

Brazil's Death Squads Are the Children of the Slave Traders

Contributed by Jeff Kallet
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Portuguese and Brazilian slave-traders shipped at least four million slaves to Brazil, in contrast to the 500,000 slaves that English vessels brought to the Americas.

Control of the vast number of slaves in Brazil became of primary importance. The book *The Unpast - Elite Violence and Social Control in Brazil, 1954-2000* By R. S. Rose documents the ways in which the brutal methods used on plantations led directly to the phenomenon of present Brazilian death squads.

The Unpast examines how and why, after the abolition of slavery, elites in Brazil imported new methods of killing, torturing, or disfiguring dissidents and the poor to maintain dominance.

Bringing a critical-historical analysis to events following the 1954 suicide of President Getúlio Vargas, R. S. Rose takes the reader through a fifty-year period that helped to shape a nation's moral climate.

He covers the misunderstood presidency of João Goulart, the overthrow of his government by a U.S.-assisted military, the appalling dictatorship that followed; the efforts to rid the countryside of troublemakers, and the ongoing attempt to rid the urban environment of the needy - an endeavor that produced 32,675 victims in just two Brazilian states between 1954 and 2000.

The largest and most comprehensive documentation of suspected death-squad victims ever undertaken, *The Unpast* is an exposé of practices and attitudes toward the poor in Latin America's largest country.

R. S. Rose is a visiting professor in history at the Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil. His books include *Johnny; One of the Forgotten Things: Getúlio Vargas and Brazilian Social Control, 1930-1954*; and *Beyond the Pale of Pity: Key Episodes of Elite Violence in Brazil to 1930*.

Commenting on the book, John W. F. Dulles said, "R. S. Rose's series of volumes about what Robert Levine called 'the dark side of Brazilian History' makes fascinating reading and is based on consultations of such a wide range of sources that he has become a leader of research in his field."

Richard Quinney, seen by many as the founder of the critical criminology movement, had this to say: "I have read a major work. This is far from the kind of work that I can do and thus am amazed with R. S. Rose's research and writing. The thoroughness of his research is impressive. And his courage in doing it is evident and inspiring. This is certainly a book that bridges criminology/sociology and Latin American Studies."

Book Information: Latin American Studies/ History/ Criminology

The Unpast: Elite Violence and Social Control in Brazil, 1954-2000 By R. S. Rose Ohio University Research in International Studies Latin America Series No. 44 xix + 437 pp., 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" 28 photographs & illustrations; over 35 figures and charts, ISBN paper: 0-89680-243-4, US\$ 28.00 - Published on February 9, 2006 by Ohio University Press

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