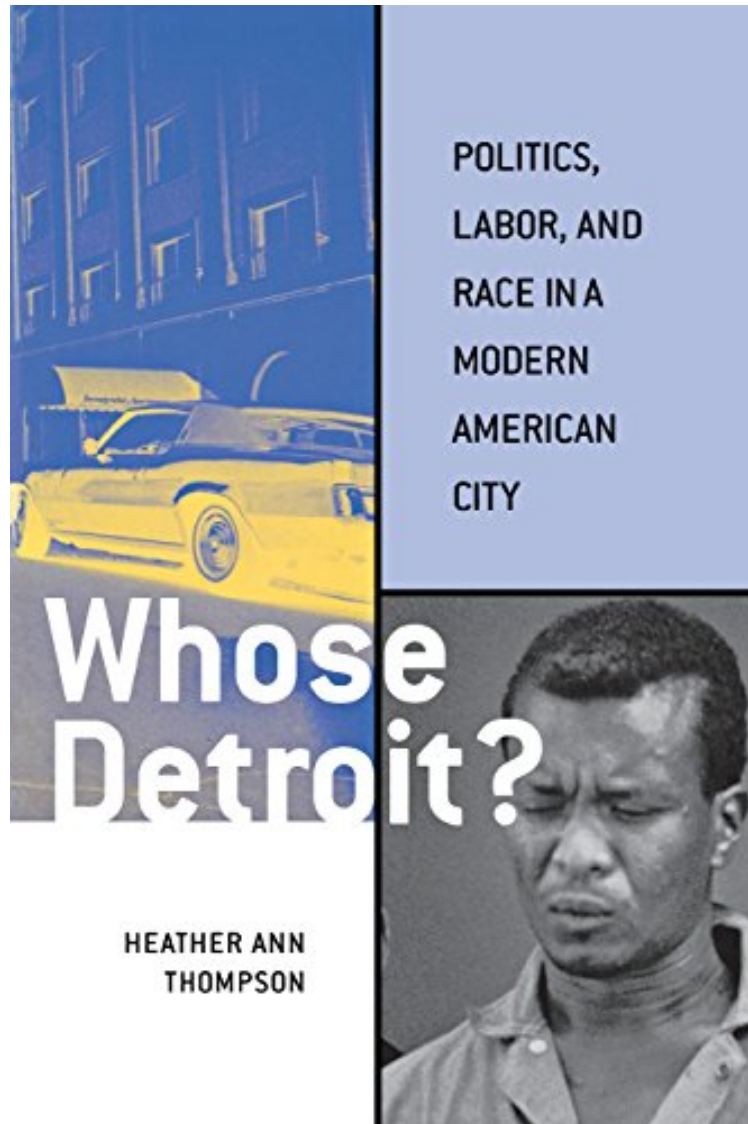


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Whose Detroit?: Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City

Heather Ann Thompson

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#1255481 in Books Cornell University Press 2004-01-15Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.90 x .80 x 5.901, .99 #File Name: 0801488842304 pages | File size: 31.Mb

Heather Ann Thompson : Whose Detroit?: Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Whose Detroit?: Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Worth readingBy Npoet9There are only minor overuse of superlatives and unfounded presuppositions that this native Detroit'er of a certain age reviewer can find in Heather Ann

Thompson's compelling and well-researched volume. It is full of a catalogue of observations, insights, anecdotes, documents and photographs to support of her interpretation of Detroit's 20th century ailments that provide us the city we have now. She personally witnessed a Detroit at a time when the social fabric that held Detroit's communities together had already collapsed. Before that, the so-called failed Cavanagh - Moynihan programs provided education, medical services, and cultural experiences that allowed insight into a broader culture beyond the confines of southeast Michigan. She chronicles how Detroit collapsed into itself, forced by the same pressures that built the city. I recall walking down 12th Street (now Rosa Parks Blvd) on that Sunday morning in July 1967 and how it changed my world forever after. The author outlines a plausible and important perspective on Detroit's demise. Much of her story weaves the history of the politics and performance of the auto industry and how that related to racism. Worth reading.

America's urbanites have engaged in many tumultuous struggles for civil and worker rights since the Second World War. In *Whose Detroit?*, Heather Ann Thompson focuses in detail on the struggles of Motor City residents during the 1960s and early 1970s and finds that conflict continued to plague the inner city and its workplaces even after Great Society liberals committed themselves to improving conditions. Using the contested urban center of Detroit as a model, Thompson assesses the role of such upheaval in shaping the future of America's cities. She argues that the glaring persistence of injustice and inequality led directly to explosions of unrest in this period. Thompson finds that unrest as dramatic as that witnessed during Detroit's infamous riot of 1967 by no means doomed the inner city, nor in any way sealed its fate. The politics of liberalism continued to serve as a catalyst for both polarization and radical new possibilities and Detroit remained a contested, and thus politically vibrant, urban center. Thompson's account of the post-World War II fate of Detroit casts new light on contemporary urban issues, including white flight, police brutality, civic and shop floor rebellion, labor decline, and the dramatic reshaping of the American political order. Throughout, the author tells the stories of real events and individuals, including James Johnson, Jr., who, after years of suffering racial discrimination in Detroit's auto industry, went on trial in 1971 for the shooting deaths of two foremen and another worker at a Chrysler plant. Bringing the labor movement into the context of the literature of Sixties radicalism, *Whose Detroit?* integrates the history of the 1960s into the broader political history of the postwar period. Urban, labor, political, and African-American history are blended into Thompson's comprehensive portrayal of Detroit's reaction to pressures felt throughout the nation. With deft attention to the historical background and preoccupations of Detroit's residents, Thompson has written a biography of an entire city at a time of crisis.

From *Library Journal* Using as a pivot the spectacular riots that gripped Detroit in July 1967, Thompson (history, Univ. of North Carolina, Charlotte) casts the Motor City turned murder capital as a symbol of America's post-1945 urban crisis. She traces Detroit's fragmented civic, labor, and racial politics from the 1930s through the 1980s to argue that more than black-white racial polarization determined the transformation of American inner cities. Thompson argues that Detroit and other northern cities in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s were battlegrounds between contradictory visions of a revolutionary, uplifting Great Society and of a reactionary, repressive, law-and-order society. The clashes were no less divisive and fierce than those of the Civil Rights Movement, which were occurring in the South at that time. On city streets and shop floors and in courtrooms, the struggle for equitable housing, worker dignity, and an end to discrimination and police brutality enlisted a biracial cast of reformers, she argues, while featuring the determination of a militant black middle class. Thompson's engrossing work challenges an array of interpretations about postwar urban America, race relations, labor relations, the triumph of Reagan conservatism, and more. Essential for any collection on the history, politics, or society of post-World War II America. Thomas J. Davis, Arizona State Univ., Tempe Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. "Thompson's engrossing work challenges an array of interpretations about postwar urban America, race relations, labor relations, the triumph of Reagan conservatism, and more. Essential for any collection on the history, politics, or society of post-World War II America." *Library Journal* "Thompson uses Detroit in the 1960s and early 1970s to consider how the battles for civil and workers rights have shaped American cities. There's plenty here for readers eager to think deeply about our hometown's challenges." *Detroit Free Press* "Thompson illuminates themes of race, labor, and politics in Detroit's history during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, revealing much about the interplay of forces central to American life. . . . Thompson presents a vivid portrait of key courtroom battles against racial injustice. . . . This first-rate contribution to a better understanding of the dynamics shaping US cities captures the flavor and drama of the Detroit struggle." *Choice* "Thompson's study is a triumph of social and political history. She connects in a most engaging style events on the street, the factory floor, and the courtroom, and convincingly shows the political realignments that have remade Detroit." *Labour/Le Travail* "A valuable addition to literature on race, labor, and urban life in postwar America. *Whose Detroit?* identifies the crucial link between shop floor and labor union issues, on the one hand, and broader urban political developments on the other." Robert H. Zieger, University of Florida "Heather Thompson uncovers as few others have the rich variety of black community and workplace organizations in Detroit in the 1960s and 1970s. Her effort to show the different responses of city leaders and union leaders to racial issues challenges the tendency either to merge these two groups or to overlook the distinctions between them." Nancy Gabin, Purdue

University" Heather Thompson powerfully rewrites the narrative of the collapse of late-sixties liberalism and of the liberal/labor alliance. The 1967 riots were a turning point in the history of the Detroit Left, perhaps the most important radical community in the country during this period. Rather than accept the riots as a product of rising black militancy, impatience, and scapegoating of 'whitey,' Thompson argues that they played a key role in the ascendance of the Black Power movement." Robin D. G. Kelley, New York University p.p1 {margin: 0.0px 0.0px 0.0px 0.0px; font: 14.0px Calibri; -webkit-text-stroke: #000000} p.p2 {margin: 0.0px 0.0px 0.0px 0.0px; font: 14.0px Calibri; -webkit-text-stroke: #000000; min-height: 17.0px} span.s1 {font-kerning: none} "In Whose Detroit?, prize-winning historian Heather Ann Thompson offers a fresh overview of urban liberalism and its critics during the rise of black political power. From her detailed discussion of radical politics to her rich account of struggles over race and policing, there is much to learn in these pages." Thomas J. Sugrue, New York University, author of *Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* "Sixteen years after its original release, *Whose Detroit?* remains essential reading. It illuminates the political, economic, and social forces that perpetuate poverty and inequality in America. Heather Thompson offers us profound commentary not just on the history of the Motor City, but the nation as a whole." Elizabeth Hinton, author of *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* "From the Inside Flap" A valuable addition to literature on race, labor, and urban life in postwar America. *Whose Detroit?* identifies the crucial link between shop floor and labor union issues, on the one hand, and broader urban political developments on the other." --Robert H. Zieger, University of Florida "Heather Thompson uncovers as few others have the rich variety of black community and workplace organizations in Detroit in the 1960s and 1970s. Her effort to show the different responses of city leaders and union leaders to racial issues challenges the tendency either to merge these two groups or to overlook the distinctions between them." --Nancy Gabin, Purdue University "Heather Thompson powerfully rewrites the narrative of the collapse of late-sixties liberalism and of the liberal/labor alliance. The 1967 riots were a turning point in the history of the Detroit Left, perhaps the most important radical community in the country during this period. Rather than accept the riots as a product of rising black militancy, impatience, and scapegoating of 'whitey,' Thompson argues that they played a key role in the ascendance of the Black Power movement." --Robin D. G. Kelley, New York University