



Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000

By Adam Fairclough

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From the end of postwar Reconstruction in the South to an analysis of the rise and fall of Black Power, acclaimed historian Adam Fairclough presents a straightforward synthesis of the century-long struggle of black Americans to achieve civil rights and equality in the United States. Beginning with Ida B. Wells and the campaign against lynching in the 1890s, Fairclough chronicles the tradition of protest that led to the formation of the NAACP, Booker T. Washington and the strategy of accommodation, Marcus Garvey and the push for black nationalism, through to Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and beyond. Throughout, Fairclough presents a judicious interpretation of historical events that balances the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement against the persistence of racial and economic inequalities.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Fairclough (To Redeem the Soul of America; Martin Luther King, Jr.), who teaches American history at the University of East Anglia, aims to present "an interpretation of the black struggle for equality in the United States between 1890 and 2000, concentrating on the South." The first half of the book covers 1890 to 1919, with sketches of such individuals as Ida B. Wells, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey. Quickly reviewing major events (e.g., the Great Migration, the Scottsboro affair), Fairclough guides readers through the 1910s, '20s and '30s, examining the failure of Garvey's black nationalism and recognizing the role of the Communist Party in fighting racism. After that, the book addresses a range of topics: education, employment, World War II, anti-communism, *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Montgomery bus boycott, the sit-ins, the 1965 Los Angeles riots and the Poor People's Campaign. He also analyzes the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr., and the effects of the Black Power movement on the struggle for black civil rights. The final chapter, despite the subtitle's promise, skims over the remaining decades of the century. An easy read that relies heavily on secondary sources, this work may disappoint serious students of African-American history with its cursory treatment of some material. Still, Fairclough's approach will probably suit his intended audience, "the general reader... who may have little or no knowledge about the history of race relations since the American Civil War."

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From Library Journal

Fairclough (To Redeem the Soul of America), who teaches American history at the University of East Anglia (U.K.), has written an overview of the American civil rights movement from the turn of the 19th century to the present. Intended specifically for the general reader, the book covers the major aspects of the black struggle for equality, although it slights the Harlem Renaissance and devotes only one brief chapter to the period since 1968. The author argues that this struggle featured conflict and interplay among three models of action-accommodation, confrontation, and separatism. Although it adds little to what experts in the field already know, this well-written work is a fine general introduction to the topic. Recommended especially for public libraries. A.O. Edmonds, Ball State Univ., Muncie, IN

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From [Booklist](#)

Fairclough, a history professor in England, offers an excellent overview of the historical events that built the modern civil rights movement in the U.S., from the post-Reconstruction era to the present. He starts with the antilynching campaign of Ida B. Wells and then explores the often examined struggle for national leadership between the accommodationist Booker T. Washington and the integrationist W. E. B. DuBois. Fairclough offers insights into Washington's controversial but effective strategic position. He explores the establishment of the NAACP and the cultural disruption over segregation in the South when the NAACP mounted legal challenges to legalized white supremacy prior to and during World War II. The author traces the conflicts between violent and nonviolent strategies during the 1960s, when a new breed of Black Power advocates evolved from the movement made famous by pacifist Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Fairclough includes the lesser-known players in the civil rights struggle, from the black women's clubs that supported the movement to the Communist Party's role in the Scottsboro case that integrated street activism with litigation. *Vernon Ford*

Users Review

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