



Rastafari: From Outcasts to Cultural Bearers

Ennis Barrington Edmonds

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Once an obscure group of outcasts from the ghettos of West Kingston, Jamaica, the Rastafarians have transformed themselves into a vibrant movement, firmly grounded in Jamaican society and beyond. In *Rastafari*, Ennis Barrington Edmonds provides a compelling portrait of the Rastafarian phenomenon and chronicles how this group, much maligned and persecuted, became a dominant cultural force in the world today. Edmonds charts the evolution of the relationship between Rastafari and the wider Jamaican society, from confrontation and repression to grudging tolerance and eventually to cultural integration. Edmonds focuses in particular on the internal development of Rastafarianism as a social movement, with its network of "houses" (small, informal groups that form around leading Rastas) and "mansions" (larger, more communal associations), to track the process of this strikingly successful integration. He further demonstrates how Rastafarian artistic creativity, especially in fashioning the music and message of reggae, was a significant factor in the transition of Rastas from the status of outcasts to the position of cultural bearers.

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