



Reds at the Blackboard: Communism, Civil Rights, and the New York City Teachers Union

By Clarence Taylor

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The New York City Teachers Union shares a deep history with the American left, having participated in some of its most explosive battles. Established in 1916, the union maintained an early, unofficial partnership with the American Communist Party, winning key union positions and advocating a number of Party goals. Clarence Taylor recounts this pivotal relationship and the backlash it created, as the union threw its support behind controversial policies and rights movements. Taylor's research reaffirms the party's close ties with the union—yet it also makes clear that the organization was anything but a puppet of Communist power.

Reds at the Blackboard showcases the rise of a unique type of unionism that would later dominate the organizational efforts behind civil rights, academic freedom, and the empowerment of blacks and Latinos. Through its affiliation with the Communist Party, the union pioneered what would later become social movement unionism, solidifying ties with labor groups, black and Latino parents, and civil rights organizations to acquire greater school and community resources. It also militantly fought to improve working conditions for teachers while championing broader social concerns. For the first time, Taylor reveals the union's early growth and the somewhat illegal attempts by the Board of Education to eradicate the group. He describes how the infamous Red Squad and other undercover agents worked with the board to bring down the union and how the union and its opponents wrestled with charges of anti-Semitism.

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Editorial Review

Review

In his study, Clarence Taylor...explores the nature and extent of the Communist influence. Relying on thorough research and presenting much detail, he finds that the Teachers Union (TU) indeed adopted policies of the Communist Party, but without abandoning the interests of the teachers they led.

(Robert D. Parmet *History News Network*)

...offers a highly readable and engaging story of the rise of [the Teacher's Union] model, as well as the ferocious onslaught against it during the McCarthy era. It is a must-read...

(*Socialist Worker.org*)

Serious students of labor should read it.

(Steve Leberstein *Working USA*)

Review

Reds at the Blackboard, Clarence Taylor's superb history of the left-led New York City Teachers' Union (1916-1964), fills a void in the historical record of teacher unionism and education in the United States, providing important background on recurring controversies of curriculum, due process, academic freedom, testing, transfers, community involvement, civil rights, and the need for more Black and Latino teachers. This meticulously researched and insightful history of an important social justice union contributes significantly to our understanding of Civil Rights and left history, and it offers important background on the rise of the United Federation of Teachers and the 1968 New York City teacher strikes and community control struggles. It is a timely contribution to the current climate of growing economic depression, persistent racial disparities, war, educational crises, charter schools, and often fractured teacher union and community relations.

(Jeffrey B. Perry, author of *Hubert Harrison: The Voice of Harlem Radicalism, 1883-1918*)

No other book to date has exposed the climate of fear and surveillance that overtook public schooling in New York City in the 1950s. This book succeeds in dramatically revising the image of the Teachers Union, a union with thousands of members and great influence in the largest city in the United States. This is an important story, and Clarence Taylor succeeds in excavating the TU from political ridicule and marginalization. A powerful and important book, with considerable significance to scholars and students in the disciplines of education and history.

(Martha Biondi, Northwestern University, author of *To Stand and Fight: the Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City*)

About the Author

Clarence Taylor is professor of history and black and Latino studies at Baruch College and professor of history at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. He has written or edited several books, including *The Black Churches of Brooklyn* and *Knocking at Our Own Door: Milton A. Galamison and the Struggle to Integrate New York City Schools*.

Users Review

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Kara Corbett:

Reading a guide can be one of a lot of exercise that everyone in the world enjoys. Do you like reading book therefore. There are a lot of reasons why people fantastic. First reading a reserve will give you a lot of new details. When you read a reserve you will get new information mainly because book is one of various ways to share the information or perhaps their idea. Second, reading through a book will make you more imaginative. When you reading a book especially tale fantasy book the author will bring that you imagine the story how the character types do it anything. Third, you are able to share your knowledge to others. When you read this *Reds at the Blackboard: Communism, Civil Rights, and the New York City Teachers Union*, you may tells your family, friends and soon about yours e-book. Your knowledge can inspire others, make them reading a book.

Jessica Keith:

People live in this new day time of lifestyle always make an effort to and must have the free time or they will get lots of stress from both everyday life and work. So , once we ask do people have extra time, we will say absolutely indeed. People is human not a robot. Then we request again, what kind of activity are there when the spare time coming to you of course your answer may unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading ebooks. It can be your alternative inside spending your spare time, typically the book you have read is definitely *Reds at the Blackboard: Communism, Civil Rights, and the New York City Teachers Union*.

Nancy Kidder:

Playing with family within a park, coming to see the coastal world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, in that case why you don't try point that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not experiencing tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of information. Even you love *Reds at the Blackboard: Communism, Civil Rights, and the New York City Teachers Union*, you may enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh occur its mind hangout men. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

Carol Stripling:

Reds at the Blackboard: Communism, Civil Rights, and the New York City Teachers Union can be one of your nice books that are good idea. Many of us recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that can increase your knowledge in vocab, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The article author giving his/her effort to put every word into delight arrangement

in writing *Reds at the Blackboard: Communism, Civil Rights, and the New York City Teachers Union* but doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest along with based confirm resource info that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can drawn you into fresh stage of crucial imagining.

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