

In Print

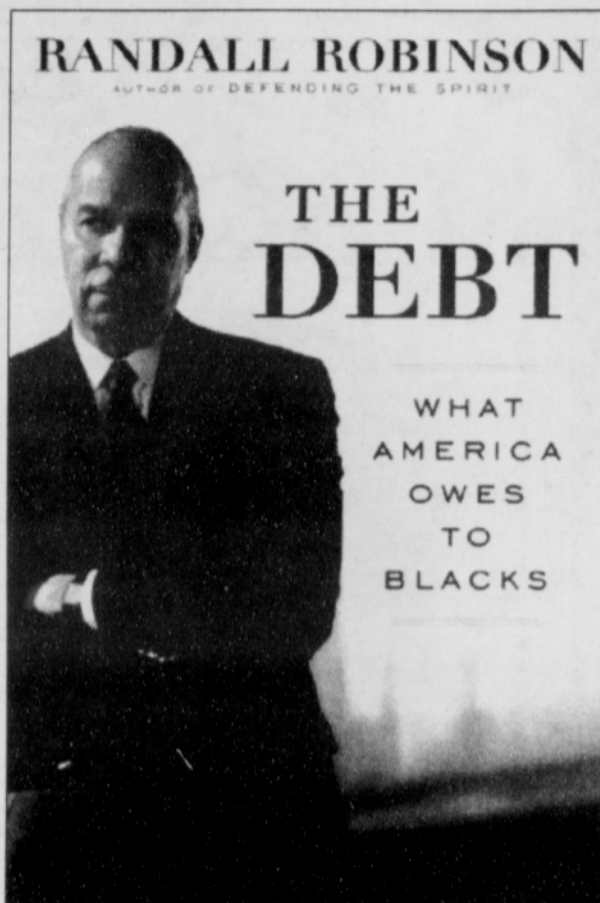
The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks

By Randall Robinson

The Dutton Book; January 2000

In this powerful and controversial book, Randall Robinson, one of our most distinguished African American political leaders, makes a case for the enormous debt America owes to Africans and African Americans for the incalculable damage blacks have suffered and continue to suffer as a result of nearly two hundred and fifty years of slavery and segregation.

Well over a century after the end of slavery, black Americans are still poorer, less educated, and earning less than their white counterparts. Statistics reveal that they lag behind whites in nearly every area of mainstream American life. In Robinson's view, this great divide cannot be bridged, or our racial problems solved, until two things happen: America must accept responsibility for the grievous wrong that has been committed



against Africans and African Americans, and take steps to redress that wrong; and black Americans need to arm themselves with a more comprehensive awareness of their ancient history and fuller recognition of their ongoing contribution to our nation of the world.

Drawing from historical research as well as personal experience, Robinson shows that only by reclaiming their lost past and proud heritage can blacks begin to lay the foundation for a viable future. And white Americans can begin making reparations for slavery and the world.

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reclaiming their lost past and proud heritage can blacks begin to lay the foundation for a viable future. And white Americans can begin making reparations for slavery and the century for de jure racial discrimination that followed with monetary restitution, educational programs, and the kinds of equal opportunities that will ensure the social and economic success of all its citizens.

A book that is both unflinching in its indictment of past wrongs and an impassioned call to our nation to educate all Americans – black and white alike – about the history of Africa and its people, *The Debt* tell us, in no uncertain terms, what white America owes blacks and what blacks owe themselves.

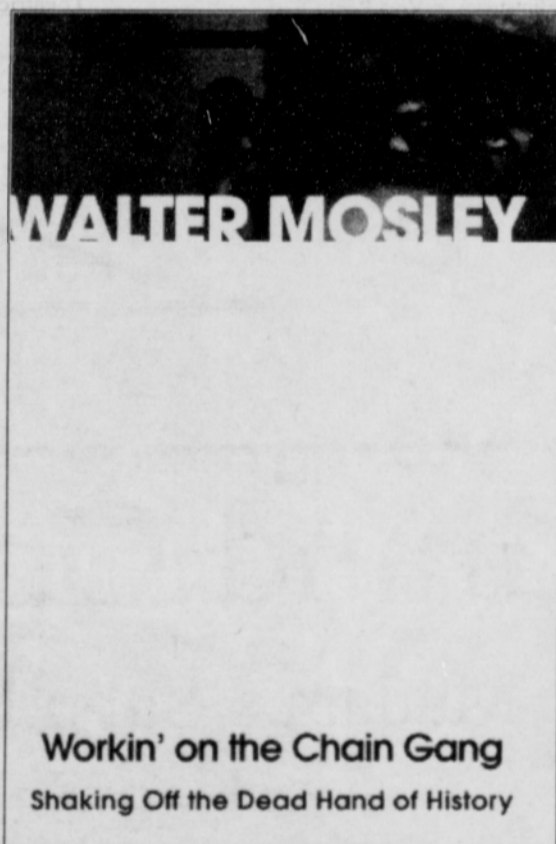
Workin' on the Chain Gang: Shaking Off the Dead Hand of History

Book Review by Jay Thiemeyer

By Walter Mosley

The Library of Contemporary Thought; 2000

Walter Moseley, author of the Easy Rawlins series, here addresses the barbarity of the American Machine, and argues for a way out from under the 'dead hand of history.' The things that he decries are well-known to us, they are the common places of our daily lives, but as with any good sermon, his recitation carries us and compels us. We cannot continue to overlook what is within our abilities to change. "The lack of moral responsibility and leadership in the world is appalling." What keeps us from taking over the responsibility ourselves? "We've been drugged and chained (by money, the 'super drug') and made into property," explains Moseley. The corporations regard us as commodities and we accept it. Moseley's essay has the simple purpose of trying to get us to see around the brightness meant to blind us to the choices. "Pursuit of the profit margin," he says, "is just that – marginalization." A footnote reads: "The introduction of private prisons comes dangerously close to the reinstatement of slavery... When you add the selling of prison labor



to private business you have pushed America to a consciousness that predates the Civil War. The bleak reality of the new millennium requires a change in consciousness, a new pair of glasses, to see our choices and seize them." The bleak reality of the new millennium requires a change in consciousness, a new pair of glasses, to see our choices and seize them. "The goals

of revolution are realized by personal enlightenment. Don't buy someone else's list; don't clip one from the newspaper... What you need is missing from the World." Not original, Moseley grants, but a terrible reality which calls for action. "The number of people it takes to make change is actually quite small." The reader could be, should be, one.

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