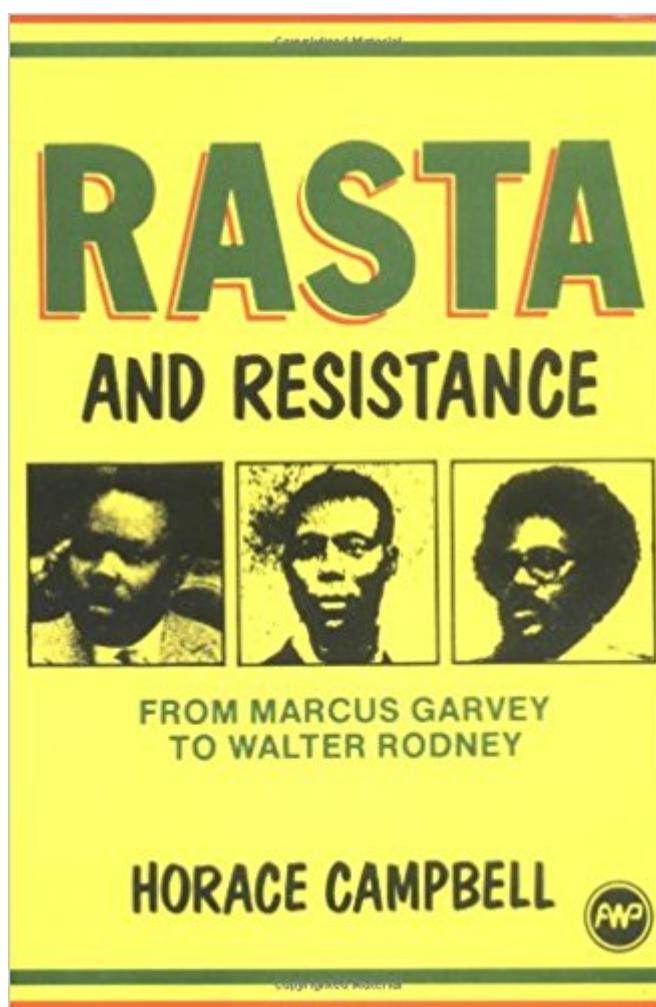


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# Rasta And Resistance: From Marcus Garvey To Walter Rodney



## **Synopsis**

Rasta and Resistance is a study of the Rastafarian movement in all its manifestations, from its evolution in the hills of Jamaica to its present manifestations in the streets of Birmingham and Shashamane Settlement in Ethiopia. It traces the cultural, political and spiritual sources of this movement of resistance, highlighting the quest for change among an oppressed people. This book serves to break the intellectual traditions which placed the stamp of millenarianism on Rasta.

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## **Customer Reviews**

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Absence of a political enquiry into the Rastafari of the Caribbean has always been an uncomfortable gap in the record of the Caribbean revolution. Now Horace Campbell has made a big step towards the filling of that gap. This is not to suggest that Caribbean writers and thinkers (we should not confuse the two groups) have not done much investigation of the Rastafari way of life with all the clarity and depth which their areas of investigation permitted them; some have also ventured into the political dominion. Campbell has many of the qualifications for the task he has undertaken. He

has been struggling for some years to apply the scientific theory of society to the reality of African and Caribbean politics, and in the process has avoided the creation of false gods. -Eusi Kwayana

Horace Campbell was born in Montego Bay, Jamaica in 1945. He is a writer, teacher and political activist who has taught in Africa, the Caribbean, Britain and North America. His writings include two books: Four Essays on Neo-colonialism in Uganda and Pan-Africanism: The Struggle Against Neo-colonialism and Imperialism as well as numerous articles, papers and essays which have been published in various journals in Britain, North America, the Caribbean and Africa. Since 1981, he has been teaching at University of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, East Africa.

This is a good read. It opens up new perspectives on the Rastafari movement and the central role this played in a lot of key movements. It was very informative, particularly in explaining the symbols, the history and Rastafari links to Africa. Also, if you are a roots reggae fan, it helps you really understand the lyrics as the backdrop to a greater movement. As a Bob Marley fan, it helped me really listen to his songs and find new meaning to it and really grasp what he was singing about. I particularly also liked the part about the events surrounding the Zimbabwe concert.

#### THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE AUTHOR AND THE SOURCE MAKE ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS I HAVE THAT WAS RECOMMENDED TO ME

very interesting book. I enjoyed it

Great book.

This book is as much about Marxist theory as it is about Rastafarianism, which isn't necessarily a bad thing unless you're not as interested in the former as in the latter. Rodney's objective is to couch the origins of the Rastafarian movement in that of proletariat class struggle. However, he provides little evidence to demonstrate a definitive link between the two. Rodney convincingly shows that Rasta developed as a means for the descendants of African slaves to positively identify with Africa and her people, as opposed to the white king of England. Insofar as this movement developed among blacks who constituted the mass of Jamaica's populace and who were working-farming poor - than Rasta may be considered a proletarian movement. However, Rodney provides no evidence that the early Rasta leaders consciously understood their struggle as a "class

"struggle" as that phrase is understood in the Marxist lexicon. The evidence suggests only that they sought to empower the mass of "sufferers" by seeking to positively identify with Africa and the African King - Haile Selassie I. The discussion of Rastafarianism in a political, social, economic and cultural context is so pervasive as to make one forget that practitioners consider Rastafari a religion. Indeed, Rodney provides no information on the central tenants, philosophy or rites of Rastafari as a religion. Rodney seeks to dismiss those Rasta who believe in the divinity of Selassie as misguided victims of Coptic propaganda. This conclusion reinforces Rodney's objective to posit Rastafari as a viable political movement for change and Rodney provides enough evidence to make this conclusion credible. Moreover, showing the political aspects of Rastafari allows those who may not necessarily believe in the divinity of Selassie to become involved in the movement. Despite the Marxist overtones and lack of religious information, the book still deserves a good rating.

Independent of the Marxist analysis the book provides great factual and historical information about the resistance of Africans and their descendants against slavery, colonialism and neocolonialism in the Caribbean and credibly depicts Rasta as a form of resistance. Indeed, if you aren't seeking a better understanding of Rastafari as a religion than this book is well worth the money. In this vein of resistance Marcus Garvey is prominently featured. The book contains an excellent chapter on the role of reggae music in spreading the Rasta's culture of resistance and ends with a thought-provoking discussion of repatriation, ultimately concluding that Africans and their descendants must struggle to change their conditions wherever they find themselves.

I had the privilege of "awakening" under the masterful stewardship of Dr. Horace Campbell. He is no longer teaching in Tanzania, but spent many years cultivating and producing great thinkers in Zimbabwe, where I met him. Since then, he has continued his tenureship stateside returning to Syracuse University in 1996. Exposing yourself to an essay, article or book by Dr. Campbell will provide interesting and compelling realizations of African and Caribbean political histories.

History teaches a lot about the Black struggles here in the United States, but you hardly find any books about slavery and Black struggles in the Caribbean and South America. Rasta and Resistance talks about the beginnings of the slave trade, slavery in Brazil, the Haitian Revolution and Toussaint L'Ouverture, Walter Rodney, Rastafarianism, ska and reggae music, and Black struggles in Great Britain. A great book for those wanting to learn more about the lost chapters of slavery and Black struggles.

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