“[F]or the Rights of Dark People in Every Part of the World”: Pearl Sherrod, Black Internationalist Feminism, and Afro-Asian Politics during the 1930s

Keisha N. Blain

Abstract

This article explores the political ideas and activism of Pearl Sherrod, an African American woman who became a leader of the Development of Our Own (TDOO), a Detroit-based antiracist political movement that sought to unite African Americans with people of color in Asia during the Great Depression. It demonstrates how Sherrod articulated “black internationalist feminism” by maintaining a commitment to building transnational and transracial political alliances while advancing a feminist agenda. By excavating Sherrod’s life, this article highlights the key role a nonstate female actor played in shaping black internationalist movements during a global economic crisis and within a climate of government repression and censorship.

Keywords: Black internationalism, black radicalism, Afro-Asian solidarity