

Kiesha Blain fashioned her research within *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom* on the less-explored leaders of Black nationalist movements—women. From the Great Depression to the early stages of the Cold War, the historian explored how women within these positions of authority promoted international politics globally. Blain characterized these females “as leaders in national and transnational black political movements, seeking to advance black nationalist and internationalist politics”(1), denoting an addition that is often left out of contemporary scholarship. Blain gave readers a more nuanced view of these women and their influence in these positions.

The historian argued that four “core tenants” bolstered the arguments for Black empowerment within these contexts. Racial separation, Black pride/unity, political self-determination, and economic self-sufficiency characterized the primary views within *Set the World on Fire*. These facets within Blain’s monograph represent ideologies of historic women achieving their international goals. Moreover, the chronology of events underscored how the connections between the grassroots “Garvey-ism” held global implications. Yet, it was not Blain’s primary objective to emphasize these connections to domestic Garveyism; instead, by characterizing the women following Marcus Garvey’s leadership, an intensive picture of the Black women that “played a key role in keeping nationalist ideas alive” came into focus (134).

Grassroots nationalism did not end with the fall of Garvey’s “Back to Africa” movement. On the contrary, Blain’s exploration into women’s activism like Mittie Gordon underscored that Black women contributed to racial discourse throughout the twentieth century. Her linear methodology, coupled with her mastery of textual evidence, reminded the audience that Black women existed in spaces of activism and civil rights, a considerable strength when crafting an intersectional discussion on grassroots activism. *Set the World on Fire* remains one of the

premier examples of new-age historical cataloging, and Blain's contribution to this historiography must not go understated. For example, Blain's chapter on organizing the Jim Crow South. The appointment of Celia Allen offered the author's arguments a concrete defense. Between the 1930s and the 1940s, Allen described "respectable"(85) Black womanhood while also chartering for Black nationalism in geopolitical regions marred by White supremacy.

Leading a grassroots Black nationalist movement to advocate for Pan-African unity, economic self-sufficiency, and self-determination, Allen exemplifies the significant commentary Blain hoped to demonstrate within her monograph. Allen helped find "over a million signatures of black residents" (75). wishing to leave America for superior prospects in West Africa, allowing Blain to underscore the achievements of Black women in organizing, while also demonstrating why Black voices were paramount in trekking the history of Jim Crow through an internationalist lens. More importantly, however, Allen's focus within the Jim Crow South context also detailed a facet of historiography less discussed. Instead of turning her attention to voting and voter rights during the Great Depression, Blain focused on the advocacy of Black women.

While the historian's work does not concern itself with how differing organizations incorporated themselves within internationalism, Blain's monograph argued that Black women did engage with the twentieth century's global politics. Unlike *Black Diplomacy* (Michael Krenn, 1990) or *Bourgeois Radicals* (Carol Anderson, 2015), the re-centering of women as the central study redefined the limits of foreign policy: what voices deserve investigative focus? While *Bourgeois Radicals* attempted to "de-center Du Bois," Blain's re-centering of Black women as the significant focus brought new insight into the conversation on who does foreign policy while refusing to erase essential narratives in the process. Moreover, unlike *Black*

*Diplomacy, Set the World on Fire* challenges its predecessors' storytelling, offering a feminist interpretation of how Black women interacted with NGOs and Black domestic nationalism. While Krenn's piece offered critical contextualization of Blain's setting and arguments, Blain moved her investigations into the next epoch of study.

Blain provided her audience with an insight into how Black women participated in grassroots nationalism and internationalism during the mid-twentieth century. Blain's analysis of gender, Black nationalism, and their impacts on foreign diplomacy maintained an insightful, stimulating investigation into the complexities of mid-century internationalism. More importantly, *Set the World on Fire* bridges the gap between the history of foreign diplomacy and other historical disciplines. Blain's research combines women, gender, and Black history into a digestible, easily understood monograph. *Set the World on Fire* is more than just discipline-shaking; this work redefined historical cataloging. Not only does this piece incorporate race into the critical discussions of Black nationalism, but the historian's interpretation also encapsulated the missing links within modern scholarship— the contributions of Black women to the historical canon.