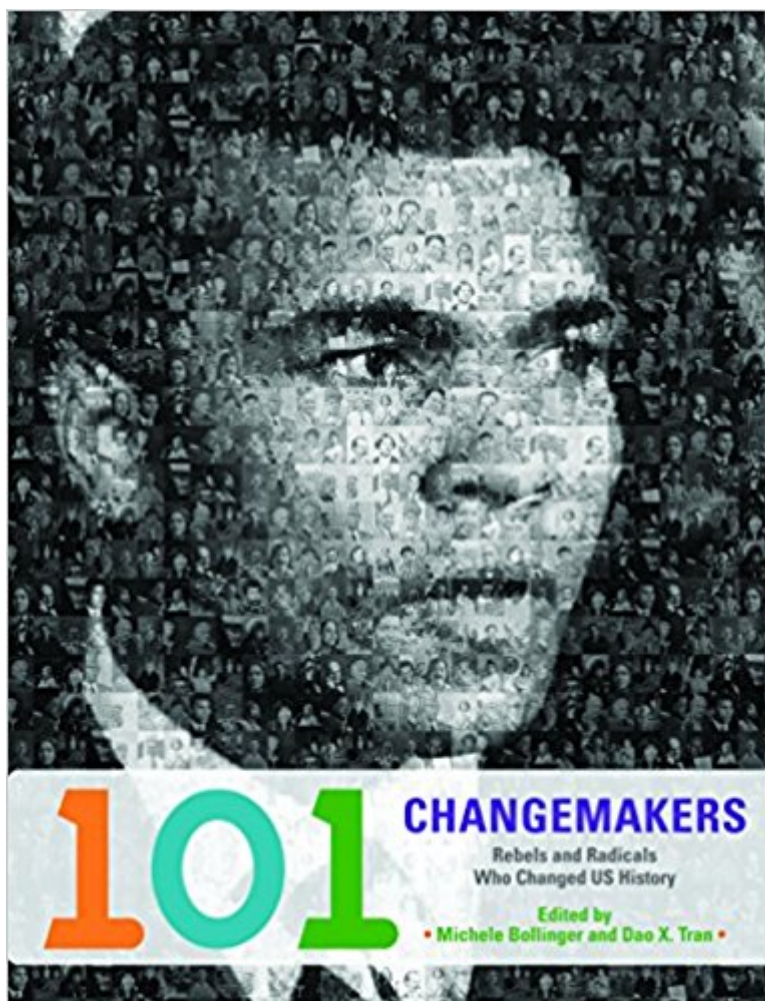


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101 Changemakers: Rebels And Radicals Who Changed U.S. History



Synopsis

In the great tradition of Howard Zinn, *101 Changemakers* offers a fresh, people's history version of the individuals who have shaped our country for middle school students. In the place of founding fathers, presidents, and titans of industry, are profiles of those who courageously fought for social justice in America: Tecumseh, Harriet Tubman, Mark Twain, César Chávez, Rachel Carson, Harvey Milk, Henry Wallace, and many more. *101 Changemakers* aims to provide young students with new ways of understanding how history is written and made.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Though this populous gallery of radicals includes the usual suspects like Susan B. Anthony, César Chávez, and Malcolm X, it focuses far more on lesser-known figures active in the abolition of slavery; the labor union and environmental movements; and the struggles to equalize civil rights for African Americans, women, immigrants, and the LGBT community. Each of the chronologically arranged entries includes a large picture, a brief account of experiences or achievements, a biographical time line, study questions, and enhancement activities that range from suggested readings to “write your own jailhouse letter.” Dubbing Frederick Douglass a freedom fighter and Albert Parsons a “martyr” of the Haymarket riot, the language betrays a leftist slant—as do some of the questions: “Can you think of other times in history when the government has used patriotism to drum up support for war?” Still, these introductions to Studs Terkel (“the world’s greatest listener”), Fred

Korematsu, Tecumseh, Francis Perkins, Bob Dylan, transgender activist Sylvia Rae Rivera, and others will give even well-read students a new angle on our country's history. Grades 7-10.

--John Peters

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My 4th grade daughter had a biography report for school, but she wanted to find a person to report

on who was a change maker, not white, and a woman. She finds history interesting but is really tired of the dead white guys. This book was a great jumping off point for her to choose (she decided on Ida B. Wells), and it's a book she keeps on coming back to.

my fifth graders love this book, and I am so thankful for a resources that helps to start conversations about the hidden figures of US history

This book is pretty incredible. We need to offer youth more alternatives to the history that is taught in our schools.

As a college professor, I meet many students who in their late teens and early 20s have discovered and been transformed by Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. The transformative effect isn't just in how they see history--no longer a march of president and list of dates and battles but struggles and accomplishments by groups of ordinary people seeking rights, voice, and dignity. It is also in how they "do" history--taking up their own social justice history projects--and what they "do with" history--organizing with and inspiring others to press for progressive change. What Dao X. Tran and Michele Bollinger's *101 Changemakers* does is make the Howard Zinn approach to history available and accessible to middle schoolers. In these pages they can learn about the society-shaking actions of Thomas Paine, Helen Keller, and Rosa Parks that conventional history books tone down. They are introduced to historical and contemporary changemakers, like Albert and Lucy Gonzalez Parsons and Laila Al-Arian or Billie Jean King and Chuck D, left out of mainstream history altogether. The book is remarkably comprehensive, readable, and engaging. But where it especially succeeds is in providing young people with the critical lens they need when they are offered conventional versions of U.S. history plus creative ideas for how to carry this changemaking history forward into renewed struggles for rights, voice, and dignity.

I was SO excited to get this book from my local library. I was fully expecting to read it, be thrilled with it, and then add the book to my "to buy" wish list. Unfortunately, I feel that the book fell rather short in some areas. First, let me say that this book is geared toward an audience of teenagers. The book is wordy, and though there is a glossary included, I wouldn't recommend the book for kids younger than 6th or 7th grade. My biggest problem with the book was that the editors leaned rather heavily on some aspects of social change, and barely glanced at others. In a book featuring "101 Changemakers", one could make a list of social causes and choose fairly equal representatives

from each grouping to write about in the book. The editors focus very heavily on a few topics, give a moderate amount of attention to some, and then barely give a passing glance to others. It was odd, and made me feel less inclined to purchase the book. I don't necessarily want to use the term "biased", but the editors seem to view some causes more favorably than others. I'd like to make a list of the types of causes/changemakers represented in this book, ranking them by the importance the editors seem to give them, and the number of times these characters popped up in the book.

1. Workers' rights/Racial equality. I was really astounded by the number of advocates for workers' rights that appeared in this book. There seemed to be at least 15-20 of them. That represents almost 20% (or more) of the book. Obviously this is an important issue to read about, but when you're limiting yourself to a selection of 101 people, that puts a heavy focus on this cause. I had never heard of some of these people, and I took about 18 hours of college courses with a professor that was passionate about this cause and its impact on American history, and managed to work the topic into the curriculum for ALL his classes. One good thing about the "changemakers" detailed here for racial equality, though, was the fact that so many groups were represented. There were plenty of champions for equality for African Americans (many of the big names we know, and a few lesser-known characters as well), but the book also touched on Native American rights, Japanese internment, and other groups, as well. This was refreshing.
2. LGBT causes. Definitely an important part of our nation's history, and many of the "changemakers" definitely deserve to be mentioned in the book, but there were times when I wondered why so-and-so had been left out, but then this other person had been included. It was interesting to see such a broad number of LGBT activists included, when it seems that books like these usually throw in one or two big names (Harvey Milk, for example), and then they move on.
3. Anti-war activists
4. Environmental causes (fewer than 5 people represented these causes, if my memory serves me correctly)
5. Women's rights. I thought it was interesting that so few suffragists were mentioned in the book, particularly since suffrage was an issue that remained unresolved decades after the abolition of slavery. It made me sad that in the area of women's rights, the book offered such a small representation of our Founding Mothers, and those who helped us gain the right to vote. Later in the book, more modern feminists were mentioned, but I feel that the earlier fighters for equality deserved more attention. After all, if it wasn't for the hard work and sacrifices of those women (and men, too), Gloria Steinem and Betty Freidan really wouldn't matter quite as much, would they?
6. Rights for disabled persons. Exactly one representative of this cause was presented in the book.

I understand that this book can't possibly mention every radical person in US History, but I thought it was weird and at times unsettling that some areas were focused on so, so heavily, and others were virtually ignored. I feel

that if the editors were bound and determined to limit this book to 101 people, they could have taken a few "changemakers" away from some of the groups that were almost over-represented, and given more attention to other causes. I'm glad that they shine a light on the issue of workers' rights and how it has impacted our history, but they really neglected some other very important areas. More suffragists should have been included. Surely they could find at least another religious figure or two (the only duo mentioned that I remember were really only included for their anti-war views, not necessarily a "change" they brought about in their field.) What about animal rights? What about veterans, and those who championed their rights and have demanded/are demanding that we as a nation take care of those who fought for us? What about educational reform? The book has value, no question. I do believe, though, that the editors unfairly give more attention to some areas of our nation's history and ignore or give too little attention to others. A more balanced approach would have been appreciated. Perhaps they could have made a list of causes and topics, and tried to divide the book into fairly equal sections discussing these topics. This book could have been fantastic. I felt it fell short of the great resource it could have been, and that makes me sad.

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