

card debt (see, for example, Brett Williams, *Debt for Sale: A Social History of the Credit Trap*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

In sum, *City of Clerks* adds an important contribution to The Working Class in America History series edited by James R. Barrett, Alice Kessler-Harris, Nelson Lichtenstein, and David Montgomery. The book is also an important addition and a rare contribution to a growing body of literature on American white collar workers and their experiences, particularly in the twentieth century. The reader comes away with a clear understanding of the workplace and leisure life of office and sales workers in a time period of rapid economic expansion in the United States. Finally, Bjelopera provides important interdisciplinary contributions to history, urban studies, economics, sociology, and the study of the human condition in late 19th and early 20th century America.

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Steve Golin. *The Newark Teacher Strikes: Hopes on the Line*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002. Pp. x, 288, photographs, appendix, notes, index. Cloth \$30.00).

With this intensive study of the 1970 and 1971 teacher strikes in Newark, New Jersey, Steve Golin joins the handful of historians who are beginning to redress the long neglect of the rise and significance of public employee unionism in the 1960s and 1970s. The activists in the Newark Teachers Union (NTU) profiled here formed part of a large wave of teachers nationwide who struck and won collective bargaining agreements in these years. Along with sanitation workers, welfare workers, postal workers, and other government employees, teachers provided the labor movement with its largest membership boost since World War II, and their unions play an increasingly important role in today's labor movement. Golin's elegantly written book, which is based on extensive interviews with over fifty strike participants, as well as archival and newspaper sources, should help to reorient the focus of recent labor history.

This book also deepens our understanding of the interconnections between social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Golin shows that demands for change extended beyond the familiar student, antiwar, civil rights, and fem-

inist movements. Indeed, the initial success of the NTU, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) which had long competed with the Newark branch of the National Education Association (NEA), came with what Golin calls the “class of 1969,” an influx of new teachers who, according to one member, saw the Union “as a continuation of the activism I’d been involved in as a college student” (60).

Nevertheless, the story of the Newark teachers is not a simple narrative of progress and working-class unity. Golin is attentive both to what unites teachers and what divides them, and to the factors which brought this union, despite its long progressive history, into conflict with most African American parents and politicians in Newark during the “vicious” strike of 1971. Golin’s portrait is akin to classic tragedy, as success only seemed to lead to later complications.

Golin’s organization of the book is straightforward, even if at times he “fudges” the chronology in order to impose thematic order and a more dramatic narrative. Chapter one celebrates the teachers who formed the NTU and highlights the healthy tension that existed between those who wanted to make the schools better meet students’ needs, along with the broader goal of working for social justice, and those who favored “bread and butter” unionism. Chapter two demonstrates the impact on the schools and on teachers of what Golin calls the “riot/rebellion” in Newark in 1967—perhaps the seminal event in Newark’s recent history. Because of the decline in wages and working conditions which the riot and its aftermath accelerated and the sense by teachers that only radical action could save the schools, the NTU finally defeated its NEA rival in a 1969 representation election.

Chapter three describes the successful three-week 1970 strike for “teacher power,” a multi-layered term which crystallized around the achievement of a grievance procedure with binding arbitration and demands to end “non-professional” duties. The strike was acrimonious, to be sure, as injunctions against the Union meant that by the third week anyone caught picketing was liable to arrest; the 188 arrests led to bitterness that would not easily be overcome.

Chapter four, “Black Power Between the Strikes,” really begins during the 1970 strike, and shows how the union, although headed by an African American woman, Carole Graves, found itself on a collision course with the newly-elected African American mayor, Kenneth Gibson, and many African American parents. This conflict had multiple sources, but the emotional flashpoints centered around the NTU’s use of the grievance procedure to eliminate such tasks as hall patrol and bus duty, which many parents inter-

preted as an abandonment of their children. Thus, Golin writes, “The Union victory in 1970 led to the war in 1971: the new conflict was built into the settlement of the old” (116). Chapter five recounts the harrowing events of the three-month 1971 strike, which featured shocking instances of violence on all sides. The NTU largely failed in its attempts to frame the strike as one of workers fighting back against management attacks on their contract. The strike instead came to be seen in terms of race rather than class. Old allies in the Union divided, as many teachers, including most African Americans, crossed the picket lines. More surprisingly, former opponents of the union, such as the notorious white vigilante leader, Tony Imperiale, supported this strike as a way to get back at the new African American political leaders.

Chapter six describes the divergent prison experiences of the arrested teachers, who did time in 1971 for their 1970 arrests. Some of them—especially women—used their jail time as a new opportunity to organize for better conditions, on their own behalf and, even more so, on behalf of less-educated prisoners. A brief epilogue, along with capsule biographies of the interviewed teachers, shows the varied paths these activists took after the strikes.

Throughout, Golin allows the teachers themselves to describe their backgrounds, motives, actions, and reactions, and he is scrupulously fair in presenting very divergent perspectives on highly charged issues, such as racial tensions and strike-related violence. He punctuates the narrative with a wide range of perceptive observations on the nuances of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and educational background, as these pertain to teachers and teacher unionism, and he skillfully teases out the varied ramifications of notions of “professionalism” and “teacher power.” Among his many comments on how gender mattered, Golin plausibly suggests that Mayor Gibson and his Black Power supporters did not accept NTU president Graves as a legitimate African American leader because she was a woman. But, as he notes, the NTU also had difficulty in presenting its case in 1970 and 1971 because of the precedent of the racially-charged 1968 “Ocean Hill-Brownsville” teacher strike in nearby New York City.

Golin pays close attention to developments in Newark, especially the interactions of race, ethnicity, and urban crisis, and his book exemplifies how good local history illuminates larger themes. Nevertheless, he might have enlarged his canvas to show more clearly the impact of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville strike, and developments in the AFT, on the Newark teachers and their opponents. Additional discussion of the connections between the Newark strikes

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and the fortunes of the AFT and NEA in New Jersey and across the country would have made this book more useful. While Golin's judgments are generally sound, there are several puzzling references, such as his characterization of the 1970 reelection of Graves as NTU president as a "coup." But the odd note here or there, and the narrow focus, do not detract from this masterful study, which deserves a wide readership by scholars, students, and teacher union members.

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