Book Reviews

Paul Ortiz. *An African American and Latinx History of the United States*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2018. Pp. 286. Paper. $15.99.

Historian and veteran Paul Ortiz, Professor at the University of Florida and Director of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, re-frames familiar narratives from U.S. history in his most recent work. Centering around the experiences of black and brown Americans, Ortiz argues that we gain a more informed understanding of U.S. history by exploring the lives and actions of these groups during pivotal moments. In lieu of traditional perceptions that focus on the U.S. state, businesses, and powerful socio-political groups, Ortiz re-examines American history from a perspective that focuses not just on ethnicity and race but also on workers and intersectional solidarity. The text's organization and analysis concentrate on a broad view of U.S. history, synthesizing the intertwining histories of the Caribbean and Latin America. The United States itself is essentially responsible for the interactions, bonds, and influences that each of these histories have with one another.

Ortiz condenses U.S. history into eight chapters, with each section covering distinct chronological eras. Early chapters anchor U.S. history through familiar events, such as the American Revolution to often neglected but pivotal events such as the Haitian revolution in the early 1800s. Other sections include new critical narratives and analysis surrounding early U.S. ventures in foreign policy and imperialist expansion (both westward on the continental United States as well as south towards the Caribbean and Latin America). This brings up one of the more important and recurring themes in the text, which was the interactions, solidarity, and awareness that linked black and brown communities in the United States as well as those who lived outside of the empire's borders. Ortiz examines black and brown American resistance and labor unrest throughout the 20th century, as well as related social justice movements in the second half of the 20th century that acted

as a response to the nation's policy at home and abroad. The later chapters emphasize the importance of black and brown American resistance against the usually 'passive' or 'inevitable' presentation of American historical events. The evidenciary base for these chapters centers information gleaned from the lives of labor organizers, local/regional communities, workers, and social justice movements—via private letters, correspondences, newspapers, and organizational (business and union) documents. The narrative presents an alternative analysis of significant periods and events in U.S. history that is often neglected or relegated to the margins.

Ortiz's book, like that of similar texts by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Michael Bronski, and of course Howard Zinn, helps flesh out typical presentations of U.S. history taught in the K-12 system and at the university level, including significant and neglected input from marginalized groups that have also helped to create and progress American history. Most important, however, is the book's dedication to challenging traditional narratives and conceptions about U.S. history–a natural consequence of the historical evidence raised and examined in this book as well as in similarly themed *People's History of the United States* books. In that vein, it is important to note that these books do not present themselves as replacements for traditional U.S. history textbooks for students, but instead find valuable service as supplementary resources for students of U.S. history that wish to correct the sometimes-misleading narratives presented within these. Ortiz offers vital context to general historical information and allows for much needed and deeper analysis of marginalized and working-class Americans.

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