

Massive Resistance Southern Opposition to the Second Reconstruction



BOOK DETAILS

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BOOK SYNOPSIS

On May 17, 1954, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the United States Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. When the court failed to specify a clear deadline for implementation of the ruling, southern segregationists seized the opportunity to launch a campaign of massive resistance against the federal government. What were the tactics, the ideology, the strategies, of segregationists? This collection of original essays reveals how the political center in the South collapsed during the 1950s as opposition to the Supreme Court decision intensified. It tracks the ingenious, legal, and often extralegal, means by which white southerners rebelled against the ruling: how white men fell back on masculine pride by ostensibly protecting their wives and daughters from the black menace, how ideals of motherhood were enlisted in the struggle for white purity, and how the words of the Bible were invoked to legitimize white supremacy. Together these essays demonstrate that segregationist ideology, far from a simple assertion of supremacist doctrine, was advanced in ways far more imaginative and nuanced than has previously been assumed.

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