



## Paul Robeson: A Biography

Martin Duberman

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The remarkable life of Paul Robeson, quintessential Harlem Renaissance man: scholar, all-American, actor, activist, and firebrand

Born the son of an ex-slave in New Jersey in 1898, Paul Robeson, endowed with multiple gifts, seemed destined for fame. In his youth, he was as tenacious in the classroom as he was on the football field. After graduating from Rutgers with high honors, he went on to earn a law degree at Columbia. Soon after, he began a stage and film career that made him one of the country's most celebrated figures.

But it was not to last. Robeson became increasingly vocal about defending black civil rights and criticizing Western imperialism, and his radical views ran counter to the country's evermore conservative posture. During the McCarthy period, Robeson's passport was lifted, he was denounced as a traitor, and his career was destroyed. Yet he refused to bow. His powerful and tragic story is emblematic of the major themes of twentieth-century history.

Martin Duberman's exhaustive biography is the result of years of research and interviews, and paints a portrait worthy of its incredible subject and his improbable story. Duberman uses primary documents to take us deep into Robeson's life, giving Robeson the due that he so richly deserves.



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