



Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, And The Black Working Class

Robin D.G. Kelley , George Lipsitz (Foreword by)

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Many black strategies of daily resistance have been obscured--until now. Race rebels, argues Kelley, have created strategies of resistance, movements, and entire subcultures. Here, for the first time, everyday race rebels are given the historiographical attention they deserve, from the Jim Crow era to the present.

Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, And The Black Working Class Details

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From Reader Review Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, And The Black Working Class for online ebook

Gianna Mosser says

A great example of a monograph written with the public discourse in mind. What a force then and now!

Lacey says

So far, wonderful. I adore Kelley. He's my hero!

Dan Sharber says

very enjoyable book! i especially like the final section on rap.

ivan says

In "Race Rebels," Robin D.G. Kelley explores the social history of cultural and community "spaces" that allowed for identity and resistance in the black community to evolve in the postwar United States. Forms of resistance took place, in Kelley's view, in places which were not traditionally seen as organized -- not the workplace, not politics, not fraternal organizations. Claiming urban spaces, these actions created a contested terrain -- whites flee buses for automobiles; whites accuse black "zoot suiters" of laziness and un-Americanism. Kelley explores "hidden transcripts" of agency -- resistance in this era was not simply about the NAACP and unions.

Callie says

I love anything by Robin Kelley. He has a really original and inspiring approach to crucial topics. This book looks at how working class Black folks rebelled in informal ways. It was amazing he was able to research the topic and insightful about the ways which we can all rebel to whatever predicament we find ourselves.

Leonardo says

Robin Kelley provee un relato ejemplar de las dinámicas del rechazo proletario y las formas alternativas de vida en su maravillosa historia sobre la clase trabajadora negra de los Estados Unidos.

Imperio Pág.203

Andrea says

A great book, desperately needed in academia and left circles to articulate the obvious -- not all culture, resistance and politicisation comes out of work or worker's movements. It also emerges from the home, the community, daily life and its myriads of experiences. I also loved not so much the idea of infrapolitics, drawn from James C. Scott that oppressed groups develop a political culture and daily routine or small individual acts of resistance that pushes back to some extent against those in power (well known to anyone who has worked a crappy job for minimum wage or tried to draw benefits), but the ways in which he tries to look at how this exists alone and in combination with movement. I love the insight that movement is built out of this underlying and broadly shared set of lived experiences and reactions, this history of small resistances and push backs, but is not reduced to this as it is through collective action that consciousness is transformed. In terms of studying power and resistance, I also loved this:

Daily acts of resistance and survival have had consequences for existing power relations, and the powerful have deployed immense resources in order to avoid those consequences or to punish transgressors. Knowing how those in power interpret, redefine, and respond to the thoughts and actions of the oppressed is just as important as identifying and analyzing resistance. The policies, strategies, or symbolic representations of those in power--what Scott calls the "official" or "public" transcript--cannot be understood without examining the infrapolitics of oppressed groups. The approach I am proposing will help illuminate how power operates, and how seemingly innocuous, individualistic acts of survival and resistance shape politics, workplace struggles, and the social order generally. I take the lead from ethnographer Lila Abu-Lughod who argues that everyday forms of resistance ought to be "diagnostic" of power. Instead of seeing these practices merely as examples of the "dignity and heroism of resisters," she argues that they could "teach us about the complex interworkings of historically changing structures of power.

I found these insights much more compelling than the histories he uses them to illustrate, but these histories were still fascinating. The range is broad: from accounts of people refusing to follow the rules on segregated buses (tremendous research!) to Black volunteers in the Spanish Civil War to South Central rap.

Shannon King says

Classic!

Byron says

I fished this from a dollar bin the other day, having once seen it mentioned in regard to the '90s-era debate about "gangsta rap." I figured at the very least the price was right. It turned out to be a not half bad read.

It's over 20 years old, and it's more academic than I require (I don't read good), but only the very last section, on the aforementioned gangsta rap, was contemporary at the time of its release. The rest of it is historical in nature, dealing with the various ways in which black workers resisted the oppression of slavery and then low-paid work that might as well be slavery.

I found many of those parts to be more interesting than I expected, while I found the stuff on rap music to be

kinda dated and rudimentary, likely having been intended for people who haven't spent their entire adult lives sitting around in their underwear developing webs of conspiracy involving rap music.

mimosa maoist says

Kelley is always a revelation. The chapter on the Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War was amazing.

Bob says

When Kelley started by describing everyday acts of rebellion while working in a McDonald's in Pasadena, California, I knew this was a book for me. RACE REBELS draws attention to "ordinary" people and their acts of personal and everyday protest and resistance. This is history that you don't find much of in your history books.

Soccermom174 says

i imagine a lot after reading this story as spend all

James Tracy says

Without a bunch of bells and whistles, Robin DG Kelley makes a really important contribution to political debate: establishing cultural politics and individual acts of defiance as something that is part of larger societal change.

A lot of other books tend to polarize this discussion around poles of "serious-Marxist-who-sees only-grand-collective-action as important" versus "post modernist who fetishizes every little act of personal rebellion and assertion of identity". In a very gentle way, Kelley brings the reader to a much healthier place. Small acts can help folks "keep your head up," and the big acts might one day change the world.

And anyone who had ever worked at a fast-food joint needs to read the beginning. Kelley writes practical, usable theory. Although his focus is on the Black Working Class, his observations and wisdom are relevant to the larger world as well.

Reginald Simms says

Coming off sometimes as apologetic Kelley does go into the depths of informal resistance in everyday life of African-Americans. From daily resistance at work to Malcolm X and zoot suits to communism and the Spanish Civil War and to Gangsta Rap Kelley describes the many informal ways African-Americans have had a somewhat organized form of political action without the official organization label. He notes how everyday resistance has been scrutinized and denigrated to become perceived as negative characteristics and qualities of a group as a whole instead of a quasi-reactive resistance to power structures. These forms of

resistance can be exemplified by the zoot suit as counter cultural garb of an era where there was a burgeoning black middle class developing and a domineering white classicist culture and opposition from the working and lower class to counter it by exhibiting pride in the appropriated and transformed status symbols they were denied.

Jason Williams says

Probably one of the best books on U.S. history you'll ever read.
