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Lost Province

Stephen Henighan

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Stephen Henighan : Lost Province before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lost Province:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good research materialBy Jessica M BruckerI bought this for a research paper, and the author's personal point-of-view helped to make this book a very good source.The vendor got this to me very quickly. Thank you so much!5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. informative yet annoyingBy Jan Øystein ThorsnasHenighan's strenghtes is the interesting way he describes his experiences with the

Moldovans and that he does it in a way that anyone that have visited Moldova can easily recognize. He partly achieves this recognition by using stereotypes, making it easy for anyone that has been in Moldova to recognize the type of people (the girls who wants to marry a rich foreigner, the teachers who are small dictators, the Moldovans poor knowledge about the world outside Moldova, the dodgy Russian-speaking biznizman etc), though might oversimplify "the Moldovans" for the reader who lacks this background. All in all I will say he succeed with this approach of describing the Moldovans though. The main weaknesses of Henighan's book, is his obvious lack of background-information, being written sources and experience with Romania and Russia/Ukraine, needed in order to interpret his experiences. Unlike Tony Hawks in *Playing the Moldovans at tennis*, who also obviously lack background information on Moldova but gets away with it by using humour (including self-irony), Henighan fails to come through as a trustworthy writer because the combination of big holes in background-knowledge and lack of self-irony at times makes his writing pretentious or simply does not interpret a situation correct. Some examples-He travels by bus from London to Lviv and tells about that while towns like Prague and Budapest has a "return to Europe atmosphere", Lviv is an example of that Ukraine, Russia and Belarus is a result of Moscow centralism and not Europe. Moldova he claims, is different because it was originally a part of Romaina and initially not a part of the Soviet Union. The fact is that Lviv is a typical old Habsburger town, that used to be part of the same Austria and Hungary as Budapest, Prague and Krakow. Lviv is Galicia and was added to the Soviet Union at exactly the same time as Moldova, and if its historical roots to Romania makes Moldova European (few people I have spoken to described Moldova as "European"), why is Lviv (with its historical roots to Poland) not equally European? The explanation is probably his limited background information on Lviv (that is not so bad really, his book is about Moldova) and that he arrived very tired to Lviv after a long tiring bustrip from the UK (but why include his uninspired mood in the book). Doesn't he have a publisher that can explain and correct a few things?-when he writes that except from a few part time teachers he didn't meet anyone under the age of 35 that he would describe as gainfully employed is is at one hand probably right. On the other he simply does not care - or is not able to? - explain that the reason for that is that hardly any teacher, doctor or other academic earn enough to live of in Moldova - you either "buy and sell things", emigrate to better paid jobs abroad or receive money from relatives working abroad. This is a great chance to give the reader insight, but he does not have the background information to give it.-When the word "bizniz" appears in a sentence in Romanian, in a context where the writers Moldovan freind talks about more or less realistic or shady plans for earning a lot of money "by buying and selling things", it is rather a word borrowed from Russian than from English. Because of his lack of knowledge of Russian language and daily life, he simply misunderstands.-Another misunderstanding is when he refers to a Moldovans freind's description of the Brezhnev years as the worst time of the Soviet Union, as the time where the Russians behaved worst towards the Moldovians. This is exactly the same story as most Russians and Ukrainians tell, they simply have the same experiences living in the same society. There are a lot of these examples. The other main weakness of his book is that he is not capable of hold his personal opinions back, even when he has a limited background for his views and - not to mention - he has told us about his view on a topic 5980 times before. The most striking example is his obsession about the language question. At the same time as he brings up his indignation about the use of Russian and the cyrillic alphabet in Moldova in virtually every chapter, he tells us that he only by coincidece finds out that Romanian traditionally was written in cyrillic script (a lot of the classics of Romanian litterature is) and that this is because Romania also is Russian orthodox. Further he complins that the Russian speakers can not read lathin letters, while anyone who have a minimum of experience with Russian speakers know that they always read lathin letters (and use them for some purposes in their daily written language), it is the rest of us that don't normally read cyrillic letters. All in all though and despite the weaknesses mentioned, the books gives an interesting story about the Moldovians and their daily life if your pleasure of reading is not ruined by the mentioned weaknesses. Please correct the factual errors and misunderstandings if there is ever published a revised edition though 7 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Vastly disappointing as well as annoying.

By Customer Stephen Henighan begins by telling us that he was working on his doctoral thesis at Oxford. One would hope after introducing himself in this way that his writing would be better. It is not. It is uneven at best. Actual writing ability aside, the book is unbelievably pretentious. The author has a world view so narrow that it precludes his ability to describe Moldova in any way that is essentially meaningful. There is interesting information about the tremendous difficulties and politics of language, and yet the information still seems skewed by his rigid world view. The information about Transnistria is interesting, but it is in no way documented and it is hard to tell if he did actual research or if the information simply came from stories he heard. And lastly, the reader can only feel an overwhelming sorrow and sympathy for any Moldovan unfortunate enough to have to deal with him. Bound up in his own self-righteous, narrow-minded, and essentially selfish way of thinking, his self described behavior to the Moldovans he encounters is, to put it mildly, unfortunate. At least Americans are no longer alone in their reputation for being boorish and condescending travelers. Henighan has added Canadians to that list - at least in Moldova. If you want actual information based on real research about Moldova, read Charles King. If you want a very insightful book that is also very funny, read "Playing the Moldovans at Tennis" by Tony Hawks. Interestingly enough, while Tony Hawks has no pretentions about being a 'great' author, his actual writing is better and more lucid than Henighan's. It also has the advantage of being hysterically funny.

Stephen Henighan, a Romanian grammar book and hours of language tapes under his belt, billets with a family as an English teacher in Moldova, a country born from the dismantling of Romania during World War II. As a Westerner in this "lost province" and former Soviet republic, Henighan feels he's an unnerving disappointment for many Moldovans, especially to the MTV-addicted, twenty-year-old Andrei.

Stephen Henighan, a Romanian grammar book and hours of language tapes under his belt, billets with a family as an English teacher in Moldova, a country born from the dismantling of Romania during World War II. As a Westerner in this "lost province" and former Soviet republic, Henighan feels he's an unnerving disappointment for many Moldovans, especially to the MTV-addicted, twenty-year-old Andrei. From the Inside Flap Stephen Henighan billets with a family as an English teacher in Moldova, a country born from the dismantling of Romania during World War II. About the Author Stephen Henighan is the author of four books of fiction, including the novel *The Places Where Names Vanish* and the short-story collection *North of Tourism*. His short fiction has been published in more than thirty journals and anthologies in Canada, Great Britain, Continental Europe, and the United States. Recently he published the controversial *When Words Deny the World: The Reshaping of Canadian Writing*. Henighan teaches Spanish-American literature and culture at the University of Guelph in Ontario.