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Fault Lines: Views Across Haiti's Divide



Synopsis

Beverly Bell, an activist and award-winning writer, has dedicated her life to working for democracy, women's rights, and economic justice in Haiti and elsewhere. Since the 7.0 magnitude earthquake of January 12, 2010, that struck the island nation, killing more than a quarter-million people and leaving another two million Haitians homeless, Bell has spent much of her time in Haiti. Her new book, *Fault Lines*, is a searing account of the first year after the earthquake. Bell explores how strong communities and an age-old gift culture have helped Haitians survive in the wake of an unimaginable disaster, one that only compounded the preexisting social and economic distress of their society. The book examines the history that caused such astronomical destruction. It also draws in theories of resistance and social movements to scrutinize grassroots organizing for a more just and equitable country. *Fault Lines* offers rich perspectives rarely seen outside Haiti. Readers accompany the author through displaced persons camps, shantytowns, and rural villages, where they get a view that defies the stereotype of Haiti as a lost nation of victims. Street journals impart the author's intimate knowledge of the country, which spans thirty-five years. *Fault Lines* also combines excerpts of more than one hundred interviews with Haitians, historical and political analysis, and investigative journalism. *Fault Lines* includes twelve photos from the year following the 2010 earthquake. Bell also investigates and critiques U.S. foreign policy, emergency aid, standard development approaches, the role of nongovernmental organizations, and disaster capitalism. Woven through the text are comparisons to the crisis and cultural resistance in Bell's home city of New Orleans, when the levees broke in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Ultimately a tale of hope, *Fault Lines* will give readers a new understanding of daily life, structural challenges, and collective dreams in one of the world's most complex countries.

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Customer Reviews

This book should be required reading for anyone considering a trip to Haiti â “ or any developing nation, for that matter. Actually, Ms. Bellâ™s book should be required reading for high school or college social studies/global studies/economics/political science or anthropology class. Perhaps it should be required reading for everyone. Ms. Bell addresses, with clarity, the now well known fact that billions of dollars in donations received after the January 12th, 2010 earthquake in Haiti have never made it into the hands of the Haitian people. She points out the one cent of every dollar pledged by the US government to Haitiâ™s recovery efforts has actually been given to the Haitian government. Haiti, Across the Divide, documents in a holistic and understandable way how the people of Haiti have had to struggle to survive â “ often because of the obstacles put in their way by US Policies, UN occupying forces, NGOâ™s, and trade agreements that undermine Haitiâ™s ability to produce itâ™s own food and which lead to low wages and extremely poor working conditions. Above all else, Ms. Bell highlights the remarkable solidarity and sense of community that is ever present with the Haitian people. This is a compelling story that is told in a language that people who arenâ™t familiar with the complexities of Haitiâ™s history can easily understand. Bravo, Ms Bell!

A friend recommended this book when she heard I have a daughter in Haiti and was about to visit her for the third time. I thought I already knew a lot about Haiti's history and current situation. I was wrong. This book was a real eye-opener. The testimonies used by Beverly Bell are so very poignant and real. They really hit home. I feel now that I have a better understanding of the stuff Haiti is really made of. I have only admiration for the fortitude of the Haitian people. I do not see them just as victims any longer. I have great hope that this book will show people who mean well how to truly help Haiti and Haitians have a better future. I highly recommend buying this book and spreading the word. It will change people's views.

Haiti comes and goes on the western worldâ™s collective radar. The 2010 earthquake brought Haitiâ™s struggle to the attention of the world. Beverly Bellâ™s book, Fault Lines, Views Across Haitiâ™s Divide, tells the post earthquake story in Haiti from the perspective of those that suffered

most directly from the catastrophic damage and then suffered the added indignity of a totally misdirected disaster response. As Bell points out, "the disaster aid was an aid disaster". Anyone who cares about what happened in Haiti after the earthquake or is concerned about changing the injustice that exists there on a daily basis should read this book and take to heart the pleas from the Haitian voices that Bell amplifies in her heartfelt accounting of the post earthquake disaster. And lest people should think that this book bemoans the brutally misdirected earthquake response without offering critical analysis the list of alternative ways to be involved in Haiti, on pg. 109 "11", serves as a must read guide for every person who ever considered engaging in humanitarian work. - Paul Miller, Director, The Haiti Justice Alliance

Beverly Bell's "Fault Lines" captures -- like no other book out now -- what the real impacts of the 2010 7.0 magnitude earthquake were on Haiti, a country with an unfortunate history of natural and man-made disasters. But perhaps the best thing about "Fault Lines" is her open challenge to stereotypes about the country, the culture, and its people. Bell's voice and perspective is unique: she has spent much of her life getting to know Haiti, and she has been invested in hearing directly from Haitians; in capturing their stories in their own voice. A definite must-read for anyone willing to accept a different narrative about the country.

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