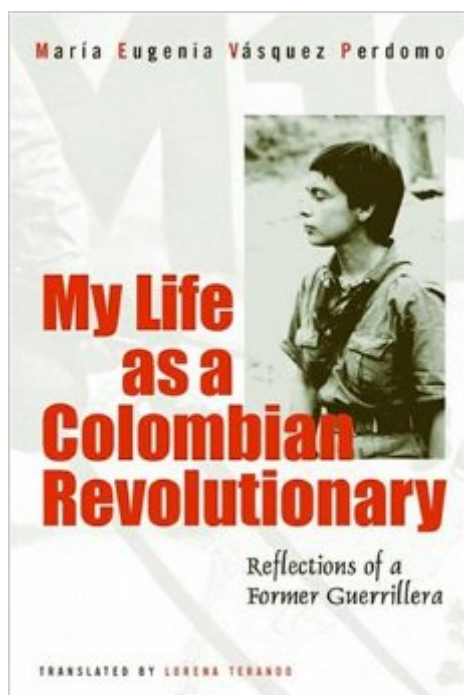


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My Life As A Colombian Revolutionary: Reflections Of A Former Guerrillera



Synopsis

In *My Life as a Revolutionary*, Maria Eugenia Vasquez Perdomo presents a gripping account of her experiences as a member of M-19, one of the most successful guerrilla movements in Colombia's tumultuous modern history. Vasquez's remarkable story opens with her happy childhood in a middle-class provincial household in which she was encouraged to be adventurous and inquisitive. As an eighteen-year-old university student in Bogota, Maria Eugenia embraced radical politics and committed herself to militant action to rid her country of an abusive government. operations in the 1970s and 1980s and became one of its leaders. She was able to avoid detection for nearly twenty years in the movement because she was both clever and considered too attractive to be a guerrillera. Her vivid narrative brings to life the men and women who were her comrades and conveys their anxiety and exhilaration as they carried out their actions. When she tells of her love affairs with some of M-19's top leaders, she cannot separate romance from camaraderie or escape a sense of impending tragedy. guerrilla movement in a Latin American country, this would be a book well worth reading. But she also gives us an unsparing analysis of what it meant to be a woman in the movement and how much her commitment to radical politics cost her.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"My Life as a Colombian Revolutionary; Reflections of a Former Guerrillera," by Maria Eugenia Vasquez Perdomo is primarily a guerrilla narrative of Colombia's violent past. To this end, the author provides an intimate understanding of "how" young urban and rural Colombians flock to

revolutionary movements. However, this book has two major shortcomings. First, the author fails to adequately explain "why" Colombians turn their back on establishment institutions to promote change. And secondly, Vasquez makes a very feeble attempt to demonstrate contrition for living the life of a terrorist for 18 years. On that note, it is no surprise that the Spanish-language version of this book was awarded the Colombian National Prize for Testimonial Literature in 1998. Colombian readers have a good understanding of the absence of political, economic, social and land reforms inside their country. American readers of this text should be warned to pay close attention to the strong 22-page historical "Introduction" by Arthur Schmidt. Otherwise, they will never completely figure out "why" Colombians join guerrilla organizations. The author fails to give a comprehensive understanding of significant historical events. For instance, Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, the Bogotazo, La Violencia, The National Front, the controversial 1970 elections and Camilo Torres take a back seat to her day to day anti-imperialism, anti-oligarchy, anti-sectarianism guerrilla activities. Had the author dedicated more time to weave Colombia's complex history to her narrative this would be a benchmark book. Still and all, this is an extremely valuable text. Vasquez is harassed, hunted and tortured by state institutions.

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