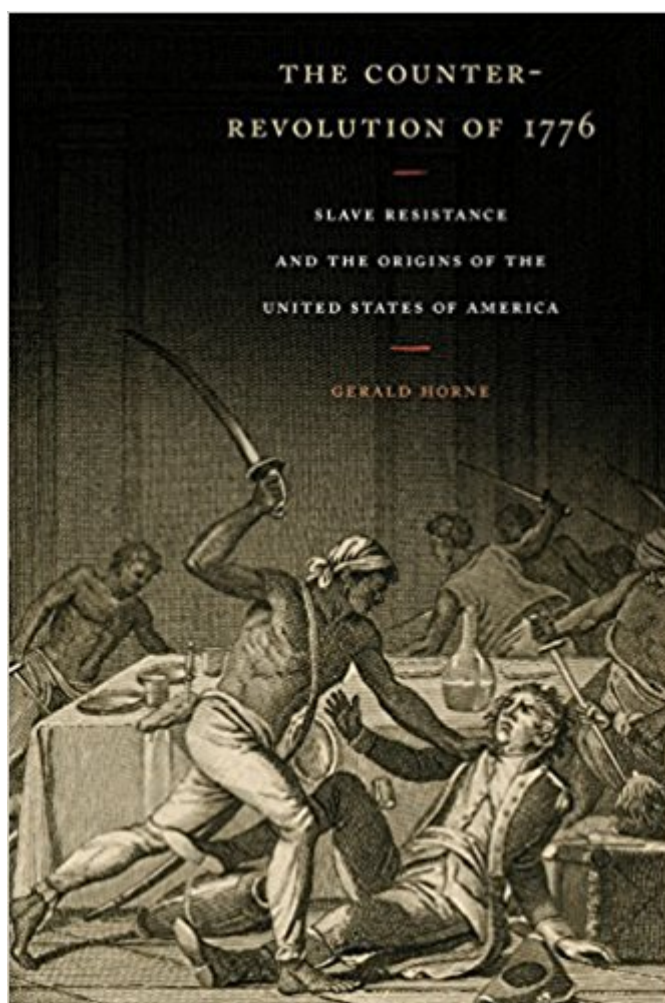


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# The Counter-Revolution Of 1776: Slave Resistance And The Origins Of The United States Of America



## Synopsis

Ida B. Wells and Cheikh Anta Diop Award Recipient for Outstanding Scholarship and Leadership in Africana Studies  
The successful 1776 revolt against British rule in North America has been hailed almost universally as a great step forward for humanity. But the Africans then living in the colonies overwhelmingly sided with the British. In this trailblazing book, Gerald Horne shows that in the prelude to 1776, the abolition of slavery seemed all but inevitable in London, delighting Africans as much as it outraged slaveholders, and sparking the colonial revolt. Prior to 1776, anti-slavery sentiments were deepening throughout Britain and in the Caribbean, rebellious Africans were in revolt. For European colonists in America, the major threat to their security was a foreign invasion combined with an insurrection of the enslaved. It was a real and threatening possibility that London would impose abolition throughout the colonies—a possibility the founding fathers feared would bring slave rebellions to their shores. To forestall it, they went to war. The so-called Revolutionary War, Horne writes, was in part a counter-revolution, a conservative movement that the founding fathers fought in order to preserve their right to enslave others. The Counter-Revolution of 1776 brings us to a radical new understanding of the traditional heroic creation myth of the United States.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Every person committed to the struggle for racial justice, liberation, and equality, and who struggles every day with the difficulties of forging unity between Black and white, needs to read this

book."-Portside.org"Historian Horne makes the case that the War for Independence was in fact a conservative counter-revolution that sought to preserve slavery in North America."-In These Times"Horne returns with insights about the American Revolution that fracture even more some comforting myths about the Founding Fathers. The author does not tiptoe through history's grassy fields; he swings a scythe . . . Clear and sometimes-passionate prose shows us the persistent nastiness underlying our founding narrative."-Kirkus"“The Counter-Revolution of 1776 is a challenging contribution to the debate about the American Revolution and a valuable addition to Horne's previous book on African American-British alliances before the Civil War."-American Studies"“The Counter Revolution of 1776 drives us to a radical new understanding of the traditional heroic creation myth of the United States."-Philadelphia Tribune"[I]t is Horne's book that has the most to teach about the complex intersections of race, class, religion, and ethnicity."-Cambridge Humanities Review"“In a refreshing take on the independence movement, Horne places slavery and its expansion in North America during the early eighteenth century at the center of the conflict between London and its increasingly nervous and truculent colonies across the Atlantic . . . This is an important book for both its novelty in a crowded field and its implications . . . Eminently readable, this is a book that should be on any undergraduate reading list and deserves to be taken very seriously in the ongoing discussion as to the American republic's origins."-The American Historical Review"“History books have painted a narrative of the U.S. founding that any student can recite: Colonists, straining against the tyranny of the British crown, revolted in the name of freedom, liberty and justice for all. But in recent years, historians have revisited that conventional story, examining the important role slaves played for Britain in its quest to quell colonists. Now, in a new book, historian Gerald Horne argues it was the desire to maintain slavery that was the prime motivator of the uprising . . . Horne revisit[s] the period leading up to 1776 to find out how slavery in North America and the British colonies influenced the revolution."-The Kojo Nnamdi Show, DC Public Radio"“This study is a powerful statement on the American Revolution. The quickening pace of his publishing is astonishing, and his style is always lean and vigorous."-Historian"“Gerald Horne's Counter Revolution of 1776 is a critical contribution in the struggle for clarity around one of the most misconceived periods of history. Horne's work provides the vast historical narrative that proves how this premise is false. He centers his analysis on the inherently counter-revolutionary nature of what led to the colonists desire for succession."-Black Agenda Report"“Gerald Horne's The Counter-Revolution of 1776 focuses on the motives of opponents and advocates of the

international slave trade leading up to the Declaration of Independence by colonial subjects of the British Crown in 1776. Horne challenges the mainstream notions that colonists rebelled against the Crown merely due to dissatisfaction with imperial control and the issue of "taxation without representation." -Journal of African American Journal "Gerald Horne's *The Counter-Revolution of 1776* strikingly places the American founding in its international setting and emphasizes that the slave-owning South seceded from the Crown in a foreshadowing of the Civil War. -The Journal of American History "Few historians dare range over the entire expanse of a nation's past, but in this book Gerald Horne aims to do just that. This study is a powerful statement on the American Revolution. The quickening pace of his publishing is astonishing, and his style is always lean and vigorous. -The Historian "If the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the sixties had had the benefit of Horne's book, *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America*, the foundation and the articulation of our movement would have been radically different. Instead of resting our outrage on mere violations of the letter of the Constitution, per se, we could have vastly enlarged our argument. -Teaching for Change "The Counter-Revolution of 1776 asks us to rethink the fundamental narrative of American history and to interrogate nationalist myths. Horne demands that historians consider slavery not as the exception to the republican promise of the American Revolution but rather as the norm insofar as protecting slavery was a fundamental cause of colonial revolt." -The New England Quarterly "With *The Counter-Revolution of 1776*, Gerald Horne refigures the origins of the American revolution to offer a challenging and potentially explosive critique of foundational myths of liberty and rebellion. -American Historical Review "This utterly original book argues that story of the American Revolution has been told without a major piece of the puzzle in place. The rise of slavery and the British empire created a pattern of imperial war, slave resistance, and arming of slaves that led to instability and, ultimately, an embrace of independence. Horne integrates the British West Indies, Florida, and the entire colonial period with recent work on the Carolinas and Virginia; the result is a larger synthesis that puts slave-based profits and slave restiveness front and center. The Americans re-emerge not just as anti-colonial free traders but as particularly devoted to an emerging color line and to their control over the future of a slavery based economy. A remarkable and important contribution to our understanding of the creation of the United States." -David Waldstreicher, Temple University "Horne holds a distinctive view of watershed historical dates. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 brought political order to Britain and encouraged free trade. This facilitated

massive slave imports into the American colonies, destabilizing colonial societies with the specter of racial conflicts and rebellious slaves allied with foreign invaders. Horne also asserts the less-familiar importance of 1772. That year's landmark *Somerset* decision by Lord Mansfield effectively banned slavery in England, signaling a trend in favor of rights for Africans. In June 1772, Rhode Islanders defied imperial authority by burning HMS *Gaspee*.

Colonists' determination to continue profiting from the slave trade ultimately led to independence, but 1776 was partly a counterrevolution against London's nascent antislavery sentiment. This narrative is often about white anxieties in Britain, the Caribbean, and North America. Readers seldom hear the voices of free and unfree Africans, though their actions (flight, rebellion, everyday resistance) speak clearly enough. Horne's interpretation emphasizes material factors over political philosophy and ideas in general. It directly challenges conventional views of the American Revolution but, based on extensive evidence, deserves close reading.

**Summing Up: Recommended Choice** "Nearly everything about Gerald Horne's lively *The Counter-Revolution of 1776* is provocative. And if Professor Horne is right, nearly everything American historians thought we knew about the birth of the nation is wrong." -Woody Holton, author of *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution* in *The Counter-Revolution of 1776* shows the centrality of slavery in colonial American life, north as well as south. It demonstrates how enslaved people's struggles merged with international and imperial politics as the British empire frayed. Gerald Horne finds among white American revolutionaries people who wanted to defend slavery against real threats. He addresses how in the United States, alone among the new western hemisphere republics, slavery thrived rather than waned, until its cataclysmic destruction during the Civil War." -Edward Countryman, Southern Methodist University

Horne, Moores Professor of history and African-American studies at the University of Houston, confidently and convincingly reconstructs the origin myth of the United States grounded in the context of slavery . . . . Horne's study is rich, not dry; his research is meticulous, thorough, fascinating, and thought-provoking. Horne emphasizes the importance of considering this alternate telling of our American origin myth and how such a founding still affects our nation today." -STARRED Publishers Weekly

In *The Counter Revolution of 1776*, Horne marshals considerable research to paint a picture of a U.S. that wasn't founded on liberty, with slavery as an uncomfortable and aberrant remnant of a pre-Enlightenment past, but rather was founded on slavery as a defense of slavery with the language of liberty and equality used as window dressing. If he's right, in other words, then the traditional narrative of the creation of the

U.S. is almost completely wrong."-Salon.com  
"The Counter-Revolution of 1776 remains a fine addition to the radical history of colonial America and a welcome counterpoint to studies of black loyalists. [Horne's] documentation is impressive and effective, and it offers a gold mine of references for future works on slave resistance."  
-Register of the Kentucky Historical Society  
"The underlying truth of the 'so-called' American Revolution is finally now out of the bag, and told in its fullest glory for the first time here. And what Professor Horne has discovered through meticulous research is nothing short of revolutionary in itself."-OpEdNews

Gerald Horne is Moores Professor of History and African American Studies at the University of Houston, and has published three dozen books including, *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the USA and Race War!* *White Supremacy and the Japanese Attack on the British Empire.*

#### GREAT READ

It's a difficult read, wordy and not concise. Lots of good information, but the reader has to work for it.

the truth comes out!!

The brilliance of Gerald Horne always astounds me. He is one of the greatest intellectuals of our time, telling a story not only from the Black point of view, but one with global perspectives that indeed rewrite the deceptive narrative about early America dished out regularly in standard education, from elementary school to college.

I'm in love with this book, The style and the quoted content of which there are many

Great!

Excellent interpretation of the American colonial period.

Very good.

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