

study stands up well in light of sixteen years of additional historical analysis. Indeed, the only change made to this new edition is a bibliographical essay that updates the scholarship since 1974.

What makes *They Who Would Be Free* impressive is the care with which the authors explore the complex nature of Afro-American ideologies, attitudes, and activities from the "abolitionist crusade" beginnings in the 1830s to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. Not only do the Peases tell us much about American and Afro-American life during this era, but their work provides considerable understanding of the racial and interracial debates of our own time. Although antislavery was the cause that helped shape black American activities within the North and drew blacks and whites together in the only meaningful interracial endeavor in pre-Civil War America, it was an experience that symbolized the difficulties and conflicts of black and whites learning how to live, work, and respect one another in a society "half free and half slave." As the Peases and others have shown, it was one thing for white abolitionists, a minority themselves, to engage in the good fight against southern slavery in alliance with former black slaves and free blacks; it was another matter for them to truly embrace Afro-Americans as their equals and imagine a society where black leaders and ideas were truly valued by the dominant white culture.

Thus, as the sub-title of this book indicates, it is the "search for freedom" that defines the experiences of Afro-Americans in the North as they responded to and helped shape the abolitionist movements and were affected by the critical events leading to civil war. "Freedom" extended, in this respect, well beyond the termination of slavery; at its basic level, it involved for blacks issues of personal respect, dignity, equal rights, and self-determination. Despite the efforts of Afro-Americans, who were often as much in conflict with one another as they were with their white friends and adversaries, the absence of any real power--political, economic, and cultural--made significant interracial interaction and understanding extremely difficult. By the end of the 1850s, black Americans of differing political and social persuasions were in common despair over the possibilities for either ending slavery or achieving racial equality within the North. It was ultimately only the violence of war itself that made possible the end of southern slavery.

This is a book that needs to be pondered by both teachers and students since almost all of the racial and interracial struggles of our own time are clearly present in the battles of the early nineteenth century. As the post-World War II civil rights movement reflected, it is when blacks and whites are brought together most directly in the cause for racial and social justice that historical and cultural differences emerge most acutely and painfully. To realize that inequality involves far more than simply the absence of legal rights but is rooted also in the cultural attitudes of a nation that often refuses to take seriously--respect--the very people whose freedom it celebrates, is one of the sobering lessons of the Peases' study. *They Who Would Be Free* deserves to be read and contemplated.

Denison University

John B. Kirby

Charles P. Henry. *Culture and African American Politics*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990. Pp. ix, 140. Cloth, \$22.50.

When W.E.B. Dubois observed the "two-ness" of the African-American he brought attention to a theme that would pervade writings in black studies to the present day. While a majority of works have considered blacks as Americans and focused upon their inequitable treatment or condition compared to other segments of the population, a growing literature has sought to portray African-American moral and social life as distinctive from that of other Americans. This work summarizes some of this thinking and attempts to extrapolate from it a political ideology unique to black Americans.

Henry begins his book by refuting the works that have defined black politics in terms of elite leadership groups and strategies. He presents an alternative model linking ideology, cultural symbols, and political action and postulates that the values found in the mass culture of African-Americans form a type of ideology. He goes on to hypothesize that this "distinct black politics based on a unique

style and combination of worldviews . . . contains the possibility of a synthesis between selfish individualism and group responsibility that could provide an instructive moral vision for the entire society."

The bulk of this book analyzes select aspects of black culture for traits that would define such a unique ideology. In African proverbs, slave folk-tales, and blues music, Henry finds a distinctive "style and ethos." Several prominent figures and events from Nat Turner to the Watts Riot are offered as evidence of the mix of religion and politics in black culture or the importance of the "bad nigger" as a hero, an expression of manhood and liberation. Marcus Garvey and Martin Luther King, Jr., are portrayed as adapters of the Puritan jeremiad to black values, producing both a unique political style and a potential goal of liberating all oppressed people. The book culminates in an analysis of Jesse Jackson's campaigns, which the author sees as containing the style and themes of African-American culture and as an effort to recapture the "moral hegemony of the Civil Rights era."

Henry supports these ideas by citing other works on Afro-American culture and values. This methodology is at once a strength and central weakness of the book. That quite a few works are abstracted makes this work a handy introduction to the literature on black consciousness and cultural uniqueness. But such is Henry's emphasis on the writings of others that those authors often become the topic of a subchapter, and a coherent and clear development of his own thought is obscured. The reliance on other writings also leaves many key ideas resting on little more than the authority of other generalizations, often themselves drawn from abstract or theoretical works.

Historians will also be troubled by the very selective presentation of figures and events from the black past, sometimes arbitrary interpretations of these (e.g., Frederick Douglass as a classic example of the "bad nigger" with no reference to his many assimilative efforts), and the overall paucity of historical facts. This is not a history of black politics or political figures. But the nationalistic and often radical perspectives it synthesizes have been an important part of black scholarship since the late 1960s, and for teachers unfamiliar with that literature, this book could provide a useful orientation.

California State University, Fullerton

Lawrence B. de Graaf

Milton Meltzer. *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? The Great Depression, 1929-1933*. New York & Oxford, Facts on File: 1991. Reprint of 1969 edition. Pp. x, 130. Cloth, \$16.95.

The Great Depression was one of the more harrowing experiences in American history. Most Americans were affected either directly or indirectly by the collapse of the Stock Market in 1929. By the time of the election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932, more than thirty percent of the nation's workforce was unemployed. Men, women, and children faced deprivation that would affect them for several generations. For African Americans and farmers in the nation's corn belt, the Depression came much earlier. And yet, as Milton Meltzer points out in this brief but excellent social history survey of the Great Depression, the top five percent of the nation were not affected at all. Moreover, where one might have supposed that there would have been fervent political activity, most Americans had internalized the work ethic and the idea of individualism so well that they more likely blamed themselves rather than the system for their economic misfortune.

Milton Meltzer has done American history survey courses (as well as advanced high school history classes) an immeasurable service in producing this volume. Not only does he succinctly provide reasons for the Depression, but through his uses of ordinary people's observations and popular culture as well as newspapers and weekly news magazines accounts, students should walk away from this book knowing more about the underlying causes of our modern day welfare state and the reasons why we still can't, as they say, "get it right."

The book is divided into fourteen very short chapters that first show how and what caused the Depression and then the impact that the Depression had on the nation's people. In this time when American history continues to undergo a massive narrative change so as to be as inclusive as possible