



Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948--1968

Jeff R Woods

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At the height of the cold war, southern segregationists exploited the reigning mood of anxiety by linking the civil rights movement to an international Communist conspiracy. Jeff Woods tells a gripping story of fervent crusaders for racial equality swept into the maelstrom of the South's siege mentality, of crafty political opportunists who played upon white southerners' very real fear of Communists, and of a people who saw lurking enemies and detected red propaganda everywhere. In their strange double identity as both defiant Confederate flag-wavers fiercely protecting regional sovereignty and as American superpatriots, many southerners stood ready to defend against subversives be they red or black.

Concentrating on the phenomenon at its most intense period, Woods makes vivid the fearful synergy that developed between racist forces and the anti-Communist cause, reveals the often illegal means used to wash the movement red, and documents the gross waste of public funds in pursuing an almost nonexistent threat. Though ultimately unsuccessful in convincing Americans outside of Dixie that the civil rights protests were controlled by Moscow, the southern red scare forced movement activists to distance themselves from the Marxist elements in their midst -- thereby gaining the sympathy of the American people while losing the support of some of their most passionate antiracist campaigners.

A product of vast archival research and the latest literature on this increasingly popular subject, this is the first book to consider the southern red scare as a unique regional phenomenon rather than an offshoot of McCarthyism or massive resistance. Addressing the fundamental struggle of Americans to balance liberty and security in an atmosphere of racial prejudice and ideological conflict, it will be equally compelling for students of civil rights, southern history, the cold war, and American anti-Communism.

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