

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS HERBERT M. HILL (1924-2004)

After a long illness, Professor Emeritus Herbert Hill died in Madison, Wisconsin on August 15, 2004 at the age of eighty. A native of New York City, Professor Hill earned a B.A. in 1945 from New York University. Subsequently he attended the New School for Social Research from 1946-48 where he studied with Hannah Arendt of the Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science.

In 1948 Hill joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) where he served as National Labor Director for the next thirty years. During that time, he challenged the labor movement to live up to its racially egalitarian rhetoric through organizing and participating in fair employment demonstrations at construction sites around the country. He coined the slogan "If we don't work, nobody works!" His leadership so angered powerful labor unions that they threatened to withhold their financial support from the NAACP unless he was fired. Fortunately, Roy Wilkins, executive director of the organization, supported his efforts and he maintained his position. In addition, he became a special consultant to the United Nations and to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. He testified before numerous state and federal legislative committees, and as an expert witness in a variety of court cases centering on labor issues and employment discrimination.

In 1977 Hill joined the Afro-American Studies Department and the Industrial Relations Program at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Professor Hill brought visibility and stability to the still young department as well as a unique mix of social and legal activism into the classroom, and to his scholarly publications. He was renowned for scholarly debates with labor historian Herbert Gutman. Those debates reshaped the study of U.S. labor history with Hill arguing vigorously and, in the end, persuasively that labor historians had tended to whitewash racism among white workers and labor unions, and overlook what W.E.B. DuBois called the 'psychological wage' that whiteness paid white workers, even when their material interests overlapped with African Americans. A subsequent generation of labor historians, with a keener sensitivity to racial matters, continues to hail Herbert Hill's landmark influence.

He was a prolific scholar who set a high standard with over 100 articles published in journals, newspapers and edited anthologies. One of his colleagues in Afro-American Studies observed that he was particularly impressed by Hill's ability to fuse a densely-detailed copiously-documented writing style with a hard hitting journalistic thrust. Professor Hill's books included:

Citizens Guide to Desegregation: A Study of Social and Legal Change in American Life with Jack Greenberg, 1955.

Soon one Morning: New Writing by Black Americans edited with an introduction and notes, 1963.

Anger and Beyond: The Negro Writer in the United States also edited and with an introduction and notes, 1966.

Employment, Race and Poverty edited with Arthur M. Ross, 1967.

Black Labor and the American Legal System 1977.

Race in America and the Struggle for Equality edited with James E. Jones Jr., 1993 which was a recipient of a Gustavus Myer Award.

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