



Soul Rebels: The Rastafari

William F. Lewis

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. . . a cult, a deviant subculture, a revolutionary movement . . . these descriptions have been commonly used in the past to identify the Rastafari, a group perhaps best known to North American readers for their gift of reggae music to the world. With both compassion and a sharp sense of reality, anthropologist William Lewis suggests alternative perspectives and reviews existing social theories as he reports on the diverse world of the ganja-smoking Rastafari culture. He carefully examines this culture in its confrontations with the law, its growing ambivalence about itself as well as the continued conflict between many Rasta and contemporary middle-class values. Characterized by rich ethnographic detail, an engaging writing style, and thoughtful commentary, *Soul Rebels* uncovers the complex inner workings of the Rasta movement and offers a critical analysis of the meaning of Rastafari commitment and struggles. *Soul Rebels* offers a solid historical overview of the movement, an excellent picture of diversity within the faith, fair and accurate discussions of sexism among the Rasta, engaging life history material, and rich descriptions of what actually goes on in a “reasoning” session. Lewis’s treatment of Rastafari populations in a Jamaican fishing village, an Ethiopian market town, and an urban neighborhood in the northeastern United States sets his ethnography in the cross-cultural and comparative framework central to anthropological analysis.

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