Revolution, Repression, and Memory: An Exploration of El Salvador's Turbulent Past, 1920-1932

Revolution Repression And Memory In El Salvador 1920 1932

To Rise in Darkness: Revolution, Repression, and Memory in El Salvador, 1920-1932: Revolution, Repression, and Memory in El Salvador, 1920–1932

by Jeffrey L. Gould

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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This book tells the story of the Salvadoran Revolution of 1932, a peasant uprising that was brutally repressed by the government, resulting in the deaths of thousands of people. The book explores the causes of the revolution, the events that led to its outbreak, and the aftermath of the repression. It also examines the ways in which the memory of the revolution has been contested and shaped over time.

Based on extensive research in archives and libraries in El Salvador, the United States, and Europe, this book provides a comprehensive account of one of the most significant events in Salvadoran history. It is a must-read for anyone interested in Latin American history, revolution, and social movements.

The Causes of the Revolution

The Salvadoran Revolution of 1932 was the culmination of a long period of social and economic unrest in the country. The vast majority of Salvadorans were peasants who worked on large coffee plantations, where they were paid poverty wages and subjected to harsh working conditions. In the years leading up to the revolution, there was a growing movement for land reform and other social reforms, but the government refused to make any concessions.

In addition to the economic grievances, there was also a growing sense of political repression. The Salvadoran government was a dictatorship, and any form of dissent was met with swift and brutal repression. In the years leading up to the revolution, the government had cracked down on labor

unions, peasant organizations, and other groups that were critical of the regime.

The final straw came in 1931, when the government rigged the presidential election in favor of the incumbent, Maximiliano Hernández Martínez. This led to widespread protests and demonstrations, which were met with violence by the government. The result was a wave of anger and resentment that eventually erupted into full-scale revolution.

The Outbreak of the Revolution

The Salvadoran Revolution began on January 22, 1932, when peasants in the western part of the country rose up in revolt. The rebels quickly gained control of several towns and villages, and the government was forced to send in troops to put down the uprising.

The government's response was swift and brutal. The army rounded up thousands of suspected rebels and summarily executed them. In some cases, entire villages were massacred. By the end of February, the government had regained control of the country, but the cost had been high. An estimated 30,000 people had been killed, and the country was left in ruins.

The Aftermath of the Repression

The Salvadoran Revolution of 1932 had a profound impact on the country. The government's brutal repression of the uprising left a deep scar on the national psyche, and the memory of the revolution has been contested and shaped over time.

In the immediate aftermath of the repression, the government attempted to suppress any memory of the revolution. The dead were buried in unmarked graves, and any mention of the uprising was banned from the media. However, the memory of the revolution lived on in the hearts of the survivors, and it eventually became a symbol of resistance to government oppression.

In the 1970s, the Salvadoran left began to organize a new wave of resistance to the government, and the memory of the 1932 revolution became a rallying cry for the rebels. The left-wing guerrillas adopted the name "Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front" (FMLN),after the leader of the 1932 revolution. The FMLN fought a civil war against the government for 12 years, and the memory of the 1932 revolution played a key role in sustaining the rebels' morale.

After the civil war ended in 1992, the FMLN became a legal political party, and the memory of the 1932 revolution has been increasingly incorporated into the national narrative. However, the memory of the revolution remains contested, and there are still those who deny that it was a legitimate uprising.

The Salvadoran Revolution of 1932 was a pivotal event in the country's history. The government's brutal repression of the uprising left a deep scar on the national psyche, and the memory of the revolution has been contested and shaped over time. However, the memory of the revolution remains a powerful symbol of resistance to government oppression, and it continues to play a role in contemporary Salvadoran politics.

This book provides a comprehensive account of the Salvadoran Revolution of 1932, from its causes to its aftermath. It is a must-read for anyone interested in Latin American history, revolution, and social movements.

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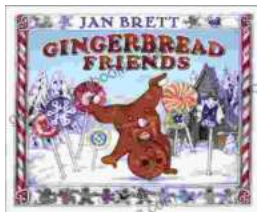
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