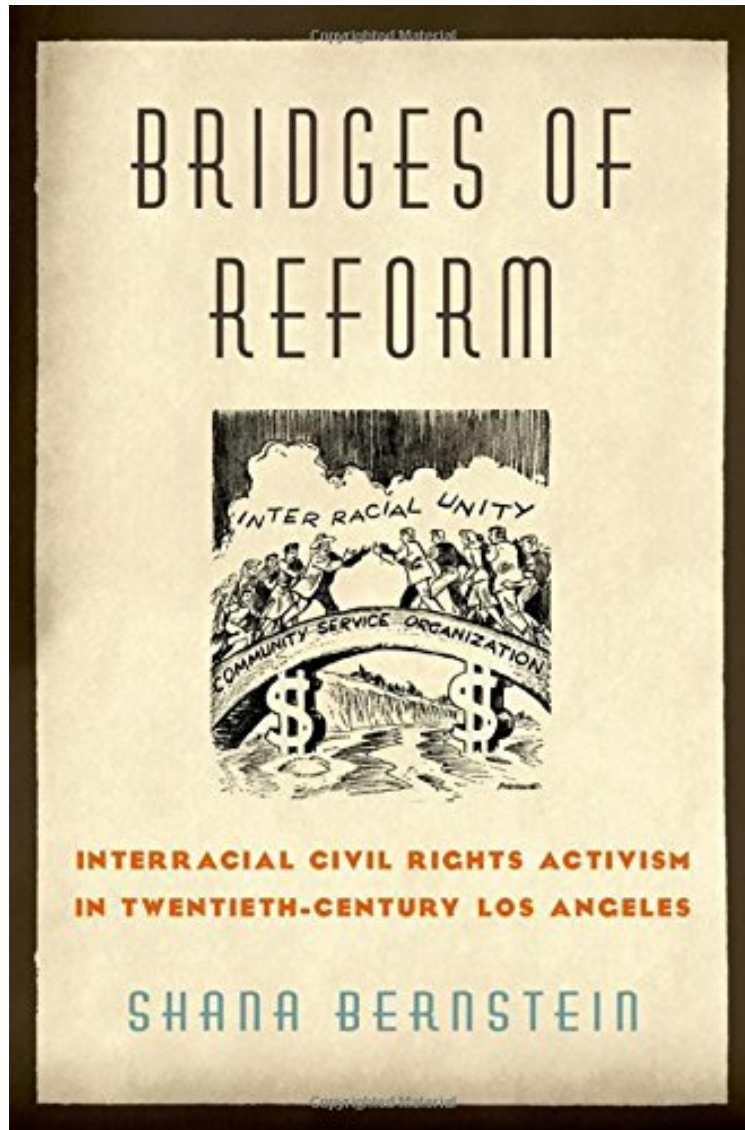


Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles

Shana Bernstein

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Shana Bernstein : Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles
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Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles:

In her first book, Shana Bernstein reinterprets U.S. civil rights activism by looking at its roots in the interracial efforts of Mexican, African, Jewish, and Japanese Americans in mid-century Los Angeles. Expanding the frame of historical analysis beyond black/white and North/South, Bernstein reveals that meaningful domestic activism for racial equality persisted from the 1930s through the 1950s. She stresses how this coalition-building was facilitated by the cold war climate, as activists sought protection and legitimacy in this conservative era. Emphasizing the significant connections between ethno-racial communities and between the United States and world opinion, *Bridges of Reform* demonstrates the long-term role western cities like Los Angeles played in shaping American race relations.

"Bernstein makes an effective case for the importance of interracial collaboration... *Bridges of Reform* is well written and thoroughly researched and is a valuable case study for civil rights activists balanced agency with the structural constraints placed upon them by geography and the social and political context." --*Journal of African American History*"Bernstein's study is one of the few to emphasize how inter-racial activism actually grew, rather than being stifled, during historically conservative and volatile times. Furthermore, many other civil rights studies focus primarily on a specific ethnoracial group; Bernstein takes a non-traditional and more complex approach by revealing that ethnoracial groups such as the CSO...owes much of its origins and sustainability to inter-racial coalitions." --*Planning Perspectives*"Better than any historian to date, Bernstein demonstrates the multiracial composition and agenda of Los Angeles's civil rights organizations... As we consider how to struggle against ongoing discrimination and inequalities, we should read Bernstein's book about multiracial civil rights movements in the past as a guide for how we can move forward together in the future." --*Social History*"Bernstein's thoroughly researched history avoids a simple romanticization of the 'lost left' while also making clear that the cold war forced civil rights organizations and activists to make difficult choices about alliances, agendas, and definitions of political progress." --*American Quarterly* "This important book provides a missing piece of the puzzle of the postwar years by telling the intriguing story of the liberal interracial coalitions, at once anticommunist and innovative, that survived McCarthyism to lay groundwork for the better-known movements of the 1960s. Full of surprising successes as well as moral ambiguities, *Bridges of Reform* will deepen understanding and spark fruitful debate about the full spectrum of activist politics during the long civil rights era." --Nancy MacLean, author of *Freedom Is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* "Bernstein's book is a timely reminder that the multiracial political coalitions of today are not new; they were forged in the years after World War II by race liberals who saw bridges where others saw chasms. And they were forged in Los Angeles, the last best hope for so many immigrants and American migrants. They saw - as does Bernstein - that civil rights could never be guaranteed for the majority if they were still denied to the minority. There was an instructive lesson, and Bernstein delivers it to us with passionate prose." --Josh Sides, author of *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present*"Based on extensive archival research, *Bridges of Reform* breaks new ground by documenting the extent of ethnic coalition building in Los Angeles that most other historians have neglected due to their focus on specific ethnic movements. Shana Bernstein's work will have a significant impact on how we view ethnic history from the Great Depression to the Cold War era." --Mario Garcia, author of *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology and Identity, 1930-1960* "This careful and nuanced account uses the history of Los Angeles to shed new light on the way civil rights activists persisted with reform during a difficult era in American history. *Bridges of Reform* illustrates the power and significance of multi-racial and -ethnic coalitions. An important contribution." --Mary L. Dudziak, author of *Exporting American Dreams: Thurgood Marshall's African Journey* "A significant contribution... Its picture of rights groups working together is original and full, but does not shirk the gloomy side of the picture." --Roger W. Lotchin, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*About the AuthorShana Bernstein is Clinical Associate Professor of Legal Studies at Northwestern University.