



Charles S. Johnson: Leadership beyond the Veil in the Age of Jim Crow

Patrick J. Gilpin, Marybeth Gasman

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A compelling biography of a key figure of the Harlem Renaissance, an eminent Chicago-trained sociologist, and a pioneering race relations leader.

The milestones for blacks in twentieth-century America—the Harlem Renaissance, the struggle for equal education, and the civil rights movement—would have been inconceivable without the contributions of one important but often overlooked figure, Charles S. Johnson (1893–1956). This compelling biography demonstrates the scope of his achievements, situates him among other black intellectuals of his time, and casts new light on a pivotal era in the struggle for black equality in America.

An impresario of Harlem Renaissance culture, an eminent Chicago-trained sociologist, a pioneering race relations leader, and an educator of the generation that freed itself from legalized segregation, Johnson was a visionary who linked the everyday struggles of blacks with the larger intellectual and political currents of the day. His distinguished career included twenty-eight years at Fisk University, where he established the famed Race Relations Institute and became Fisk's first black president.

“This study goes a long way toward supporting the possibility suggested by the authors that Charles S. Johnson may yet be recognized among the great leaders of the first half of the twentieth century who prepared the way for greater racial equality in the second half and beyond.” — *The Journal of Southern History*

“...a book that is long overdue ... Gilpin and Gasman do a commendable job in documenting the distinguished career of a man whose work as a Harlem Renaissance entrepreneur, though laudable, was eclipsed by over a quarter century of dedication to the cause of bettering the condition of African Americans and oppressed minorities worldwide.” — *Rudolph Fisher Newsletter*

“...a carefully balanced reconstruction of Johnson’s varied achievements as social scientist, educator, sidelines activist, and arts advocate ... this study of leadership 'beyond the veil' in the age of Jim Crow provides a sound and serviceable entrée into a Du Boisian terrain of heretofore sketchily traced black intellectual action and aspiration.” — John S. Wright, *Journal of American History*

“...an uncommonly good biography of an often-neglected African American leader during the era of Jim Crow. Written with vigor and skill, Gilpin and Gasman present a warm and positive portrait of Johnson that is neither uncritical nor apologetic ... Specialists and the general reader will find much of interest in it.” — *University Faculty Voice*

“It seems almost inexplicable that the national and international prominence enjoyed by Johnson at the time of his death is only now receiving the well-considered appreciation of Patrick J. Gilpin and Marybeth Gasman's comprehensive biography.” — from the Foreword by David Levering Lewis, Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer of W. E. B. Du Bois

"Gilpin and Gasman have captured the essence of this formal, private, enigmatic man's work and put it in the context of his times—the tumultuous decades leading up to *Brown v. Board of Education* and the civil rights movement. This is a welcome and long-overdue addition to the canon of American civil rights history." — John Egerton, author of *Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement in the South*

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