

in this book (efficiency and meliorism), the reader is once again reminded just how deeply intertwined Progressivism can be with other seemingly unrelated circles. While I would not hasten to call Franklin Bobbitt a poster child for the term (at least by my definition), Christou shows how, under certain conditions, the founder of scientific management in curriculum fits under the Progressive umbrella. By the same token, Christou also displays how a paragon of Progressivism like C. C. Goldring could, by his own admission, opt for more traditional educational techniques. By the time the book reaches its climax—a case study of one of Ontario's interwar Deputy Ministers (Duncan McArthur)—the reader is eager to see where in Christou's typology this self-professed Progressivist fits.

Having my own favourites of this time period, I was disappointed that Christou did not give more play to the more garden-variety examples of Ontario Progressives such as Peter Sandiford, Stanley Watson, or John Althouse. However, this seemed to be the whole point of Christou's book. In a bid to avoid pat labels, he chose to come to terms with Progressivism as Blatz did with intelligence quotient (IQ) testing: In its function rather than its form. Christou's definition does not lie solely in listing a series of appropriate die-hards or dogmas. Instead, meaning is derived from the pure rhetoric found in the Ontario sources, no matter the origin. In that way, Christou answers the question "Who is not a progressive reformer, anyway?" The implied response must be "Nobody, given the right context."

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Elizabeth Todd-Breland

*A Political Education: Black Politics and Education Reform in Chicago since the 1960s*

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Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018. 344 pp.

The cover of *A Political Education* shows teachers protesting unfair conditions in public schools in 2012. Page after page, the book inside reveals a palimpsest of decades of similar protests and organizing since the 1960s. Elizabeth Todd-Breland chronicles the politics of Black achievement in Chicago—a phrase referring to the wide array of strategies that activists used to improve schooling conditions and educational opportunities for Black students in the midwestern city.

Following activists and organizations that fought relentlessly for Black Chicagoans, Todd-Breland tackles pivotal moments of the history of education such as desegregation, community control, Black Power schools, teacher movements and reforms around school choice. Actors in this profoundly human story are Black education reformers, and Todd-Breland reclaims the term "reformer" (6) to underline how the educational history literature has falsely equated it with white male Progressive Era planners.

Todd-Breland's critically acclaimed book—it won the 2019 Pauli Murray Book Prize from the African American Intellectual History Society and the 2019 AERA Outstanding Book Award—is especially impressive in its fluent engagement with numerous strands of the historical literature. *A Political Education* not only engages with but also contributes to the fields of urban history, Black History, labour history, women's history, educational history, political history, and intellectual history, and the book highlights artificial boundaries between these fields. The scope seems almost too ambitious at first, since it covers traditionally fragmented topics: students and teachers, curriculum, electoral politics, educational spaces outside of schools, and many others. But it is precisely because the book is about making connections and showing continuity that Todd-Breland can masterfully take her readers around a nebula of educational reform movements.

Through extensive use of archival material, *A Political Education* corrects narratives of decline and images of cities as wastelands during the urban crisis. Yet in this nuanced study, the history of Black political activism in Chicago is never monolithic—there is “no singular Black politics on the ground” and “no consensus in Black communities on the best strategy or tactics to improve Black education” (50). The author thus meets the core challenge of the book: to identify and highlight continuity in traditions of protest without portraying them as one-dimensional and homogeneous. Todd-Breland calls attention to both the diversity of voices and tactics in the city's political landscape, and to threads of unity in self-determining politics of Black achievement. She skillfully does so by balancing analyses of individual action and collective efforts, and is particularly effective in pinpointing crucial nuances, for example on the multiple, sometimes competing positions advocates held regarding whether or not integration was the most strategic way to promote educational equity for Black students in Chicago.

One of the most important contributions of this work is its seamless incorporation of gender analysis. Similarly to other novel work such as Lisa Levenstein's *A Movement Without Marches* (2009) and Crystal Sanders's *A Chance for Change* (2016), the book provides a model for work that not only names intersectionality and recognizes that most activists involved in advancing educational opportunities for Black children were Black women. It also actually uses intersectionality as a lens to show how and why Black women such as Chicago's Rosie Simpson, Barbara Sizemore and Lillie Peoples became key players and effective community organizers in the politics of Black achievement.

Todd-Breland also adds to literature that revises and nuances our understanding of desegregation policies. She argues that desegregation was about fighting for equal resources more than it was about enacting policies that simply mixed Black and White bodies. Moreover, Todd-Breland not only sees desegregation as a strategy but also as discourse and ideology—in fact, she purposefully does not study desegregation in Chicago as a legal fight, but first and foremost as a strategic and ideological debate in activist circles. In this way, she amplifies the voice of Barbara Sizemore. A Chicago educator, and one of the main actors in Todd-Breland's book, Sizemore highlighted harmful flaws in the logic behind *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)

and the image of the damaged Black psyche experts used in the case. Todd-Breland also makes a crucial contribution to the literature with her analysis of shift from desegregation to community control as the strategy to advance educational opportunities of Black students in Chicago. The story, with activist Rosie Simpson as one of its protagonists, bridges literatures in the field by linking anti-poverty programs and community control, and is in line with new scholarly work that shows the paramount role that Black women played in these movements.

Todd-Breland breaks new ground with her work on corporate education reform and the push for privatization as well, thus making a major contribution to the ongoing scholarly conversation about the use of neoliberalism as a concept for historical analysis. *A Political Education* teaches us that these strands of reforms can only be fully understood in a historical perspective; the author reminds us that the alignment of multiple actors around “efficiency, accountability, privatization, and corporate models” in the late twentieth century emerged out of “the broken promises of earlier education struggles, including the struggle for community control” (60). The growing role of business in education reform, and the blurring of private and public spheres happened in a moment of national disinvestment in the public sector. Moreover, Todd-Breland demonstrates that it is only through a granular study of the longer history of Black traditions of reform that we can understand specific “Black responses to corporate school reform and privatization measures” (224). *A Political Education* thus highlights the necessity of the historical perspective even for recent developments. The author will now put this rich knowledge into practice in Chicago, and will herself become a decision maker in this history—the new mayor of Chicago, Lori Lightfoot, appointed her to the Chicago Board of Education in June 2019.

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*Just Watch Us: RCMP Surveillance of the Women's Liberation Movement in Cold War Canada*

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Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018. 318 pp.

The 1964 Bob Dylan song, “The Times They Are a-Changin’,” reflected the hope that social movement activism would usher in a new world. Dylan’s song declares, “The order is rapidly fadin’,” suggesting a new political and economic order were on the horizon. The message resonated positively or negatively, depending on your political viewpoint.

Social movements that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s supported “New Left” political ideologies. They actively formed organizations to mobilize resources outside state systems. Gay rights, Civil Rights, labour, Anti-war, and Women’s rights