

An Introduction to Hubert Harrison

The brilliant writer, orator, educator, critic, and political activist Hubert Harrison (1883–1927) is one of the truly important, yet neglected figures of early twentieth-century America. The historian Joel A. Rogers, in *World's Great Men of Color*, describes him as “the foremost Afro-American intellect of his time” and “one of America’s greatest minds.” Rogers adds (after chapters on Booker T. Washington, William Monroe Trotter, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey), “No one worked more seriously and indefatigably to enlighten his fellow-men” and “none of the Afro-American leaders of his time had a saner and more effective program.”¹

Variants of Rogers’s lavish praise were offered by other contemporaries. The novelist Henry Miller, a socialist in his youth, remembered Harrison on a soapbox as his “quondam idol” and as an unrivaled, electrifying speaker.² William Pickens, field secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a former college dean and oratory prize winner at Yale, described him as “a plain black man who can speak more easily, effectively, and interestingly on a greater variety of subjects than any other man I have ever met in the great univer-

sities.” Pickens added that Harrison was a “‘walking cyclopedia’ of current human facts” and it made “no difference” whether he spoke about “*Alice in Wonderland* or the most extensive work of H. G. Wells; about the lightest shadows of Edgar Allen Poe or the heaviest depths of Kant; about music, or art, or science, or political history.”³ Eugene O’Neill, America’s leading playwright and a future Nobel Prize winner for literature, lauded Harrison’s ability as a critic and considered his review of the ground-breaking play *The Emperor Jones* to be “one of the very few intelligent criticisms of the piece that have come to my notice.”⁴ W. A. Domingo, the first editor of Marcus Garvey’s *Negro World*, emphasized the fact that Garvey, A. Philip Randolph, and the leading black activists of their generation “all followed Hubert Harrison.”⁵ The communist and community activist Mary Adams wrote of the outstanding work that Harrison did in teaching black history and black people’s “rich heritage of revolt.”⁶ The freethinker and Harlem activist Hodge Kirnon praised the fact that Harrison “lived with and amongst his people”; that he “taught the masses”; and that he was “the first Negro whose radicalism

“The Father of Harlem Radicalism”

Jeffrey B. Perry

was comprehensive enough to include racialism, politics, theological criticism, sociology and education in a thorough-going and scientific manner.”

Despite such high praise from his contemporaries, Harrison’s legacy has largely been neglected. There is great loss in this since his life was one of remarkable struggle, contributions, and seminal influence.

Hubert Harrison was an extraordinary internationalist, who more than any other political leader of his era, combined class consciousness and (anti-white supremacist) race consciousness in a coherent political radicalism. He opposed white supremacy, capitalism, and imperialism and maintained that white supremacy was central to capitalist rule in the United States, that racism and racist practices were not in white workers’ class interests, and that “Negroes” must not wait on white Americans while struggling to shape their future. This unique message, repeatedly delivered to the masses, enabled him to play signal roles in the development of what were, up to that time, the largest class-radical movement (socialism) and the largest race-radical movement (the “New Negro”/Garvey movement) in U.S. history. Harrison served

as the foremost black organizer, agitator, and theoretician in the Socialist Party (SP) of New York; as the founder and leading figure of the militant World War I-era “New Negro” movement; and as the editor of the *Negro World* and principal radical influence on the Garvey movement during its radical high point in 1920. Harrison’s views on race and class consciousness profoundly influenced a generation of “New Negro” militants that included the class-radical socialists A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, the future communists Cyril Briggs and Richard B. Moore, and the race-radical Marcus Garvey.⁸ His efforts during the period when Harlem became an “international Negro Mecca” and “the center of radical Black thought”⁹ earned him the title, “The Father of Harlem Radicalism.”¹⁰

Harrison was not only a radical activist, however. Rogers describes him as an “Intellectual Giant and Free-Lance Educator” whose contributions were wide-ranging, innovative, and influential. Rogers’s appraisal is accurate. Harrison was an immensely popular orator and freelance educator; a highly praised journalist, critic, editor, and book reviewer (who initiated the first “regular book-

review section known to Negro newspaperdom"); a promoter and aid to black writers and artists (including J. A. Rogers, Claude McKay, Charles Gilpin, and Augusta Savage); a pioneer black activist in the free thought and birth control movements; and a bibliophile and library popularizer (who helped develop the 135th Street Public Library into an international center for research in black culture). In his later years he was the leading black lecturer for the New York City Board of Education and one of its foremost orators. He was also a trailblazing literary critic during the period known as the Harlem Renaissance. (Interestingly, Harrison questioned the "Renaissance" on grounds of its genuineness, its willingness to take "standards of value ready-made from white society," and its claim to being a significant new rebirth. He maintained that "there had been an uninterrupted," though ignored, "stream of literary and artistic products" flowing "from Negro writers from 1850" into the 1920s.)¹¹

A brief review of Harrison's life indicates his importance and suggests reasons for the previous neglect.

Hubert Henry Harrison was born at Estate Concordia, Saint Croix, Danish West Indies, on April 27, 1883. Little is known with certainty about his parents. Rogers writes that they were of "unmixed African ancestry" and church records indicate that his mother was a poor, laboring-class woman, who was not formally married at the time of Hubert's birth, who had several other children, and who died in 1899. Other available information suggests that Hubert spent his early years pursuing his educational interests and that as a teenager he worked as an underteacher in an island school. These opportunities were possible in part because in Saint Croix (unlike in the United States) there was no formal segregation, no lynchings, and no system of severe racial proscriptions against class advancement for those of African descent.

Shortly after his mother died Hubert emigrated to the United States, arriving in 1900 as a seventeen-year-old orphan.¹²

Harrison's move from the rural, agricultural island of Saint Croix to the teeming urban/industrial metropolis of New York was truly a move from the nineteenth into the twentieth century. His arrival coincided with U.S. capitalism's ascent to new imperialist heights, with the period of intense racial oppression of African Americans known as the "nadir," and with the era of critical writing and muckraking journalism that, according to the social commentator Daniel Bell, produced "the most concentrated flowering of criticism in the history of American ideas." These factors would play an important part in shaping the remainder of his life.¹³

Over the next twenty-seven years, until his unexpected death at age forty-four, Harrison made his mark in the United States by struggling against class exploitation and racial oppression; by participating in and helping to create a remarkably rich and vibrant intellectual life; and by working for the enlightened development of the lives of "the common people." His political/educational work emphasized the need for working-class people to develop class consciousness; for "Negroes" to develop race consciousness, self-reliance, and self-respect; and for all those he reached to develop modern, scientific, critical, and independent thought as a means toward liberation.

Harrison's life in the United States was never easy. Soon after his arrival in New York he began working menial jobs and attending high school at night. He finished school; read constantly; and after several years obtained postal employment, married Irene Louise Horton (whose family came from Antigua and Demerara), and started to raise a family that eventually included five children. His insatiable thirst for knowledge and his critical mind led him to break from

“orthodox and institutional Christianity” and to develop an “agnostic” “philosophy-of-life,” which stressed rationalism, modern science, and evolution and placed humanity at the center of its worldview.¹⁴

During his first decade in New York, Harrison set out to write a “History of the Negro in America,” and he began to participate in the vibrant intellectual life that was created by working-class black New Yorkers. He was active in church lyceums, the YMCA and YWCA, the White Rose Home social work center, a postal worker study circle, and a press club. He befriended working-class scholar/activists such as the bibliophiles Arthur Schomburg and George Young, the journalist John E. Bruce, the actor Charles Burroughs, and the social worker/educator/activist Frances Reynolds Keyser. Harrison’s approach, especially his efforts at getting “in full-touch with the *life* of my people” as an aid “to understanding them better,” makes clear that he was what Antonio Gramsci would later describe as an “organic intellectual.”¹⁵

Harrison was a critical and independent thinker and his wide-ranging interests included history, politics, science, free thought, literature, social and literary criticism, and the protest philosophy of activists such as W.E.B. Du Bois. Like Du Bois, Harrison criticized the approach of Booker T. Washington, whom he described as “subservient” and with whom he differed on approaches to politics, education, labor unions, protest, and dissent. Harrison’s readings in history, along with events like the 1906 Brownsville, Texas, affair, led him to reject the Republican Party to which African Americans had been wedded since the Civil War era. In addition, as his readings extended further into sociology, economics, evolution, and single taxism, he became familiar with the authors Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, Lester F. Ward, Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, Henry George, T.

Thomas Fortune, Francisco Ferrer, and Du Bois and he moved in the direction of socialism. The rejection of the Republican Party and the sympathy for the socialist message accelerated his move toward third-party politics and toward the Socialist Party.¹⁶

In this vibrant intellectual environment and with a developing self-confidence, Harrison began lecturing, teaching, and writing letters to newspapers. His boldness soon affected him economically. After he wrote two letters in the *New York Sun* that criticized Washington for inaccurately portraying abroad the oppressive conditions faced by African Americans, Harrison lost his postal employment through the efforts of Washington’s powerful “Tuskegee Machine.” It was a devastating blow and the resultant loss of income and security seriously impacted his remaining years with his family and at times influenced his political and educational efforts.¹⁷

Shortly after his postal firing, Harrison turned to full-time work with the Socialist Party. From 1911 to 1914, he was America’s leading black socialist—a prominent Socialist Party speaker and campaigner (especially in the 1912 presidential campaign of Eugene V. Debs), an articulate and popular critic of capitalism, the leading black socialist organizer in New York, and the initiator of the Colored Socialist Club—an unprecedented effort by U.S. socialists at organizing African Americans. In his writings he made major theoretical contributions on the subject of “The Negro and Socialism” by advocating in the *New York Call* and the *International Socialist Review* that socialists champion the cause of African Americans as a revolutionary doctrine, that they develop a special appeal to and for African Americans, and that they affirm the duty of all socialists to oppose race prejudice. (Some of his writings from this period appeared in his first book, *The Negro and the Nation* [1917].) His proposal that “the crucial test of Socialism’s sincerity” was

its "duty" to "champion" the cause of the African American anticipated by over a year Du Bois's dictum that the "Negro Problem . . . [is] the great test of the American Socialists."¹⁸

Such efforts were to little avail and Socialist Party theory and practice (including segregated locals in the South, the failure to route the 1912 presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs in the South, and racist positions on Asian immigration at the 1912 national convention) soon led Harrison to conclude that Socialist Party leaders, like organized labor, put the white "Race first and class after."¹⁹

As Harrison started to move away from the Socialist Party, he turned his efforts toward the more egalitarian, militant, action-oriented, Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). He was a featured speaker (along with the IWW leaders "Big Bill" Haywood, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Carlo Tresca, and Patrick Quinlan), and the only black speaker at the historic 1913 Paterson silk strike. He also publicly defended Haywood against attack by the right wing of the Socialist Party on the issue of "sabotage." SP leaders soon moved to restrict his speaking, however, and as their attacks on both his political views and his principal means of livelihood intensified, his disenchantment grew, he was suspended, and he then left the party.

After leaving the Socialist Party, Harrison took what he revealingly described in his "Diary" as the first truly self-initiated step of his life—the founding of the Radical Forum.

The forum was an effort at drawing together radicals from various different movements who were "sick of the insincerities of cults and creeds" and desired to receive "the awakening breath of the larger liberalism, from which all alike may draw inspiration." In this same period he began teaching at the Modern

School (along with some of America's foremost artists and intellectuals) and he lectured indoors and out on birth control, the racial aspects of World War I, religion, science, evolution, sex, literature, and education.²⁰

Harrison's outdoor lectures pioneered the tradition of militant street-corner oratory in Harlem. As a soapbox orator he was brilliant and unrivaled.

He had a charismatic presence, wide-ranging intellect, remarkable memory, impeccable diction, and wonderful mastery of language. Factual and interactive, he utilized humor, irony, and a biting sarcasm. With his popular indoor and outdoor style he paved the way for those who followed—including A. Philip Randolph and Marcus Garvey—and, much later, Malcolm X.²¹

By 1915–1916, his experiences with the racial oppression, glaring racial inequality, and white supremacy of U.S. society as well as with the "white race first" attitude of the organized labor movement and the Socialist Party led Harrison, the former leading black socialist, to respond with a "race first" political perspective.²² Important steps in this direction were made through the frontier of art as Harrison wrote several theater reviews in

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which he described how the "Negro Theatre" revealed the "social mind . . . of the Negro."²³ With his new "race first" approach he served over the next few years as the founder and intellectual guiding light of the "New Negro Manhood Movement," better known as the "New Negro" Movement²⁴—the race-conscious, internationalist, mass-based, autonomous, militantly assertive movement for "political equality, social justice, civic opportunity, and economic power" that laid the basis for the Garvey movement (and with its encouragement of mass involvement with literature and the arts contributed to the vibrant literary climate leading to the 1925 publication of Alain Locke's well-known *The New Negro*).²⁵

Harrison's "race first" approach and its core race-conscious message, which would become more pronounced during the sacrifices and social upheaval of World War I, would remain as his political staple for the remaining thirteen years of his life. The call to race consciousness would become the center of his strategic perspective, and it was basically a call for African Americans to recognize the racial oppression they faced and to use that awareness to unite, organize, and respond as a group.²⁶

Harrison, as he later explained, had grown dissatisfied with strategies such as those advocated by the NAACP that sought "to secure certain results by affecting the minds of white people" when, in fact, African Americans had "no control" over those minds and had "absolutely no answer to the question, 'What steps do you propose to take if those minds at which you are aiming remain unaffected?'" As an alternate strategy he began to advocate "the mobilizing of the Negro's political power, pocket book power and intellectual power," which were "within the Negro's control," in order "to do for the Negro the things which the Negro needs to have done." This would be accomplished "without depending

upon or waiting for the co-operative action of white people." Though interracial cooperation, whenever it came, would be "a boon" that "no Negro, intelligent or unintelligent" would "despise," he emphasized that blacks could not "afford to predicate the progress of the Negro upon such co-operative action," because such action "may not come."²⁷

At first, in the early stages from perhaps 1915 through around 1920, Harrison advocated the propagandistic doctrine of "Race First!" (the phrase subsequently was treated as the essence of the Garvey movement in Tony Martin's *Race First*). He considered it "propaganda" and described it as "a response to the American doctrine of Race First" and to the American socialists and labor movement, who repeatedly put the white race before class. Harrison emphasized to the socialists, "We say Race First, because you have all along insisted on ["white"] Race First and class after when you didn't need our help."²⁸

During the summer of 1917, as the "Great War" raged abroad, along with race riots, lynchings, segregation, discrimination, and white-supremacist ideology at home, the race-conscious Harrison founded the Liberty League and the *Voice*. They were, respectively, the first organization and the first newspaper of the "New Negro" movement.²⁹ The Liberty League was called into being, he explained, by "the need for a more radical policy" than that of existing civil rights organizations such as the NAACP. Harrison felt that the NAACP limited itself to paper protest, was dominated by white people's conceptions of how black people should act, concentrated too much on "The Talented Tenth," and repeatedly stumbled over the problem of "white" minds that remained "unaffected" and refused "to grant guarantees of life and liberty."³⁰

In contrast to the NAACP, the Liberty League encouraged direct action, was not dependent on "whites," and aimed beyond "The

Talented Tenth" at the "common people" of "the Negro race." Its program emphasized internationalism, political independence, and class and race consciousness. In response to white supremacy, the *Voice* called for a "race first" approach, full equality, federal anti-lynching legislation (which the NAACP did not support at that time), enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, labor organizing, support of socialist and anti-imperialist causes, and armed self-defense in the face of racist attacks. It stressed that new black leadership would emerge from the masses.³¹

Contemporaries readily acknowledged that Harrison's work laid the groundwork for the Garvey movement. From the Liberty League and the *Voice* came the core progressive ideas and leaders later utilized by Marcus Garvey in both the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the *Negro World*. Harrison himself claimed, with considerable basis, that from the Liberty League "Garvey appropriated every feature that was worthwhile in his movement" and that the secret of Garvey's success was that he "[held] up to the Negro masses those things which bloom in their hearts—racialism, race-consciousness, racial solidarity—things taught first in 1917 by the *Voice* and The Liberty League."³²

After the *Voice* ceased publication in early 1918, Harrison briefly served as an organizer for the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and then chaired the Negro-American Liberty Congress. The June 1918 Liberty Congress (co-headed by the long-time activist William Monroe Trotter) issued wartime demands against discrimination and segregation and petitioned the U.S. Congress for federal anti-lynching legislation.³³ This autonomous and militant effort was undermined by the U.S. Army's antiradical Military Intelligence Bureau (MIB) in a campaign that was spearheaded by the NAACP founder and leader Joel E. Spingarn and involved Du Bois.³⁴

Following the Liberty Congress, Harrison initiated "New Negro" criticism of Du Bois for urging African Americans to forget justifiable grievances, for "closing ranks" behind President Woodrow Wilson's war effort, and for following Spingarn's lead and seeking a captaincy in Military Intelligence (that branch of government that monitored radicals and the African-American community). Harrison's exposé, "The Descent of Dr. Du Bois," was a principal reason that Du Bois was denied the captaincy he sought in Military Intelligence, and more than any other document, it marked the significant break between the "New Negroes" and the older leadership.³⁵ Sensing the need to articulate this new direction, Harrison restarted the *Voice* and worked on a daring, though unsuccessful, plan to bring it into the deep South.³⁶

After the resurrected *Voice* failed, Harrison edited the monthly *New Negro* magazine from August through October 1919. The *New Negro* was "intended as an organ of the international consciousness of the darker races—especially of the Negro race" and it aimed to be for African Americans what *The Nation* was for "white" Americans. Harrison's attention to international matters would intensify over the next several years, especially when he became editor of the *Negro World*, and he would write many powerful pieces critical of imperialism ("the most dangerous phase of developed capitalism") and supportive of internationalism. He was abreast of current events and wrote knowledgeably on Africa, India, Asia, the Islamic world, the Caribbean, the Americas, Europe, Russia, and the Russian Revolution. Harrison repeatedly began his analysis of situations from an international perspective and emphasized that it was important for black people to overcome ignorance of international events and for African Americans "to get in international touch" with "the downtrodden section of the human population of the globe and establish busi-

ness, industrial and commercial relations with them."³⁷

On the domestic front, Harrison's criticism of left, labor, and black leadership grew. He increasingly sought to mobilize "the Negro's political power, pocket book power and intellectual power." What was particularly new in his strategy was his conception of, and approach to, race unity. As he later explained, many who sought race unity were unclear on what they actually meant—was it to be "unity of thought and ideas," "unity of organization," "unity of purpose," or "unity of action?" For Harrison unity of thought was neither desirable nor possible, except in the graveyard, and unity of organization was exceedingly difficult and not likely. Unity of purpose was a real possibility, however. The fault with previous efforts, he wrote, was that the uniters (and here he referred principally to Washington and Du Bois) had "generally gone at the problem from the wrong end." As he explained, "They have begun at the top when they should have begun at the bottom." "To attempt to unite the 'intellectuals' at the top" was "not the same thing as uniting the Negro masses," who were the key to "racial solidarity."³⁸

With that perspective, Harrison, in January 1920, became the principal editor of the *Negro World*, the organ of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. He reshaped and developed that paper—changed its style, format, content, and editorial page—and was primarily responsible for developing it into the preeminent radical, race-conscious, political and literary publication of the era. Many of his most important editorials and reviews from early 1920 (as well as ones from the Liberty League period) were reprinted in his book *When Africa Awakes* (1920). Over the first eight months of 1920, Harrison was the *Negro World's* chief radical propagandist, and in August, at the UNIA's 1920 convention, he was the one who

gave "radical tone" to the UNIA's "Declaration of the Negro Peoples of the World."³⁹

By the 1920 convention, however, movement was under way to have Harrison "dismissed from the editorship of the paper." Harrison, in turn, was highly critical of Garvey. His criticisms concerned the extravagance of Garvey's claims, his ego, the conduct of his stock-selling schemes, and his politics and practices. Though Harrison continued to write columns and book reviews for the *Negro World* into 1922, their political differences grew and Harrison worked against, and sought to develop political alternatives to, Garvey. In particular, Harrison urged political action in terms of electoral politics; he attempted to build the all-black Liberty Party (to run African-American candidates for political offices, including the presidency); he consistently maintained the position that African Americans' principal struggle was in the United States (and that they should therefore not seek to develop a state in Africa); he opposed imperialism and did not seek an African empire; he argued that Africans, not African Americans, would lead struggles in Africa; he vociferously opposed the Ku Klux Klan; and he favored reason, science, and fact-based knowledge over more exaggerated claims to the masses.⁴⁰

In the 1920s, after breaking with Garvey, Harrison continued his full schedule of activities. He lectured on a wide range of topics for the New York City Board of Education and for its elite "Trends of the Times" series, which included prominent professors from the city's foremost universities. His book and theater reviews and other writings appeared in many of the leading periodicals of the day—including the *New York Times*, *New York Tribune*, *New York World*, *Nation*, *New Republic*, *Modern Quarterly*, *Pittsburgh Courier*, *Chicago Defender*, *Amsterdam News*, *Boston Chronicle*, and *Opportunity* magazine. He also spoke against the revived

Ku Klux Klan and the horrific attack on the Tulsa, Oklahoma, black community, and he worked with numerous groups, including the Virgin Islands Congressional Council, the Democratic Party, the Farmer-Labor Party, the single tax movement, the American Friends Service Committee, the Urban League, the American Negro Labor Congress, and the Workers (Communist) Party.

One of his most important activities in this period was the founding of the International Colored Unity League (ICUL) and its organ, *The Voice of the Negro*. The ICUL was Harrison's most broadly unitary effort (particularly in terms of work with other black organizations and with the black church). It urged blacks to develop "race consciousness" as a defensive measure and its 1924 platform had political, economic, and social planks urging protests, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and collective action. It also included as its "central idea" the founding of "a Negro state, not in Africa, as Marcus Garvey would have done, but in the United States," as an outlet for "racial egoism." It was a plan for "the harnessing" of "Negro energies" and for "economic, political and spiritual self-help and advancement" (which preceded a somewhat similar plan by the Communist International by four years).⁴¹

Overall, in his writing and oratory, Harrison's appeal was both mass and individual. He focused on the man and woman in the street and emphasized the importance of each individual's development of an independent,

critical attitude. The period during and after World War I was one of intense racial oppression and great black migration from the South and the Caribbean into urban centers, particularly in the North. Harrison's race-conscious mass appeal utilized newspapers, popular lectures, and street-corner talks and marked a major shift from the leadership approaches of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois, the paramount black leaders of his youth. He rejected Washington's reliance on white patrons and a black political machine and Du Bois's reliance on a "Talented Tenth of the Negro Race." Harrison's affective appeal (later identified with that of Garvey) was aimed directly at the urban masses and, as the Harlem activist Richard B. Moore explained, "More than any other man of his time, he [Harrison] inspired and educated the masses of Afro-Americans then flocking into Harlem."⁴²

Though he was extremely popular among the masses who "flocked to hear him," Harrison was often overlooked by "the more established conservative Negro leaders, especially those who derived support from wealthy whites." Others, "inferior . . . in ability and altruism, received acclaim, wealth, and distinction" that was his due. When he died from appendectomy complications on December 17, 1927, the Harlem community, in a major show of affection, turned out by the thousands for his funeral. A church was (ironically) named in his honor and his portrait was to be placed prominently on the main floor of

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the 135th Street Public Library, where he, along with the bibliophile Arthur Schomburg and others, had helped to found and develop the world-famous Department of Negro Literature and History (which grew into the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture).⁴³

Despite these manifestations of love and respect from his contemporaries, Harrison has been greatly neglected in death. He lies buried in an unmarked, shared plot in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx; the church named in his honor was abandoned; his portrait donated to the library cannot be found; and his life story and contributions have largely been ignored. Probably not one in a thousand Americans has ever heard of him.⁴⁴

Some reasons for this neglect are readily apparent. Harrison was poor, black, foreign born, and from the Caribbean. Each of these groups has suffered from discrimination and neglect in the United States. He opposed capitalism, racism, and the Christian church—dominant forces of the most powerful society in the world. He supported socialism, “race consciousness,” racial equality, women’s equality, free thought, and birth control. The forces arrayed against the expression of such ideas were, and continue to be, formidable. Others, most notably (the similarly poor, black, Caribbean-born) Garvey, who challenged the forces of white supremacy only began to emerge from similar historical neglect with the increase in black studies and popular history that were by-products of the civil rights/black power struggles of the 1960s.⁴⁵ Even then, however, Harrison was largely overlooked. In part this was undoubtedly due to his “radicalism” on issues other than race—particularly on matters of class and religion.

There is one other important factor that has served to keep Harrison’s achievements and ideas from the prominence they deserve. He was an inveterate critic whose style was can-

did and, at times, biting sarcasm. He would not, as he said, “bow the knee to Baal, because Baal is in power.” He criticized the ruling classes, white supremacists, organized religion, organized labor, politicians, civil rights and race leaders, socialists, and communists. Though his comments were usually perceptive, well researched, and without malice, they often challenged the established order and existing leaders and engendered reaction. As Rogers explains,

Most of the enmity against Harrison was incurred by his devastating candor. . . . He spoke out freely what he thought, and more often than not it was with such annihilating sarcasm and wit, that those whom he attacked never forgave him. Before he began his attacks, he usually collected “the evidence” as he called it, consisting of verbatim utterances, verbal or printed, of the prospective victim. . . . There was, however, no personal malice in Harrison’s shafts. Like a true sportsman, he was willing to shake hands with an opponent as soon as he had descended from the platform, and was surprised and hurt that others were not.⁴⁶

In particular, Harrison’s willingness to directly challenge prominent leaders in left and African-American circles stung many of the people most likely to keep his memory alive. In his writings he had pointed out that “those who live by the people must needs be careful of the people’s gods.”⁴⁷ It was advice he did not always heed himself. He was often more candidly critical than calculatingly cautious and “leaders” who might have publicly preserved his memory made little effort to do so; some actually led in the great neglect that followed.

In February 1928, less than two months after his massive funeral, Hodge Kirnon, an influential grassroots Harlem activist, omi-

nously observed in a letter to the editor of the black weekly *New York News*,

It has now become a subject of popular discussion among thoughtful people as to the reason for the absence of any mention of the late Hubert Harrison in the columns of the three leading Negro monthly periodicals in this country. *The Messenger*—"a journal of scientific radicalism" [edited by the socialist A. Philip Randolph] has not a word to say concerning the death of the first and ablest Negro exponent of scientific radicalism. *The Crisis*—"A Record of the Darker Races" [edited by the NAACP's W.E.B. Du Bois] laments the passing of [boxer] "Tiger" Flowers, but omits to record the services of a man who was a lecturer for the Board of Education, and of whom William Pickens says "can speak more easily, effectively and interestingly on a greater variety of subjects than any other man I have met, even in the great Universities." *Opportunity*—"a Journal of Negro Life" [edited by the Urban League's Charles S. Johnson] is equally silent over the demise of an acknowledged first rate thinker—one who gave liberally to the intellectual life of the Negro, and whose writings have appeared in that journal.

This concerted silence is ominous. It does appear that there is something wrong somewhere.⁴⁸

There was indeed something wrong. An important figure, compared to Socrates by his peers,⁴⁹ was being ignored. The tragedy in this lies in the fact that Harrison's life story has much to offer. His life was lived in poverty, yet he struggled relentlessly for knowledge, understanding, and the uplift of common people. He was, according to Rogers, one of those "individuals of genuine worth and immense potentialities who dedicate their lives to the advancement of their fellow-men." According to the *Pittsburgh*

Courier, "despite the handicap of poverty, . . . [he] became one of the most learned men of his day and was able to teach the wide masses of his race how to appreciate and enjoy all the finer things of life, to glance back over the whole history of mankind, and to look forward 'as far as thought can reach.'"⁵⁰

Hubert Harrison was a brilliant writer, editor, orator, critic, and radical activist. Among African-American leaders of his era, he was the most class conscious of the race radicals, and the most race conscious of the class radicals—a seeming incongruity made possible by the political-economic system of the United States, in which a system of racial oppression was central to capitalist rule. His radicalism was grounded in his study, his analysis of society, and his practical work. He was not rhetorical, utopian, or dogmatic. He stressed modern and historical knowledge, critical and scientific approaches to problems, political independence while working with different groups and parties, and concern with the great democratic issues of the day. He worked tirelessly and indefatigably for those he referred to as the "common people." The radicalism in all this stems from the fact that it came from an African American who would not deny that race and class divided America. Then, as now, the demands for economic justice premised on true racial equality struck at the very heart of the existing social order and were inherently radical.⁵¹

Postscript

When Harrison first developed his call for "race first," it was, in part, a reflexive response to both the "white race first" of the socialists and to the inadequacy of the socialists' "class first" in the face of class and racial oppression. "Race first" urged placement of the racial struggle to the fore, before the class struggle. It tended to de-emphasize struggle against class oppression, and in its propagandistic fervor it

at times suggested an almost fatalistic biological permanency to racism among European Americans. There was little indication of anything temporal in the use of the slogan, which responded to white supremacy as if it was ubiquitous and permanent.

The historian Ernest Allen points out particular difficulty with Harrison's decision to respond to the socialists' "rigidly determinist" "class first" with the "equally dogmatic 'race first'" slogan. He concludes, "Whereas 'class first' ignored the *special* oppression which blacks *qua* blacks suffered above and beyond that borne by white laborers, 'race first' obliterated the class aspects of the African American struggle." Though Harrison did not himself obliterate class struggle with his propagandist use of the slogan, Allen's comment is insightful.⁵²

Over time, Harrison seemed to replace his call for "race first" with a call to develop race consciousness.⁵³ Though the phrases were at times interchangeable and Harrison at times seemed to move between biological and social understandings of race, the call to race consciousness suggested a broader and deeper appeal, more compatible with class consciousness, not "rigidly determinist," more sociohistorical (as opposed to biological), and more temporal.⁵⁴ It is this message that his children remembered Harrison delivering. There was, however, overlap in his use of the slogans and nowhere did he clearly compare and differentiate the concepts.⁵⁵

In his writings Harrison explained that race consciousness was needed as a self-defense measure under existing societal conditions and that it was a necessary counter to white supremacy. It was also a strategic component in the struggle for a racially just and socialist society. Thus, where "the feeling of racial superiority" among the white population was pronounced, there was necessarily produced "in the mind of the masses of the black, brown and yellow peoples" what is termed in

psychology "a protective reaction." This protective reaction was "race consciousness," and like loyalty, it was "neither an evil nor a good." The "good or evil of it" depended "upon the uses to which it is put." As long as the outer situation remained the same, reasoned Harrison, "We must evoke race-consciousness to furnish a background for our aspirations, readers for our writers, a clientele for our artists and professional people, and ideals for our future." So long as a black child could "not aspire to be Governor of Massachusetts or President of the United States, like the son of an immigrant, German or Russian, so long will we need race-consciousness."⁵⁶

Race consciousness took various forms. Harrison cited opposition to "Jim Crow," objection to "educational starvation," "racial independence in business," opposition to mimicking "whites," rejection of "our conservative leaders," and "reaching out into new fields of endeavor" as manifestations. The slogan did not mean that blacks "hate white people," he noted, but it did mean "that in sheer self-defense, we too must put race very high on our list of necessities." If such effort had not been made all along, there would have been no "'Negro progress' to boast about" as proof of equal human potential. Black churches, newspapers, life insurance companies, banks, fraternities, colleges, and political appointees all indicated black race consciousness.⁵⁷

Organizing efforts among working people offer a clear example of what Harrison's race-conscious message entailed. Essentially, it was a proactive policy that did not wait for "white" laborers to act in their class interest by struggling against white supremacy. Harrison pointed out that "the black worker was opposed by the general run of white working men, who kept him out of their unions for the most part and yet called him 'scab' for getting their jobs at the only time when those jobs

were available to him." Though he called on black workers to support "the program of the advanced labor movement in this country," he also advocated that African-American workers should—when confronted by racist, exclusionary unions—"Form your own unions." These unions could then "co-operate in every possible way with the white unions," when "allowed that right." He considered this policy not "the best," but "the most helpful."⁵⁸

The strategic importance of this race-conscious message in terms of labor was strikingly revealed in a 1920 review of the labor leader William Z. Foster's *The Great Steel Strike*. After explaining that it was "conceded on all sides that the white organized labor movement has been and still is pronouncedly anti-Negro" Harrison challenged Foster's urging that "the best Negro leaders must join heartily in destroying the pernicious anti-union attitude . . . [that is] so deeply rooted among their people." Harrison countered that "self-respecting Negro leaders [would] abstain from urging the laboring masses of their race to join forces with the stupid and shortsighted labor oligarchy which refuses to join forces with them" and he emphasized that it was a principal duty of whites to oppose racism. He explained that until that was done there would be little prospect for real joint effort—"It is up to the white unions and the American Federation of Labor and the great railroad brotherhoods themselves and not up to the Negro leaders to change this deep seated aversion which American Negroes have for white American labor."⁵⁹

In 1921, in the pages of the *Negro World*, Harrison offered more on the importance to his strategic perspective of both race consciousness by African Americans and "white worker" opposition to racism. After clarifying that the principal enemy of the darker peoples of the world was "capitalist imperialism" and its "economic motive," he explained that "structures of racial self-protec-

tion" were "defensive structures" that arose in response to white "racial solidarity." He emphasized that it was particularly the task of "white" revolutionists to "show their sincerity by first breaking down the exclusion walls of white workingmen before they ask us to demolish our own defensive structures of racial self-protection." The reason was that black race consciousness "arose as a consequence of the former ["white" "racial solidarity"], and the cause should be removed before the consequence can fairly be expected to disappear." He emphasized that those "who will meet us on our common ground will find that we recognize a common enemy ["capitalist imperialism"] in the present world order and are willing to advance to attack it in our joint behalf."⁶⁰

Thus, for Harrison, the key to the class question and to class unity was the breaking down of white racial solidarity and the system of racial oppression. Harrison, the former leading black socialist and a consistent class radical, concluded that in the United States progressives would have to go through race to get to class. Most particularly, as long as white supremacy and racial oppression remained, proponents of working-class struggle would have to fight against them to succeed.

The particular significance of Harrison's call for race consciousness should not be overlooked. The historian Nathan Huggins, in his perceptive study *Harlem Renaissance*, has argued that race consciousness "most likely leads to provincialism," that it can be tied to an identity crisis and to race guilt, and that it is often reflected in a hatred of whites. Yet, in Harrison's case we see something quite different. Rather than a provincial, he was an extremely well-educated (though self-educated) and critically independent intellectual. He had traveled some, he was abreast of domestic and international events, and he was well versed in modern and scientific thought. He was not undergoing an identity

crisis or expressing race guilt; rather, he quite rationally, and in a well-thought-out fashion, was attempting to point a way forward. His analysis was based on his study of society.⁶¹

Rather than moving from a "hate white[s]" analysis, Harrison, an internationalist and a true educator, was approaching the black masses with a call for self- and group awareness and unity with "the darker peoples of the world" and he was urging white workers to fight against white supremacy. Quite simply, he had concluded, after considerable practical experience and intellectual analysis, that as long as the United States remained a white supremacist society a needed and necessary corrective, in the interest of all, was for African Americans to develop race consciousness. In the United States (where a system of racial oppression was central to capitalist rule), to heighten the class struggle people would have to wage struggle against racial oppression and the supremacy of "the white race." In that way, the foremost class-conscious African-American radical led in the advocacy of race consciousness.⁶²

Notes

The themes in this article are treated in greater depth in Jeffrey B. Perry, *Hubert Henry Harrison: "The Father of Harlem Radicalism,"* vol. 1 of 2 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, forthcoming); and in Jeffrey B. Perry, *Hubert Harrison: An Introductory Reader* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, forthcoming). The author expresses his thanks to Aida Harrison Richardson and the late William Harrison for their support and encouragement and to Ernest Allen, Jr., Theodore William Allen, Gene Bruskin, Robert Fitch, Bill Fletcher, Jr., Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Geoffrey Jacques, Portia James, Jack O'Dell, and Michael Spiegel for reading and commenting on material on which this piece is based.

1. J[oe]l A. Rogers, "Hubert Harrison: Intellectual Giant and Free-Lance Educator (1883-1927)," in J[oe]l A. Rogers, *World's Great Men of Color*, edited with an introduction, commentary, and new bibliographical notes by John Henrik Clarke, 2 vols. (1947; New York: Collier Books, 1972), Vol. 2, pp. 432-442, esp. pp. 432-433.

2. Henry Miller, *The Rosy Crucifixion, Book Two: Plexus* (1963; New York: Grove Press, 1965), pp. 560-561.

3. William Pickens, "Hubert Harrison: Philosopher of Harlem," *Amsterdam News*, February 7, 1923, p. 12.

4. Eugene O'Neill to Hubert Harrison (hereafter HH) (June 9, 1921), copy in Hubert Henry Harrison Papers, Correspondence.

5. W. A. Domingo, interview with Theodore Draper, January 18, 1958, New York, Theodore Draper Papers, Robert W. Woodruff Library for Advanced Studies, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, Preliminary listing as Box 20, Folder 7, "Negro Question for Vol. 1 (cont.);" Notes re: W. A. Domingo, 2.

6. Mary Adams, "Record of Revolts in Negro Workers' Past," *Daily Worker*, May 1, 1928.

7. Hodge Kirnon, "Hubert Harrison: An Appreciation," *Negro World*, December 31, 1927.

8. Domingo, interview with Draper, January 18, 1958.

9. Richard B. Moore, "Africa Conscious Harlem," *Freedomways*, Vol. 3, no. 3 (Summer 1963), p. 320.

10. On Harrison as the "Father of Harlem Radicalism," see Roi Ottley and William J. Weatherby, eds., *The Negro in New York: An Informal Social History* (New York: New York Public Library, 1967), p. 223; Jervis Anderson, *A. Philip Randolph: A Biographical Portrait* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), p. 79; Warren J. Halliburton with Ernest Kaiser, *Harlem: A History of Broken Dreams* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1974), p. 45; Helen C. Camp, "Hubert Henry Harrison," in Alden Whitman, ed., *American Reformers: An H. W. Wilson Biographical Dictionary* (Bronx, NY: H. H. Wilson Company, 1985), pp. 406-407; Jeffrey B. Perry, "Hubert Henry Harrison, 'The Father of Harlem Radicalism': The Early Years—1883 Through the Founding of The Liberty League and The Voice in 1917," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1986; Jeffrey B. Perry, "Hubert Henry Harrison," *Encyclopedia of African American History and Culture* (New York: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 1230-1231; Jeffrey B. Perry, "Hubert Henry Harrison," in John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, gen. eds., *American National Biography*, 24 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), vol. 10, pp. 212-214; Perry, *Hubert Henry Harrison*, vol. 1; Robert Hill, "On Collectors, Their Contributions to the Documentation of the Black Past," in Elinor Des Verney Sinnette, W. Paul Coates, and Thomas C. Battle, eds., *Black Bibliophiles and Collectors: Preservers of Black History* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1990), pp. 47-56, esp. p. 47; and Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Verso, 1998), p. 1.

11. Rogers, *World's Great Men of Color*, vol. 2, p. 432; HH, "On a Certain Condescension in White Publishers [Part I]," *Negro World*, Vol. 12, no. 4 (March 4, 1922), p. 7; HH, "No Negro Literary Renaissance,"

Pittsburgh Courier, March 12, 1927, sec. 2, p. 1; HH, "Cabaret School of Negro Writers Does Not Represent One-Tenth of Race," *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 28, 1927, sec. 1, p. 3.

12. Baptism Record of "Hubert Henry [Harrison]," July 7, 1883, in "Baptisms Solemnized During the Years March 3, 1883--October 21, 1899," St. John's Anglican Church, Christiansted, Saint Croix, United States Virgin Islands, p. 9; HH, "Diary," cover; Rogers, *World's Great Men of Color*, vol. 2, p. 433; "Dr. Harrison's Rise as Orator Is Like Fiction: Educator, Writer and Speaker Now Ranks with Best in His Line," *Chicago Defender*, January 19, 1924, pt. 2, p. 1.

13. Daniel Bell, "The Background and Development of Marxian Socialism in the United States," in Donald Drew Egbert and Stow Persons, eds., *Socialism and American Life*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), vol. 1, pp. 213-405, esp. p. 268; Philip S. Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism 1895-1902*, 2 vols. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972); and Rayford W. Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro: From Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson*, New Enlarged Edition, originally published as *The Negro in American Thought and Life: The Nadir, 1877-1901* (1954; New York: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 11, 62.

14. HH, "Diary," May 20, 1908.

15. HH, "Diary," November 25, 1907; Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1957), pp. 118-120; Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971; New York: International Publishers, 1978), pp. 5-11; Manning Marable, *Black Leadership* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 97-101.

16. HH, "Lincoln and Liberty: Fact Versus Fiction (II)," *Negro World*, March 12, 1921; HH, "Lincoln and Liberty: Fact Versus Fiction (III). Lincoln and Republican Party Favor Perpetual Slavery," *Negro World*, March 19, 1921; HH, "The Grand Old Party," *Negro World*, c. July 1920; HH, "When the Tail Wags the Dog," *Negro World*, c. July, 1920. The last two articles are in HH, *When Africa Awakes: The "Inside Story" of the Stirrings and Strivings of the New Negro in the Western World* (New York: Porro Press, 513 Lenox Avenue, 1920), pp. 46-48 and 49-53.

17. HH to the editor, *New York Sun*, December 8, 1910, p. 8, and December 19, 1910, p. 8; Charles W. Anderson to Booker T. Washington (September 10 and October 30, 1911), in Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock, eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, 13 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972-1984), vol. 11, pp. 300-301, 351.

18. HH, "The Negro and Socialism: 1--The Negro Problem Stated," *New York Call*, November 28, 1911, p. 6; HH, "Race Prejudice--II," *New York Call*, December 4, 1911, p. 6; HH, "The Duty of the Socialist Party," *New York Call*, December 13, 1911, p. 6; "How to Do It--and How Not," *New York Call*, December 16, 1911, p. 6; HH,

"Summary and Conclusion," *New York Call*, December 26, 1911, p. 6; HH, "The Black Man's Burden, [I]," *International Socialist Review*, Vol. 12, no. 10 (April 1912), pp. 660-663; HH, "The Black Man's Burden [II]," *International Socialist Review*, Vol. 12, no. 11 (May 1912), pp. 762-764; HH, "Socialism and the Negro," *International Socialist Review*, Vol. 13, no. 1 (July 1912), pp. 65-68; W.E.B. Du Bois, "Socialism and the Negro Problem," *New Review*, Vol. 1, no. 5 (February 1, 1913), pp. 138-141, quote p. 140.

19. HH, "Southern Socialists and the Ku Klux Klan," c. 1914, HH Papers, Writings, reported in *Negro World*, January 8, 1921, copy in HH Papers, Scrapbook 33; HH, "Race First Versus Class First," *Negro World*, March 27, 1920; HH, "An Open Letter to the Socialist Party of New York City," *Negro World*, May 8, 1920.

20. HH, "Diary," September 28, 1914.

21. "The Reminiscences of A. Philip Randolph," interview with Wendell Wray, July 25, 1972, p. 152, in Oral History Project, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York; Lester A. Walton, "Street Speaker Heralds Spring in Harlem," *New York World*, March 23, 1928, p. 17; Hill, "On Collectors," p. 47; and Theodore G. Vincent, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement* (San Francisco: Ramparts Press, 1972), p. 137.

22. HH, "Introductory," in HH, *When Africa Awakes*, pp. 5-8. Harrison is considered "the originator [among African Americans] of the 'race first' concept," which he said derived from "the American doctrine of 'Race First.'" See HH, *The Negro and the Nation* (New York: Cosmo-Advocate Publishing Co., 2305 Seventh Avenue, 1917), p. 3 n; Robert A. Hill, "Introduction: Racial and Radical: Cyril V. Briggs, *The Crusader* Magazine, and the African Blood Brotherhood, 1918-1922," in *The Crusader*, 6 vols. (New York: Garland, 1987), vol. 1, p. lviii, n. 122; [HH], "Program and Principles of the International Colored Unity League," *Voice of the Negro*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (April 1927), pp. 4-6; and Hodge Kirmon, "Hubert Harrison," *Negro World*, December 31, 1927.

23. HH, "Negro Society and the Negro Stage, Preamble [Parts 1 and 2]," c. July 1915, HH Papers, Writings.

24. In 1916 Harrison began speaking of a "New Negro Manhood Movement." By 1917 he spoke also of a "New Negro Movement," and over the years he and others would use both phrases, with "New Negro Movement" coming to predominate.

25. HH, "As the Currents Flow," *New Negro*, Vol. 3, no. 7 (August 1919), pp. 3-4; Nathan I. Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 53-59; Anselmo Jackson, "An Analysis of the Black Star Line," *Emancipator*, March 27, 1920, p. 2; and William H. Ferris, "The Spectacular Career of Garvey," *Amsterdam News*, February 11, 1925, pt. 2, sec. 2, p. 9. Alain Leroy Locke served as special editor for the March 1925 *Survey Graphic* (subtitled *Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro*), which included a wide variety of articles, stories, and poems by prominent black writers. Eight months later he brought out *The New Negro* (1925;

Black Culture and the Harlem Renaissance (Houston, TX: Rice University Press, 1988), p. 3, writes that Harlem "symbolized the central experience of American blacks in the early twentieth century—the urbanization of black America."

43. Rogers, *World's Great Men of Color*, vol. 2, pp. 433, 437; State of New York, Department of Health of the City of New York, Standard Certificate of Death, December 17, 1927, Register No. 28066; "Harlem Community Church Renamed in Honor of the Late Hubert Harrison," *New York Age*, May 12, 1928; "New Exhibition is Opened at 135th St. Public Library," *Harlem Home News*, May 13, 1925, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, SC Micro R-707, reel 6, Harlem, vol. 1. "Hubert Harrison's Portrait in Library," *Amsterdam News*, September 10, 1930. The Hubert Harrison Memorial Church, headed by Rev. E. Ethelred Brown, was located at 149 West 136th Street. See "Lament Dream of Dr. Hubert Harrison: Eulogized by Several Who Knew His Life and Work," *Amsterdam News*, December 28, 1927, p. 1.

44. Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner*, p. 123, writes that "Seldom has a person been so influential, esteemed, even revered in one period of history and so thoroughly unremembered in the space of a generation." James accurately concludes that Harrison "deserves better than that."

45. As the historian Tony Martin, *Race First*, p. 360, has correctly pointed out, "for two decades or so after his death [in 1940] Garvey was all but relegated to the position of an unperson" as "Afro-American, West Indian and African history books, with few exceptions, failed to mention him or glossed over his career in embarrassed and contemptuous haste." It was only with "the Black Power revolution of the 1960s" that the race activist Garvey received renewed recognition.

46. HH, "To the Young Men of My Race," *Voice*, January 1919, reprinted in HH, *When Africa Awakes*, pp. 91–95; Rogers, *World's Great Men of Color*, vol. 2, p. 439. Baal, a God of the Canaanites often represented by a calf, was considered a false God by the Israelites; see Hosea 13:1.

47. HH, "The Negro a Conservative," *Truth Seeker*, Vol. 41, no. 37 (September 12, 1914), p. 583; Rogers, *World's Great Men of Color*, vol. 2, p. 439.

48. Hodge Kirnon, "Kirnon Flays Monthly Magazines," letter to the editor [February 17], *New York News*, February 28, 1928, HH Papers, Miscellany. Interestingly, Harrison had recently (1926) been engaged by the Urban League as promoter of publicity in Harlem.

49. The journalist Cleveland G. Allen wrote that Harrison "was a great scholar, and his scholarship and attainments were used unselfishly for the good of others. . . . He was the Socrates of his day, and one of the Prophets of his age." Cleveland G. Allen to Mrs. [Irene] Harrison, 1927, HH Papers, Correspondence. See also Oscar Benson, "Literary Genius of Hubert Harrison," *New York News*, December 24, 1927; Claude McKay, *A*

Long Way from Home: An Autobiography (1937; New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970), pp. 41–42; and John G. Jackson, *Hubert Henry Harrison: The Black Socrates* (Austin, TX: American Atheist Press, 1987).

50. Rogers, *World's Great Men of Color*, vol. 2, p. 432; "Hubert H. Harrison!" *Pittsburgh Courier*, December 31, 1927, sec. 2, p. 8; and Portia P. James, "As Far as Thought Can Reach: Hubert Harrison and the New Negro Movement," unpublished manuscript, 1989, possession of author.

51. Theodore Allen in "The Most Vulnerable Point," n.p., October 1972, p. 4, elaborates the position that "the principal aspect of United States capitalist society is not merely bourgeois domination, but bourgeois white-supremacist domination." He discusses the origins of the system of racial oppression and its centrality to class rule in the United States in Theodore William Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, 2 vols. (New York: Verso, 1994 and 1997), vol. 1, pp. 32–35, 143–150, and vol. 2, pp. 221–222 and 239–259.

52. Ernest Allen, Jr., "The New Negro: Exploration in Identity and Social Consciousness, 1910–1922," in Adele Heller and Lois Rudnick, eds., 1915, *The Cultural Moment: The New Politics, the New Woman, the New Psychology, the New Art & the New Theatre in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), pp. 48–68, quote p. 58.

53. HH, "Race Consciousness."

54. Though Harrison referred to race as a "shifting reality" (HH, "The Brown Man Leads the Way: A Review of *The New World of Islam* by Lothrop Stoddard [concluding part]," *Negro World*, November 5, 1921, p. 5), he seemed to move between biological and social-historical understandings of the concept, most often leaning toward the sociohistorical.

55. Aida Harrison Richardson and William Harrison, interview with author, August 4, 1983, New York City.

56. [HH], "The Need for It"; and HH, "Race Consciousness."

57. [HH], "The Need for It"; and HH, "Race Consciousness."

58. HH, "The Negro and the Labor Unions," in HH, *When Africa Awakes*, p. 21; "Negroes Meet Today to Seek Tulsa Redress: Hubert Harrison of Colored Liberty League Wires Oklahoma Gov. to Punish Responsible Whites," *New York Call*, June 5, 1921, pp. 1, 2.

59. HH, "The Negro in Industry," review of *The Great Steel Strike and Its Lessons* by William Z. Foster, *Negro World*, Vol. 9 (August 21, 1920), p. 2; and William Z. Foster, *The Great Steel Strike and Its Lessons* (New York: B. W. Heusch, 1920).

60. HH, "Wanted—A Colored International," *Negro World*, May 28, 1921.

61. Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*, pp. 8–9, 49, 307–308.

62. HH, "Race First Versus Class First," *Negro World*, March 27, 1920.