



Howard Zinn on Race

Howard Zinn, Cornel West (Introduction)

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Howard Zinn on Race is Zinn's choice of the shorter writings and speeches that best reflect his views on America's most taboo topic. As chairman of the history department at all black women's Spelman College, Zinn was an outspoken supporter of student activists in the nascent civil rights movement. In "The Southern Mystique," he tells of how he was asked to leave Spelman in 1963 after teaching there for seven years. "Behind every one of the national government's moves toward racial equality," writes Zinn in one 1965 essay, "lies the sweat and effort of boycotts, picketing, beatings, sit-ins, and mass demonstrations." He firmly believed that bringing people of different races and nationalities together would create a more compassionate world, where equality is a given and not merely a dream.

These writings, which span decades, express Zinn's steadfast belief that the people have the power to change the status quo, if they only work together and embrace the nearly forgotten American tradition of civil disobedience and revolution. In clear, compassionate, and present prose, Zinn gives us his thoughts on the Abolitionists, the march from Selma to Montgomery, John F. Kennedy, picketing, sit-ins, and, finally, the message he wanted to send to New York University students about race in a speech he delivered during the last week of his life.

Howard Zinn on Race Details

Date : Published June 14th 2011 by Seven Stories Press (first published January 1st 2011)

ISBN : 9781609801342

Author : Howard Zinn , Cornel West (Introduction)

Format : Paperback 239 pages

Genre : History, Nonfiction, Politics, Social Movements, Social Justice, Race

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From Reader Review Howard Zinn on Race for online ebook

TR Peterson says

This inspiring collection of Zinn's articles and speeches from his days as a participant in the Civil Rights movement is a must-read for activists of today.[return][return]As ever, Zinn inspires, clarifies and enlightens with his insight and keen eye for injustice. As the Occupy movements have spread around the world in the past year, it's more vital than ever that activists learn about the radical past in the United States - something that comes so vividly to life in Zinn's anecdotes from a previous radical period in US history.
[return][return]This should be in every OWS participant and supporter's library.

Nicholas Lyell says

Super Excellent. The prose is beautiful and has the clarity and magnitude of subject to truly grab your emotions.

Karrie says

A++++++

Mills College Library says

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Randall Wallace says

Richard Hofstadter once said that the Emancipation Proclamation “had all the moral grandeur of a bill of lading”. Howard says that political desires killed the “moral momentum” of Radical Reconstruction and the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments had to lie dormant as seeds for a hundred more years. He reminds us that even Lyndon Johnson hesitated to revoke the Compromise of 1877 while modern day abolitionists were being murdered in Mississippi. Johnson’s refusal to invoke federal law/power to protecting blacks in the 60’s connected him, in his continuing to ignore the Constitution, directly to the failure of Reconstruction. Order since then had always been maintained at the expense of blacks in the South.

History is taught to most of us to be the result of legislation and things Presidents did and rarely the result of social agitation. Activists are rarely treated with public esteem because of a simple rule: historically to ruin an activist, one merely paints them in print as an extremist. America has a way of “forgetting” how many “extremists” through our history made our country better in the end and instead puts the spotlight on Lincoln and other come-late-to-the-party centrist compromisers. But extremism need not be immoral. Howard’s legacy is to show all Americans that throughout our history when progress toward equality happens it is

through it's "agitators, radicals and 'extremists' – black and white together" who "are giving the United States it's only living reminder that it was once a revolutionary nation." I love Howard. ? Also the labeling of non-extremists as extremists, such as abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, has long been the established technique to effectively sideline even these moderates as well as the true agitators in the public discourse. It wasn't until the Los Angeles Riots that the myth of "negro passivity" finally ended. On a more inclusive tone, Howard includes in these great essays Ella Baker saying, "Remember, we are not fighting for the freedom of the Negro alone but for the freedom of the human spirit, a larger spirit that encompasses all of mankind." On the other non-inclusive hand, I found the best distillation of American racist white patriarchal thinking so far in this chilling true story of Howards: A Newsweek writer was bluntly told during the Civil Rights movement "We killed two-year-old Indian babes to get this country, and you want to give it to the niggers?"

Wide-open stand up solidarity across all color boundaries against such a mindset is our only hope in fighting the dominant white patriarchal capitalist culture. Another amazing book by Howard and a great preparation for reading bell hooks and Angela Davis...

Sam Motes says

This is a collection of articles written and published by Zinn during the Civil Rights battle. Introductions are given to set the stage of why the article was written. Very eye opening read on the Civil Rights movement.

Rich says

I came to Howard Zinn far too late... how did no one tell me about him before? Maybe I'm not the only one intimidated by The People's History (what story to start with? How to handle it all? So many pages?) but books like this work perfectly for me: selected writings on a subject.

The article about voter registration in Selma is worth the entire price. The article about our history of demonizing immigrants throughout history is amazingly relevant, in any age.

Well worth the read... I've been saying "In this book I'm reading by Howard Zinn, he says..." for days now...

Molly says

Wow - this is a must-read. A collection of thoughtful, accessible essays spanning 60 years of the civil rights movement from someone who was witness and participant.
