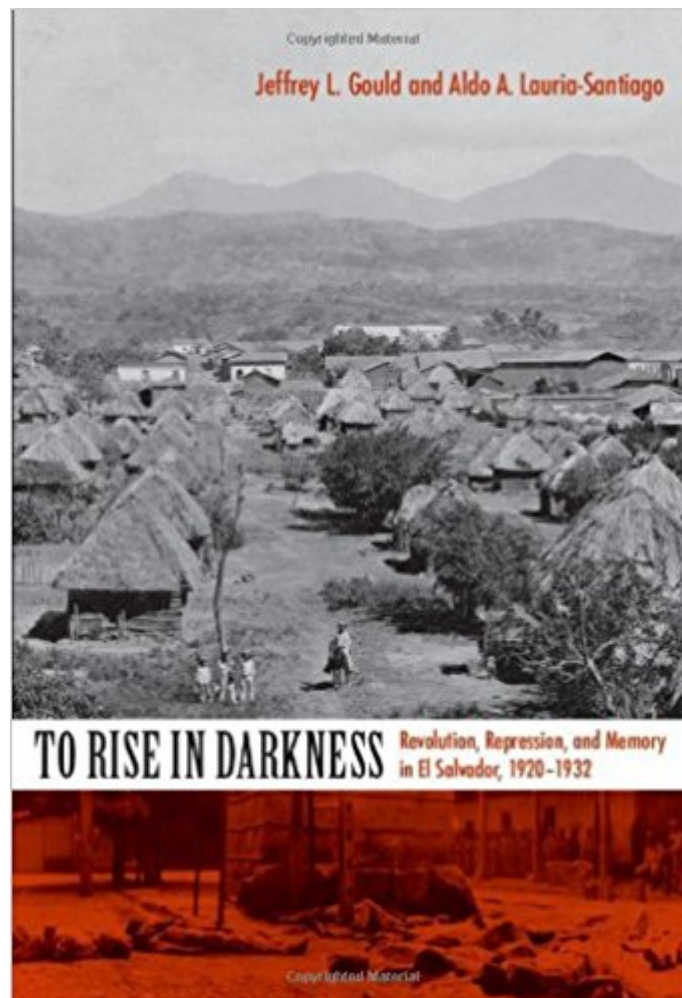




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To Rise In Darkness: Revolution, Repression, And Memory In El Salvador, 1920-1932



Synopsis

To Rise in Darkness offers a new perspective on a defining moment in modern Central American history. In January 1932 thousands of indigenous and ladino (non-Indian) rural laborers, provoked by electoral fraud and the repression of strikes, rose up and took control of several municipalities in central and western El Salvador. Within days the military and civilian militias retook the towns and executed thousands of people, most of whom were indigenous. This event, known as la Matanza (the massacre), has received relatively little scholarly attention. In To Rise in Darkness, Jeffrey L. Gould and Aldo A. Lauria-Santiago investigate memories of the massacre and its long-term cultural and political consequences. Gould conducted more than two hundred interviews with survivors of la Matanza and their descendants. He and Lauria-Santiago combine individual accounts with documentary sources from archives in El Salvador, Guatemala, Washington, London, and Moscow. They describe the political, economic, and cultural landscape of El Salvador during the 1920s and early 1930s, and offer a detailed narrative of the uprising and massacre. The authors challenge the prevailing idea that the Communist organizers of the uprising and the rural Indians who participated in it were two distinct groups. Gould and Lauria-Santiago demonstrate that many Communist militants were themselves rural Indians, some of whom had been union activists on the coffee plantations for several years prior to the rebellion. Moreover, by meticulously documenting local variations in class relations, ethnic identity, and political commitment, the authors show that those groups considered "Indian" in western El Salvador were far from homogeneous. The united revolutionary movement of January 1932 emerged out of significant cultural difference and conflict.

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Customer Reviews

“This fine new book about the 1932 El Salvadoran massacre known as La Matanza. . . offers insights into a range of issues—agrarian history, ethnicity, the texture of historical discourse and memory, and the ways in which capitalist elites have acted to repress socialism. . . . Other works on the subject have barely tapped the available archival sources; Gould and Lauria-Santiago’s careful research allows them to challenge stereotypes and resolve many longstanding questions.” —Cindy Forster, *American Historical Review* “[A] remarkable and thoroughly impressive volume. . . It rests upon scrupulous investigation of primary documentary evidence at local, regional, national and international levels. Indeed, Aldo Lauria-Santiago’s contribution goes far beyond primary responsibility for the writing for the sections of the volume on political economy; he has clearly played an important role in assisting the revival of the Salvadorean National Archive.” —James Dunkerley, *Journal of Latin American Studies* “To Rise in Darkness contributes to a clearer understanding of a complex period of political, social, and cultural history, including how its contemporary interpretation reveals the dynamics of individual and social memory. . . . It will appeal to an interdisciplinary audience for its methodological and theoretical attention to discourse and ideology, symbolism and power, political agency and subjectivity, memory and identity.” —Robin DeLugan, *E.I.A.L.* “Gould and Lauria-Santiago. . . have laid a groundwork (and set a high bar) for a new generation of scholars, from the North and South, working in related areas.” —Ellen Moodie, *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* “[T]he book, along with its accompanying film, are sure to spark animated and productive debates about the events and processes it analyzes with such care and eloquence. . . . [T]his finely wrought study makes a major contribution to understanding one of the most horrific and consequential episodes in the modern history of Latin America.” —Michael J. Schroeder, *A Contracorriente* “This spectacularly detailed book will challenge important assumptions for scholars of Central America. It is also an excellent case study for students of mobilization and ethnicity. The authors explore questions that both of these literatures have been grappling with for some time. The authors weave together weighty ideas and rich data that succeeds in bringing insight to contentious politics.” —Louis Edgar Esparza, *Mobilization* “To Rise in Darkness tells the story of the 1932 Communist-led uprising in El Salvador and the violent repression that followed, one of the most consequential events in Latin American history. As a prelude to the widespread terror that would sweep throughout

Central America during the Cold War, this killing is beginning to receive scholarly attention, yet *To Rise in Darkness* will be the touchstone for future discussion of the 1932 revolt and massacre. Based on painstaking research and exhibiting a sharp conceptual focus, this book will influence scholarship on the relationship between political mobilization, ideology, and violence for years to come.

•Greg Grandin, author of *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation*

“*To Rise in Darkness* is a remarkable achievement. It completely transforms understanding of one of the most important political events in twentieth-century Central America.

•Lowell Gudmundson, Mount Holyoke College

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