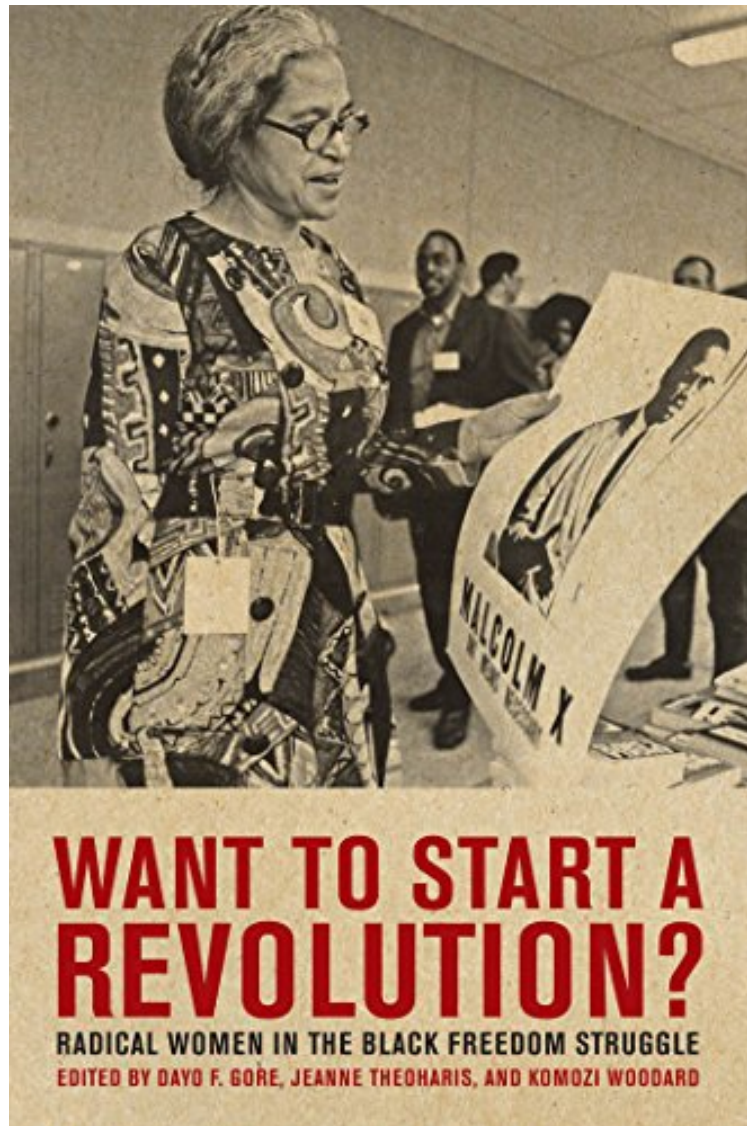


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## Want to Start a Revolution?: Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle

*Jeanne Theoharis, Komozi Woodard*  
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**Jeanne Theoharis, Komozi Woodard : Want to Start a Revolution?: Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Want to Start a Revolution?: Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle*:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. revolution started By Michael West *WANT TO START A REVOLUTION?* is a major intervention in the literature on the black freedom struggle in the United States. It aims at

nothing less than a re-envisioning of African American radicalism, which it does by placing women at the core of the struggle in the 20th century. The volume reveals women at work across time and space and in numerous movements and settings. It shows, too, incredible political transgression--that is, the ease and abandon with which women in struggle moved across organizational, ideological and other boundaries that were supposed to be fixed and impenetrable. In this volume, such transgressions are encountered from beginning to end. Consider Esther Cooper Jackson, the subject of the first chapter. Middle-class in background, she encountered the communist movement as a graduate student at Fisk University before ending up at Freedomways magazine, from which podium she powerfully mediated the inter-connections and inter-locutions between multiple traditions in the black freedom struggle. Consider, too, Johnnie Tillmon, whose story is told in the last chapter of the volume. Descended from sharecroppers, her political career demonstrated the suppleness and power of Black Power, which previously took a drubbing from scholars for allegedly mashing up the Civil Rights movement. *WANT TO START A REVOLUTION*, along with a number of other recent works, definitively refutes and corrects such fallacies, and indeed shows that there were no inseparable lines between Civil Rights and Black Power. This verity is well exemplified in the life and labor of Johnnie Tillmon, in whose hands Black Power became an ideology for defending poor single mothers and welfare recipients like herself. Organizationally, the result was the militant National Welfare Rights Organization. Between Cooper and Tillmon, *WANT TO START A REVOLUTION* presents a cast of equally fascinating activists (Vicki Garvin, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Rosa Parks, Assata Shakur, Flo Kennedy, Shirley Chisholm, Denise Oliver and Yuri Kochiyama, among them) and movements (the Panthers' Oakland Community School, the Young Lords, and Atlanta's Black Arts scene, among them). Vicki Garvin probably summed it up best. "While I was a pan-Africanist, I was a proletarian, working class, internationalist," she is quoted as saying in the chapter on her. She failed to add that she was also a feminist, but perhaps that went without saying. Like the women and movements it chronicles, *WANT TO START A REVOLUTION* is a book for all seasons. Academic specialists will find it novel and refreshing both because of the new information it contains and its bold paradigmatic challenges. The volume is also accessible and engaging, which makes it an excellent undergraduate text. Last, but certainly not least, *WANT TO START A REVOLUTION* will inspire and excite activists, providing them something of a handbook from which many lessons may be learned and many techniques gleaned.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By John Gardner  
Great Product  
0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great!!  
By JD Kirkland  
I needed this book for a class and I was really excited to see that it arrived very soon. When I ordered it I thought I'd have to wait a couple weeks, but a few days and the book was on my front porch. I was very grateful. ^\_\_^  
-J.D. Kirkland

The story of the black freedom struggle in America has been overwhelmingly male-centric, starring leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Huey Newton. With few exceptions, black women have been perceived as supporting actresses; as behind-the-scenes or peripheral activists, or rank and file party members. But what about Vicki Garvin, a Brooklyn-born activist who became a leader of the National Negro Labor Council and guide to Malcolm X on his travels through Africa? What about Shirley Chisholm, the first black Congresswoman? From Rosa Parks and Esther Cooper Jackson, to Shirley Graham DuBois and Assata Shakur, a host of women demonstrated a lifelong commitment to radical change, embracing multiple roles to sustain the movement, founding numerous groups and mentoring younger activists. Helping to create the groundwork and continuity for the movement by operating as local organizers, international mobilizers, and charismatic leaders, the stories of the women profiled in *Want to Start a Revolution?* help shatter the pervasive and imbalanced image of women on the sidelines of the black freedom struggle.

Contributors: Margo Natalie Crawford, Prudence Cumberbatch, Johanna Fernandez, Diane C. Fujino, Dayo F. Gore, Joshua Guild, Gerald Horne, Ericka Huggins, Angela D. LeBlanc-Ernest, Joy James, Erik McDuffie, Premilla Nadasen, Sherie M. Randolph, James Smethurst, Margaret Stevens, and Jeanne Theoharis.

"This book is an important intervention in the historiography of US Black movements, strongly asserting the centrality of women in a broad range of Black liberation struggles."