



A Hubert Harrison Reader

By Hubert Harrison

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The brilliant writer, orator, educator, critic, and activist Hubert Henry Harrison (1883-1927) is one of the truly important, yet neglected, figures of early twentieth-century America. Known as "the father of Harlem radicalism," and a leading Socialist party speaker who advocated that socialists champion the cause of the Negro as a revolutionary doctrine, Harrison had an important influence on a generation of race and class radicals, including Marcus Garvey and A. Philip Randolph. Harrison envisioned a socialism that had special appeal to African Americans, and he affirmed the duty of socialists to oppose race-based oppression. Despite high praise from his contemporaries, Harrison's legacy has largely been neglected. This reader redresses the imbalance; Harrison's essays, editorials, reviews, letters, and diary entries offer a profound, and often unique, analysis of issues, events and individuals of early twentieth-century America. His writings also provide critical insights and counterpoints to the thinking of W. E. B. DuBois, Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey. The reader is organized thematically to highlight Harrison's contributions to the debates on race, class, culture, and politics of his time. The writings span Harrison's career and the evolution of his thought, and include extensive political writings, editorials, meditations, reviews of theater and poetry, and deeply evocative social commentary.

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Editorial Review

Review

Jeff Perry's new book on Hubert Harrison's writings and speeches is a timely addition to the scholarship on early Black radicals and on the Harlem Renaissance period. Although Harrison was widely known and exercised a great deal of influence on political leaders such as A. Philip Randolph, Chandler Owen, and Marcus Garvey, few of his writings and speeches have been included in traditional overviews of Black politics of the period. Perry's book presents the broad range of Harrison's influence, detailing his work in literary criticism, theatre, philosophy, as well as his work with race and class politics. Moreover, Perry's introductory essays are encyclopedic in their own right. Anyone who has an interest in the history of Black politics, the Harlem renaissance period, or in early American radical politics must read this book. --Portia James, Anacostia Museum, October 2, 2001

Review

"With publication of this volume it will be possible to trace the evolution of Harrison's thought for the first time ever. The appearance of Harrison's writings will most certainly not only fill a gap in our understanding of black radical and nationalist writings around the World War I period and beyond, but will also, I suspect, change the way in which we tend to look at black thought generally in this period." (Ernest Allen, Jr., W.E.B. DuBois Department of Afro-American Studies, UMass at Amherst)

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Users Review

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Christopher Forney:

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