

*Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom.* By Keisha N. Blain. (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. 264 pp.)

Keisha N. Blain's *Set the World on Fire* is among a growing body of groundbreaking books about Black nationalism in the twentieth century. In her work, Blain successfully argues that women leaders of some of the period's more consequential organizations—the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the Peace Movement of Ethiopia (PME)—were responsible for maintaining and expanding Black nationalist sentiment in the African diaspora from the mid-1920s through the 1950s.

When the UNIA's charismatic leader Marcus Garvey was convicted in the United States of mail fraud and deported to Jamaica, the organization kept pushing forward due to the vision and work of two powerful leaders: Amy Jacques Garvey and Amy Ashwood Garvey. Married to the UNIA leader at different times, both women carried on the Black nationalist mission of "advocat[ing] Pan-African unity, African redemption from European colonization, racial separatism, black pride, political self-determination, and economic self-sufficiency" (p. 3). Blain's textured stories of how these women created their own spheres of influence in the African diaspora (England and Jamaica) reveal their effective politicking and organizing to aid Afro-descended people to free themselves from global white supremacy. Blain excavates more ground on Black nationalism by detailing the history of the PME and its founder, Mittie Maude Lena Gordon. A former UNIA member, Gordon was a central actor in expanding the back-to-Africa movement in the United States.

As a group, these nationalists engaged in political organizing that was grounded in a political philosophy that emphasized women's rightful role, as women, in advancing Black liberation. Blain describes this as "proto-feminism" and readers will have to consider its limitations in freeing the female half of the African diaspora. This is because Black nationalism is inherently patriarchal (as are all nationalisms) and so these women's vision for how to free all Black people was going to be limited by sexist cultural norms that maintained distinct roles and expectations for men and women. Another important component to these women's nationalist philosophy was their "civilizationist" attitude that Africans had to be elevated by Black people of the diaspora (p. 107). This, along with their monolithic view of Africa in which they ignored the complexity of the continent, with its hundreds of

ethnic groups and their histories and cultures, demonstrate just how “Western” these nationalists’ thinking was.

One of the book’s many strengths is its focus on Black nationalist women’s grassroots organizing in the southern United States, which adds an important layer to the region’s Black Liberation Movement history. Additionally, Blain effectively incorporates poetry and letters to editors written by readers of various Black nationalist publications, and the result is a book with an artistic feel that brings to life Black nationalists’ thoughts and feelings about Africa as the place where all Afro-descended people could start anew. Engagingly written and oftentimes eye-opening because of the facts and stories she shares, Blain’s book is an excellent example of the type of scholarship that re-envision a subject so that its actors and their intellectual and political histories may be more fully understood.

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*Aloha Rodeo: Three Hawaiian Cowboys, the World’s Greatest Rodeo, and a Hidden History of the American West.* By David Wolman and Julian Smith. (New York, William Morrow, 2019. 256 pp.)

*Aloha Rodeo* is a colorful and historical description of the life of the Hawaiian cowboys—the paniolos—that grew out of the Hawaiian cattle industry, specifically on the Parker Ranch on Hawai‘i’s Big Island at the turn of the century. The paniolos [from the word espanol (p. 39)] had been trained by vaqueros [from Spanish vaca (cow) and querer (to love) (p. 35)], the cow punchers from California. The “rodeos” developed from the Spanish word for “roundups” where cattle were branded. Captain George Vancouver had introduced the first cattle into King Kamehameha’s Hawai‘i in 1793 thus predating the cattle culture on the U.S. mainland. John Palmer Parker came to Hawai‘i from Massachusetts around 1809 and married one of Kamehameha I’s granddaughters, Chiefess Kipikane. Parker was given land on the Big Island and hired by the Hawaiian Kings to hunt and thin the herds of feral cattle that had resulted when strays multiplied in the Big Island’s mountains and become dangerous to the local population. Parker became the largest land owner on Hawai‘i Island and made his fortune selling salted beef in Waimea to provision whalers and shipping live cattle to Honolulu and across the Pacific. *Aloha Rodeo* relates how Parker Ranch expanded as its cattle were driven into the sea at Kawaihae, hauled into small boats, and carried to ships