and for what purpose" (p. 239). Inherent in this ontological reflection is the epistemological one, or how we learn to be who we are and whether art is a native talent or a learned skill. Enraptured with the experience of learning the trade of artists and still admiring her own training as a historian, Painter relies on the informed, structured processes of education and her own hard work to help her get where she wants to go. Her internal ontological debate is settled when she graduates and comes to terms with her own self-confidence and enjoyment of the art processes—learning not to see herself through other people's eyes and to move beyond Du Bois's "double consciousness."

For this historian of education, this memoir is provocative in a variety of ways. It reminded me of the dynamics of graduate school—my own and that of my current students—which can be brutal in its insistence on taking apart one's original assumptions and exhausting in its instruction of different skills and ways of thinking. We are proud to be admitted to graduate school, and then in the face of unfamiliar knowledge, we think we were admitted by mistake. New theories disconnect us from our old ways of thinking, writing, and knowing; new obsessions take us away from the outside world. If we are socially marginalized in any way in this process—as women, gender fluid, older or younger than the norm, people of color, people with disabilities, first-generation college students, heads of households, and recent college graduates—the learning process can be even more challenging as we wrestle with expectations and assumptions that bleed in from the outside world. We can feel unmoored, critiqued, lost, and unsure. Somehow, we hang on, in love with our new subject, and gradually gain the skills and self-confidence to bloom. And then we take our unique knowledge and run with it into a new world.

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Diana D'Amico Pawlewicz. *Blaming Teachers: Professionalization Policies and the Failure of Reform in American History.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2020. 264 pp.

With the possible exception of police work, is there any other occupation in the United States that has been as politicized as teaching?

Americans expect their education system to instruct children to be good citizens and to teach adolescents the skills they need to get good jobs. They expect public education to combat class and racial inequality. And, as we've recently seen from our collective experiences navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, public education serves as a massive childcare system too, and even whether schools can simply open safely for on-site instruction has been deeply politicized. Over the years, teachers have been in the middle of these expectations and controversies and are often charged with responsibility for the fact that our education system can never do all that we ask of it.

Historicizing the way education reformers have larded this weight onto teachers is the subject of Diana D'Amico Pawlewicz's powerful book *Blaming Teachers: Professionalization Policies and the Failure of Reform in American History*. Covering the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Pawlewicz employs the history of schools in New York City to show that teachers have long borne the brunt of blame for the limits of public education. In wave after wave, school reformers—in both public administration and the public sphere—sought to "professionalize" teachers and improve the education system. But for the overwhelmingly female teaching force, the author argues, these reforms never actually brought meaningful professionalization, as had been the case with predominately male careers in medicine, the law, or the academy. Instead, ironically, "professionalization" for teachers always meant the opposite: an "exogenously directed process fueled by blame in which others identified teachers' shortcomings and proposed policy solutions" (p. 4–5) that limited their discretion and autonomy in the classroom.

In the book's first chapter, Pawlewicz shows that anxiety about the state of New York City schools in the nineteenth century led to "professional" reforms: municipal partnerships in teacher preparation, new hiring standards and certification, and teacher testing. These efforts simultaneously restricted the profession to white women while also setting teachers "on a course separate from the one followed by other professions" (p. 18). Indeed, reforms such as tying normal school curricula to the school district's requirements for hiring would end up further regulating teachers' work lives. In the next chapter, Pawlewicz argues that Progressive Era reformers sought to ensure there were enough teachers capable of instructing new immigrants in American values and to help ameliorate the social tensions caused by urbanization and labor conflict. Again, these reforms "promised stature and order, but in practice degraded teachers and their work" (p. 45). Most interesting in this chapter is Pawlewicz's convincing argument that tenure policies were put in place not to protect an overwhelmingly female workforce but instead to prevent

teacher turnover, reinforcing the bureaucratization of urban school systems. In fact, protections against discrimination based on marital status and motherhood—protections that teachers expected from tenure—only emerged because teachers fought for them in the courts.

In chapter 3, Pawlewicz examines the shifts in teacher-preparation programs during the Great Depression. Before the Depression, some of the nation's premier thinkers sought to broaden teacher preparation by ensuring education programs included liberal arts study that went beyond the rudiments most future teachers received in normal schools. But gendered assumptions and the financial pressure of the Depression led institutions of higher education—even elite universities like Columbia and New York University—to prioritize applied learning rather than the special knowledge that might have established teachers as classroom authorities.

After World War II, as the fourth chapter points out, the "connection between failing schools and teachers was the most tangible it had ever been, and the discourse of blame reached a fever pitch" (p. 104). Teacher shortages led to national anxiety about how to recruit enough good teachers for the growing number of students. Professionalizing teachers, to yet another wave of reformers, represented a "panacea" that could both bring in new teachers and improve the nation's teaching force. New York City schools attempted to employ emergency certification and merit pay provisions, both of which teachers and their unions opposed. Administrators also focused on ratcheting up teacher testing, and these exams, Pawlewicz points out, were implemented from above rather than by future peers, as other professions' gatekeeping procedures did. This attempt to ensure better teachers, supported by the Teachers Guild (an American Federation of Teachers local), had the practical impact of keeping African Americans out of the city's teaching force.

In the final chapter, Pawlewicz shows how the militance of the Teachers Guild and, later, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) in the 1950s and 1960s stemmed from their almost exclusively male leaders, such as David Selden and Albert Shanker. While these leaders purported to fight for professionalism, Pawlewicz argues, this professionalism did not actually accrue to rank-and-file teachers. Though unions may have won political and economic power, "very little of that authority extended to ordinary classroom teachers. Instead, teachers in New York City remained targets of reform, spoken about and blamed" (p. 141). Further, the union's call to organize for professional authority, she argues, stemmed from the "gendered and racialized ideas that cast masculine Whiteness as authority" (p. 142).

This last chapter represents the book's most important argument, since it challenges the accounts of teacher unionism that have typically

marked this history. Even those books that employ measured criticisms of teacher unions in New York City—such as Jerald Podair's *The Strike That Changed New York* (2002) or my own *Teacher Strike!* (2017)—see the rise of teacher unionism as empowering rank-and-file teachers. And with such a provocative argument, there is likely to be some fruitful debate about *Blaming Teachers* moving forward. While Pawlewicz makes a compelling case that union militance may not have brought teachers the authority and autonomy in the classroom that marked other professions, the reader is left wondering why thousands of female teachers would accompany white male leaders like Shanker into high-stakes labor actions in the 1960s and 1970s. Further, teacher unions elsewhere led by women during this time—such as the Detroit Federation of Teachers (Mary Riordan) and the Newark Teachers Union (Carole Graves)—engaged in similarly militant actions for collective bargaining rights. As Pawlewicz defines it early in *Blaming Teachers,* professionalization meant "authority, expertise, and status" (p. 4). While she shows that collective bargaining may not have enhanced the first two, it did pay dividends for both the long-term security and the economic and social status of teachers. And, of course, the majority of these workers were women, even at the height of Shanker's male-led militance. In the future, scholars may want to explore how rank-and-file teachers thought about these trade-offs, and whether economic and social status may have been more important to them than autonomy in the classroom.

Blaming Teachers is a major contribution to the labor history of teachers as well as an important challenge to how we think about the legacy of teacher unions. It is sure to be a part of the conversation on either of these questions in the history of education. Further, since understanding the history of one's occupation is one distinction of a "profession," this book should be read in any teacher-preparation program that dares to treat its students as future professionals.

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