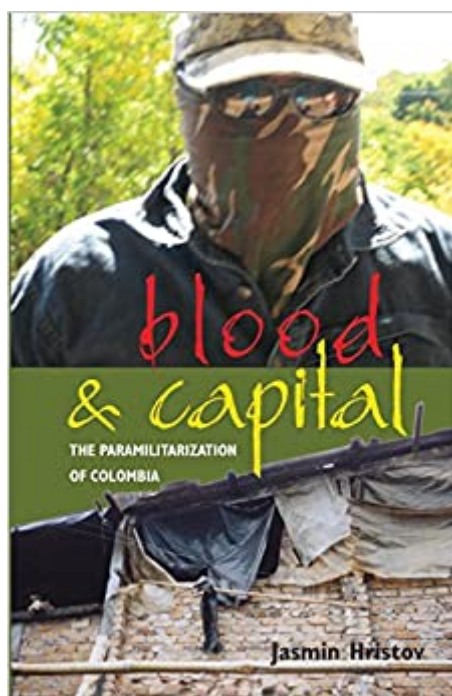


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Blood And Capital: The Paramilitarization Of Colombia (Ohio RIS Latin America Series)



Synopsis

WOLA-Duke Book Award Finalist *In Blood and Capital: The Paramilitarization of Colombia*, Jasmin Hristov examines the complexities, dynamics, and contradictions of present-day armed conflict in Colombia. She conducts an in-depth inquiry into the restructuring of the state's coercive apparatus and the phenomenon of paramilitarism by looking at its military, political, and legal dimensions. Hristov demonstrates how various interrelated forms of violence by state forces, paramilitary groups, and organized crime are instrumental to the processes of capital accumulation by the local elite as well as the exercise of political power by foreign enterprises. Issues of forced displacement, proletarianization of peasants, concentration of landownership, growth in urban and rural poverty, and human rights violations are viewed in relation to the use of legal means and extralegal armed force by local dominant groups and foreign companies to advance their economic interests. After documenting the penetration of major state institutions by right-wing armed groups and the persistence of human rights violations against social movements and sectors of the low-income population, *Blood and Capital* raises crucial questions about the promised dismantling of paramilitarism and the validity of the so-called demobilization of paramilitary groups, both of which have been widely considered by North American and some European governments as proof of current Colombian president Álvaro Uribe's advances in the wars on terror and drugs.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Hristov's rich description of the Colombian conflict with information based on the author's fieldwork presents a valuable addition to the literature and presents an analysis that has become rare in the age of neoliberal ideological hegemony. • The Americas; This is a well-researched resource examining paramilitary-state repression and the underlying political and economic conditions in Colombia that drive it. • International Affairs; By making explicit the connections between neoliberal policies and paramilitarism, and the use of violence as a means of resource acquisition and the facilitation of a climate for its continuation, Hristov powerfully refutes attempts to oversimplify the conflict in Colombia and its justification as part of the war on terror. • H-Human Rights; The description of Colombia that Hristov provides is expressed in an almost structural-functional account of the way in which neoliberalism and paramilitarism are mutually supportive, how large numbers of marginalized and disadvantaged people are dispossessed and forcibly removed from their subsistence economies, where they are replaced by the exploitation of Colombia's ample natural resources by dominantly foreign capital ably abetted by cunning comprador elites. • The Innovation Journal; Hopefully Blood & Capital will receive the attention that it deserves, and Hristov's meticulous research can be used to truly disarm the state coercive apparatus in Colombia. • Upside Down World; The connections between the paramilitary and members of the government, the judiciary and armed forces in fact have been well documented, but (Jasmin Hristov) adds to this documentation a very sharp class analysis of the political dynamics involved. • Socialist Studies

Jasmin Hristov has written on paramilitarism in Colombia for the summer 2009 issue of NACLA (North American Congress on Latin America) Magazine which is focused on the subject. Click here to read her article, "Legalizing the Illegal: Paramilitarism in Colombia's 'Post-Paramilitary' Era" --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

This book is a Must Read if you want to fully understand the Colombian internal conflict. You'll find other books that are trying to explain the conflict (e.g. Robin Kirk, Julie Mazzei), but this one is more up to date and gives you more insight in the domestic conflict's cause. On the other hand this book is not about the FARC-EP, ELN or WOD, only about the Paramilitary Groups and the state's involvement. The author demonstrates that Colombia's unequal land distribution (about the most unequal in the world) is in fact the main cause of the conflict. The paramilitary groups were originally founded by landlords and drug-lords. Eventually the drug-lords became landlords too when they

laundered their drug monies. Even today the land-grab continues legally. Indigenous peoples are still denied their constitutional landownership today and small peasants are still forcibly displaced and/or denied their common law land-titles. Colombia counts over 4.9 million Internally Displaced Persons according to CODHES. Paramilitaries are largely responsible for this. This book shows you that the Paramilitary Groups have become a deathly cancer. The Paramilitary Groups do not only kill, torture, extort, steal, narco-traffic and much more, but they're also heavily supported by the state. Paramilitary Groups is a too friendly name, since they seem to be a state-approved and heavily armed violent mafia. The cancer has spread almost into every state institution, including the congress. If you know that the former president of Colombia - Alvaro Uribe - authorized licenses to drug traffickers when he was director of the department of Civil Aviation, that Uribe was placed on a list of narco-terrorists by the Pentagon, that he (and his father) was a collaborator of the Medellin Cartel and a friend of Pablo Escobar, that his estate was identified by human rights bodies as an epicenter of paramilitary violence, that in 2002 47 legal proceedings were filed against him because of irregularities during his governorship of Antioquia and if you know that his presidential campaign was funded by paramilitary groups and that Uribe's 2002 and 2006 election victories were based on fraud, violence and fear, than it is not difficult to understand that in the 8 years of Uribe's presidency the interests of the paramilitary groups and its ties to the state became much stronger, despite the deceptively called "Justice and Peace" law and program that turned out to be a fraudulent impunity program with very little demobilization. The book makes you realize that the present state of Colombia needs drug monies and the internal FARC-EP/ELN enemy to continue the present paramilitary status quo and unequal land distribution. That will make a solution of the conflict very difficult. Juan Manuel Santos is not going to do it. The author worked several years on her book and did a meticulous research. Over 450 references are listed that confirm the author's statements and a respectable bibliography is included. The author conducted several interviews herself. However, some more tables, graphs and maps would have made the book even more attractive.

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