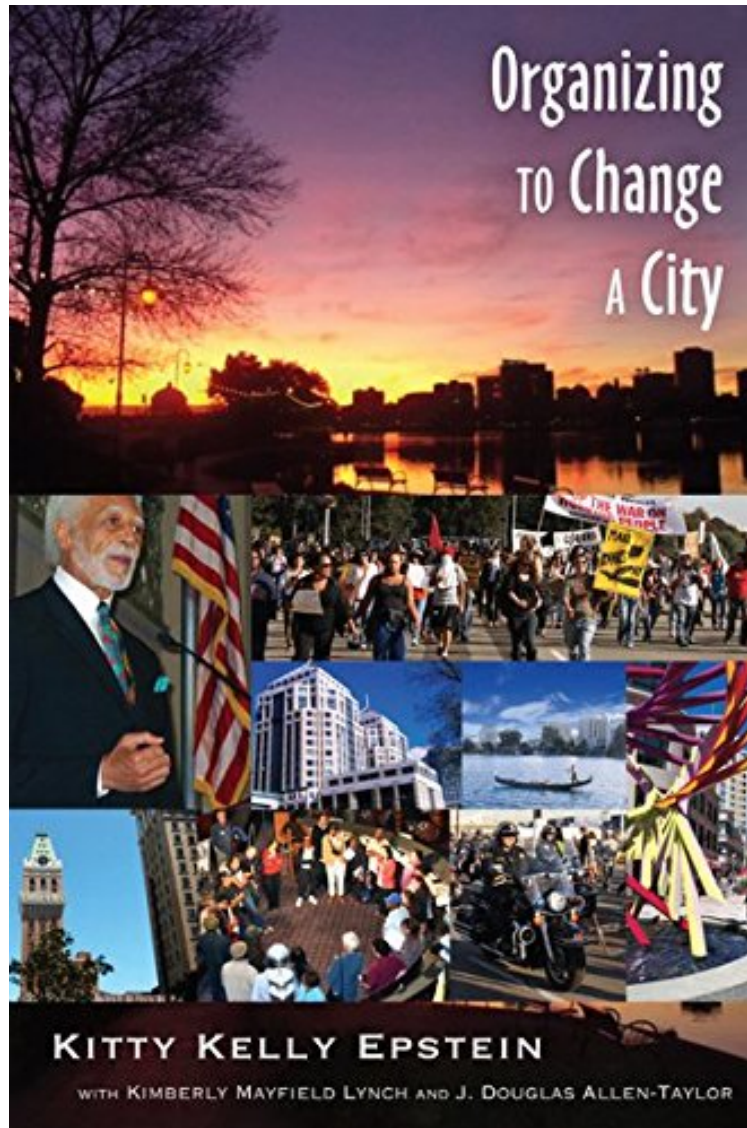


[Read now] Organizing to Change a City: In collaboration with Kimberly Mayfield Lynch and J. Douglas Allen-Taylor

Organizing to Change a City: In collaboration with Kimberly Mayfield Lynch and J. Douglas Allen-Taylor

Kitty Kelly Epstein

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Kitty Kelly Epstein : Organizing to Change a City: In collaboration with Kimberly Mayfield Lynch and J. Douglas Allen-Taylor before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Organizing to Change a City: In collaboration with Kimberly Mayfield Lynch and J. Douglas Allen-Taylor:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is a fantastic read that delivers a blue print in which

progressives ...By Francisco Ortiz This is a fantastic read that delivers a blue print in which progressives can combat the political machines that run most large U.S. cities. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. sloppy liberal cheerleading

By Chuck Morse This unfortunate book is full of big and small errors. Epstein set out to write a laudatory assessment of Ron Dellums's single term as Oakland's mayor, but her commitment to celebrating rather than analyzing her subject forces her to write a contradictory, problem-laden account. She argues that his 1996 election represented a major victory for local social movements, but fails to address the widespread dissatisfaction with his performance in office and, accordingly, can't explain why he left office after only one term. Did the social movements die? Why was there no attempt to persuade him to run again? The answer to this question is simple: he was a massive disappointment for Oaklanders across the political spectrum and left office (and public life) in a cloud of scorn and disdain. However, Epstein doesn't address these issues and, accordingly, can't explain the course of events. And the book has very specific problems too. She presents Dellums as an opponent of the War on Drugs and mass incarceration, which have been devastating for Oakland. However, Dellums cosponsored the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act. This act resulted in the 100:1 sentencing disparity for crack vs. powder cocaine in federal drug cases and is widely regarded as a major legislative foundation of the War on Drugs. She also does not address Dellums' inability to respond meaningfully to the police murder of Oscar Grant, which occurred under his watch and sparked massive protests. And there are more innocuous but nonetheless dumb errors littered throughout the book. For instance, she says that the City of Oakland has named public buildings after Huey Newton (of the Black Panther Party) and Emiliano Zapata (a Mexican revolutionary). This is simply not true. It's not an important point, but it indicates the level of scholarship here. Municipal politics in Oakland ARE interesting. Some of the country's most "progressive" politicians have governed the city for decades and yet it has remained a site of staggering rates of inequality and police violence. How could these contradictory phenomena unfold in the same city and why? Ron Dellums's mayoralty is part of the story, but readers looking for insight will have to look elsewhere. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Toward Cities for Citizens

By Robin Toth Kitty Kelly Epstein's "Organizing to Change a City" recounts how the city of Oakland, California, engaged "1000 residents in participatory policy-making, changed its electoral system, reduced the homicide rate by 40%, and implemented a number of egalitarian initiatives." In these pages we find, not only hope that people, particularly poor people and people of color, CAN change the system that holds them captive, but also specific ways in which that can be done. From her chapter two, "The Power of the People Beat the Power of the Machine: Recruiting a Mayor," to her final chapter, "Organizing to Change a City: Strategic Necessities" Epstein's work provides specific information about how one city achieved its goal of serving citizens rather than business interests. For example, on page fifty we learn that "For cities, the policy of requiring a certain percentage of local residents to be hired on publicly funded projects seems to have enough 'interest convergence' that it will be acceptable to white residents as a policy." After enacting this policy, the hiring of local residents increased but the hiring of African Americans was lacking. To address that problem "a community-based organizing campaign has begun to rectify that aspect of the problem . . ." I found the style of Epstein's work direct and easy reading. Despite her Ph.D. and academic position, she is clearly writing, not only for academics, but, more importantly, for the citizens with whom she is clearly so passionately engaged.

Activist and scholar Kitty Kelly Epstein tells the unique story of a city that recruits a progressive mayoral candidate, defeats a political machine, mobilizes a thousand residents to make policy, and then implements many of the policies created by this participatory process. Violence, jobs, education, and gentrification are all addressed by the ongoing social justice movement and its victories, including a 40% drop in the homicide rate, 8,000 likely new jobs, and a program that produces diverse and effective teachers. This very accessible book will be useful in urban studies, sociology, education, ethnic studies, civic engagement, political science, and policy studies classes and to those who are studying protest movements. The author explains the history of modern urban inequity and the racial wealth gap and then proposes on-going strategy and tactics for social activists in every city. Her co-authors, Lynch and Allen-Taylor, add their own intimate perspectives on these dynamic developments.

This interesting volume on grassroots political organizing examines the recent progressive political successes in Oakland California, and explores the ways in which protest and planning can affect policy change and spur meaningful urban renewal. The work provides specific practical information on the methods of Oakland organizers, and serves as both an inspiration and a blueprint for urban organizers around the country. Epstein is an activist and educator, and is a former policy advisor to the Mayor of Oakland. (Annotation 2013 Book News Inc. Portland, OR)

About the Author Kitty Kelly Epstein has received numerous awards for her unique blend of scholarship and community activism. She has worked as an academic and as a policy advisor, most recently to the mayor of Oakland. Epstein is the author of *A Different View of Urban Schools: Civil Rights, Critical Race Theory and Unexplored Realities* (revised edition).