



The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925

By Wilson Jeremiah Moses

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The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925 By Wilson Jeremiah Moses

The "golden age" of black nationalism began in response to the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and extended to the time of Marcus Garvey's imprisonment in 1925. During these seventy-five years, an upsurge of back-to-Africa schemes stimulated a burst of literary output and nurtured the growth of a tradition that flourished until the end of the century. This tradition then underwent a powerful revitalization with the rise of Marcus Garvey and the ideological Pan-Africanism of W.E.B. Du Bois.

In this controversial volume, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism*, Wilson Jeremiah Moses argues that by adopting European and American nationalist and separatist doctrines, black nationalism became, ironically, a vehicle for the assimilationist values among black American intellectuals. First providing the historical background to black nationalism and Pan-Africanism, he then explores the specific manifestations of the tradition in the intellectual and institutional history of black Americans. He describes the work of Alexander Crummell, W.E.B. Du Bois, Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington--specifically challenging the traditional interpretation of Washington as a betrayer of Douglass' vision--and the National Association of Colored Women.

Moses also examines the tradition of genteel black nationalism in literature, concentrating on the novels of Martin Delany and Sutton Griggs, as well as the early poetry of W.E.B. Du Bois. Using literary history instead of literary criticism, he identifies the particularly Anglo-African qualities in these works. He concludes with a description of those trends that led to the decline of classical black nationalism at the time of the Harlem Renaissance and the "New Negro Movement," which attempted to redefine the cultural and spiritual goals of Afro-Americans. Offering both a critical and sympathetic treatment of the black nationalist movement in the United States, Moses' study will stimulate further debate concerning the nature of the assimilationist tendencies dominating black nationalist ideology in the "golden age."

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Editorial Review

Review

"A well crafted, superbly researched, and immensely creative study of black intellectual history."--Alfred Moss, *University of Maryland* in the *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*

"The book gives important information and a fresh look at many historical issues."--Paula Giddings, *Essence*

"This impressive study will stir controversy among black scholars and proponents of separatism."--*Publishers Weekly*

"Moses provides much information on: the anti-Catholic strain in black nationalist propaganda; the forerunners of Garvey; black women's clubs and their relationships to white feminists; how black nationalism echoed sentimental Christian racism."--*Kirkus Reviews*

"Well written and significant."--*Choice*

"Convincing and...well-written....Highly recommended for specialists in black studies."--*Library Journal*

"This is an excellent book that fits my needs perfectly. The coverage is fine and the topical arrangement is great."--Robert T. Starks, *Northeastern Illinois University*

About the Author

Wilson Jeremiah Moses is Professor of Afro-American Studies and American Civilization at Brown University. He is the author of *Black Messiahs and Uncle Toms* and a biography of Alexander Crummell.

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