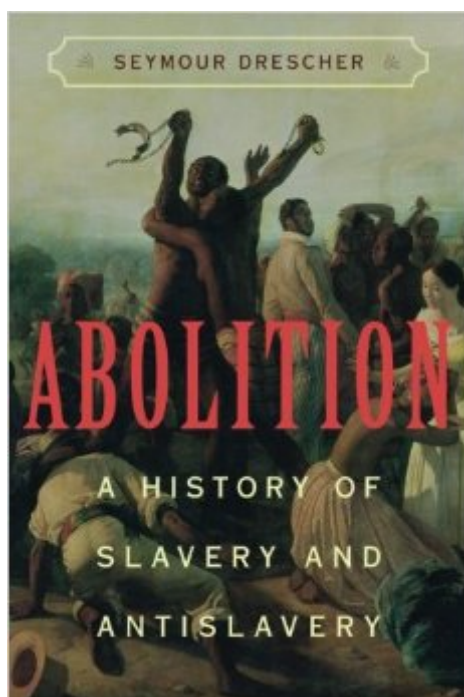


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Abolition: A History Of Slavery And Antislavery



Synopsis

In one form or another, slavery has existed throughout the world for millennia. It helped to change the world, and the world transformed the institution. In the 1450s, when Europeans from the small corner of the globe least enmeshed in the institution first interacted with peoples of other continents, they created, in the Americas, the most dynamic, productive, and exploitative system of coerced labor in human history. Three centuries later these same intercontinental actions produced a movement that successfully challenged the institution at the peak of its dynamism. Within another century a new surge of European expansion constructed Old World empires under the banner of antislavery. However, twentieth-century Europe itself was inundated by a new system of slavery, larger and more deadly than its earlier system of New World slavery. This book examines these dramatic expansions and contractions of the institution of slavery and the impact of violence, economics, and civil society in the ebb and flow of slavery and antislavery during the last five centuries.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In the United States nowadays mention the word slavery and most people would think of captive African blacks slaving away brutishly and the Civil War that was fought, for among other reasons, to free them. Anyone versed in history will know that every great civilization, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Chinese and others were built on slavery. It was the cornerstone. Caesar conquered Gaul to steal accumulated wealth and enslave thousands to guarantee the fortune he needed to succeed in

politics. This book, brilliantly written, covers slavery from the Middle Ages to the end of the Second World War. He could have brought the story of slavery up to the present time for slavery still exists in some regions of the world. Perhaps in his next book. Meanwhile we have this gem. The historical breath is striking, examples fly off the pages and one is transported to worlds many do not know existed. The history is horrid, the prospect of repetition, a possible reality, is frightening. Examples abound in history. In the late 1600s thousands of Englishmen were captured on the high seas and sold as slaves by Muslims in North Africa. They joined other captured souls from France, the American colonies, Ireland, Spain, and Scotland. In Africa they joined hapless citizens from Iceland, Russia, Eastern Europe and Italy. They had invariably been "secured" by Italian slave merchants who sold them to both Christians and Muslims. They were a commodity. The numbers were not insignificant. From 1600 to 1750 there were over 20,000 British and Irish citizens enslaved in North Africa. Some were lucky to be ransomed; most weren't. Their existence was brutish. Drescher's book concentrates on slavery in the Americas.

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