



Mary Parker Follett Prophet of Management

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Though Mary Parker Follett died in 1933, her philosophy of business organization and management is echoed in companies today where quality circles employee empowerment, and more horizontal organizational structures built on networks and relationships have been adopted with impressive results. Ahead of her time in the 1920s and 1930s, Follett was a political scientist, social work pioneer, speaker, and advisor to leaders concerned with labor-management relations on both sides of the Atlantic. Her advocacy of conflict as a constructive and creative means of problem solving and her general criticism of strict hierarchical structures in business organizations ran counter to the administrative dictates of the post-World War II era. Accordingly, her insights were neglected in the years following her death, and much of her work fell out of print. In *Mary Parker Follett - Prophet of Management*, editor Pauline Graham presents a selection of Follett's remarkable writings, culled from all her work, including her lectures. These, delivered between 1925 and 1933, provide a fascinating perspective on critical management topics that have continued relevance for managers today: conflict, power, authority, leadership, control, the role of the individual in the group, and the place of business in society. This collection brings together an eminent group of management experts from four continents and two generations who celebrate their own good fortune in having encountered Mary Parker Follett in the decades when her work was uncovered primarily through library research. Commentaries by Warren Bennis, John Child, Angela Dumas, Tokihiko Enomoto, Henry Mintzberg, Nitin Nohria, and Sir Peter Parker accompany Follett's own words. Their reflections underscore the contemporary significance of Follett's ideas and testify to the excitement of discovering eloquence and truth in the observations of a brilliant thinker who continues to lead the way in her espousal of business as a social in



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