



Ethiopia: Power and Protest: Peasant Revolts in the Twentieth Century

By Gebru Tareke, Gebru Tareke

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This study of popular protest and resistance in Ethiopia focuses on three important peasant-based rebellions that occurred between 1941 and 1970. The author attempts to uncover certain key features of popular protest in pre-revolutionary Ethiopia. Drawing upon ample evidence, he concludes that these revolts were not a consequence of capitalist exploitation, as was usually the case in most Third World countries, but were connected with the rise of a modern, bureaucratic, multi-ethnic national state. Ethiopian peasants were neither conservative nor compliant, as is often assumed, although their defiance was nevertheless essentially non-revolutionary. These interesting and fresh findings also suggest a possible explanation for the eruption and intensification of armed conflict in rural Ethiopia after 1974. On a theoretical level, the study makes a significant contribution to the ongoing analysis of social movements in agrarian societies.

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