



From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World (Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History)

Eugene D. Genovese

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In perhaps his most provocative book Eugene Genovese examines the slave revolts of the New World and places them in the context of modern world history. By studying the conditions that favored these revolts and the history of slave guerrilla warfare throughout the western hemisphere, he connects the ideology of the revolts to that of the great revolutionary movements of the late eighteenth century.

Genovese argues compellingly that the slave revolts of the New World shaped the democratic character of contemporary European struggles just as forcefully as European struggles influenced New World rebellion. The revolts, however, had a different purpose before as well as after the era of the French Revolution. Before, their goals were restoration of African-type village communities and local autonomy; after, they merged with larger national and international revolutionary movements and had profound effect on the shaping of modern world politics.

Toussaint L'Ouverture's brilliant leadership of the successful slave revolt in Saint-Dominique constitutes, for Genovese, a turning point in the history of slave revolts, and, indeed, in the history of the human spirit. By claiming for his enslaved brothers and sisters the same right to human dignity that the French bourgeoisie claimed for itself, Toussaint began the process by which slave uprisings changed from secessionist rebellions to revolutionary demands for liberty, equality, and justice.

Those who have taken issue with Genovese before will find little in *From Rebellion to Revolution* to change their minds. The book is sure to be widely read, hotly debated, and a major influence on the way future historians view slavery.

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