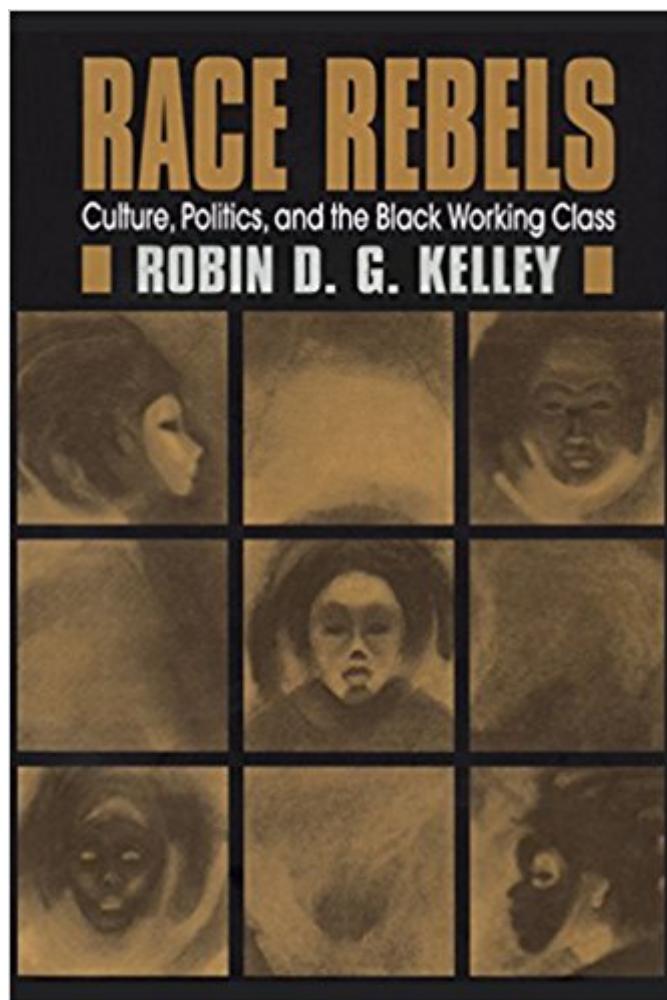


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Race Rebels : Culture, Politics, And The Black Working Class



Synopsis

Robin D. G. Kelley is professor of history and Africana studies at New York University and author of Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression (1990).

Book Information

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Have you ever, when reading something, seen a reference to another book that makes you want to read it? Then when you get around to reading it, you realize that, with the first reference, you learned everything you wanted to know about the book? That was my experience with this book. I don't even remember where I read a reference to Robin D.G. Kelley's Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class, but I know my life would not be less rich had I not read it. This is not to say it's a bad book. It's a book that serves a function, fills a niche. Kelley writes as an academic (professor of history and Africana studies at NYU at the time of publication, now professor of American studies and ethnicity and history at USC), so the book is heavy on documentation and light on readability. (For 227 pages of text, there are 65 pages of end notes, a 37 page bibliography, and a 15 page index. But who's counting.) With that tone and purpose in mind, the reader can still glean an interesting take on civil rights and black history in the U.S. In a relatively small space, Kelley covers a lot of ground. I enjoyed his recounting of, in a sense, the underbelly of the civil rights movement. We all know about Martin Luther King, the march on Washington, and the high-profile civil rights leaders. Kelley reveals the under-the-radar civil rights movement. Many workers, whether domestics, dock workers, field workers, etc., performed their own small acts of workplace rebellion,

including industrial sabotage, workplace theft, and simple loafing. By doing so, they claimed ownership of their own time and persons, rejecting the role of slave.

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