

this look at the IBE and education in Geneva a long-term project based on grants from the Swiss government.⁴ Their works have also been reviewed in this journal in French.⁵ One of the challenges for non-French speaking readers is that some of their work is in French.

This book also works well in the sense that it is not simply a written analysis of the role of the IBE. Rather, it looks at the question from a variety of perspectives. The work speaks to the primary sources used and provides images of these sources when helpful. This gives the reader a deeper sense of the events and the outcomes that emerged from these instances at the international level. Further, the book provides “inserts” (sidebar discussions), which address specific questions; in the example of Insert 11.1 (184), the discussion point is how did delegations get their ideas to centre stage at the International Conferences on Public Education? “Self-presentation” and “mention” (i.e. citation in separate delegations’ speeches to heighten and triangulate attention on an issue or controversy) were the two most cited strategies.

All in all, the book represents a well-crafted analysis of a very significant actor in international education governance in the early to middle twentieth century. That the IBE continues in 2025, its centenary year, is testament to its strength, perseverance, and durability.

John Allison
Nipissing University

Funké Aladejebi

Schooling the System: A History of Black Women Teachers

McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021, 304 pp.

For nearly two decades, I have dedicated my professional practice to Ontario's public education system. I began my career as an elementary teacher in a Toronto school that served a predominantly Black student population. In North America, Black women teachers often work in Black neighbourhoods, engage with curricula that is white male dominant, witness the disproportionality of Black students in the discipline system, and endure racially motivated push-out from their school districts.⁶ Like other Black woman teachers, I was labeled as aggressive, undermined as a leader, and surveilled for centering Black children in my work. Indeed, Black women teachers'

4 Rita Hofstetter and Bernard Schneuwly, *The International Bureau of Education*, v–vi.

5 Amongst several examples is Riodel's review: Xavier Riodel, *Le Bureau International d'éducation, Matrice de l'internationalisme éducatif (premier 20e siècle)*, by Rita Hofstetter and ÉRHISE, *Historical Studies in Education / Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 35 no. 1 (2023): 139–42. <https://doi.org/10.32316/hse-rhe.vi0.5181>.

6 J. L. Stovall and M. Mosely, “We just do us’: How Black Teachers Co-Construct Black Teacher fugitive space in the face of antiblackness” *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 26, no. 3 (2023): 298–317, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2022.2122424>.

lived experiences and aspirations are informed simultaneously by race and gender.

The book *Schooling the System* offers contemporary Black educators, like me, opportunities to take up the following questions: How do we, Black women teachers, thrive despite the anti-Black logics endemic in Ontario's school system? What might we learn from the Black women teachers who have come before us? *Schooling the System* situates my work and those of other contemporary Black women educators within a larger, longstanding narrative of Black Canadians who have always dared to dream, resist, and reimagine public education in Ontario.

Schooling the System is written by Dr. Funké Aladejebi and contributes to a limited body of Canadian scholarship on Black women teachers.⁷ Black Canadians have long organized to combat anti-Black racism in Canadian schools and increase educational equity for children of African descent. As Aladejebi notes, Black women teachers, whose numbers increased in the second half of the twentieth century, facilitated institutional transformation across many Canadian schools. Although we, Black women teachers, continue to be central to Ontario's education system, our narratives are largely excluded within the historiography of Black Canadian education and Canada's education system more broadly.

In *Schooling the System*, Aladejebi investigates Black women educators' early presence in Ontario's state-sanctioned school systems from the 1940s to 1980s. The book leverages oral history narratives to trace the lives of Black women teachers as they faced ideological and systemic exclusion, engaged in teaching methods grounded in Black knowledges, and challenged prevailing ideals about Canadian citizenship.

Aladejebi's work presents Black women's personal and professional accounts not only to reveal the dynamics of race, gender, and power in Canada but also to further centre their communal practices of relationship building and support. It is in listening to and interpreting these intricate narratives that readers witness the ways Black women teachers, in post-World War II Canada, understood, absorbed, and rejected notions of self, exclusion, and togetherness. This style of historical listening, Aladejebi explains, provides space for readers to interpret Black women's choices differently and "view [their] stories as deliberate attempts to reframe their lives as professional working women" (11). Indeed, *Schooling the System* affirms Black women educators as knowledge producers and active agents in the remembering and telling of their own lives.

Schooling the System is organized thematically and chronologically into five chapters. Drawing on oral history narratives, and archival and numerical data, Funké Aladejebi's book traces Black women's journeys as educators in Ontario from the 1940s to the 1980s. Each chapter features intimate recollections revealing Black

7 Afua P. Cooper, "Black Women and Work in Nineteenth-Century Canada West: Black Woman Teacher Mary Bibb" in *We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up*, P. Bristow ed. (University of Toronto Press, 2016), 143–170; A. Henry, *Taking Back Control: African Canadian Women Teachers' Lives and Practice* (State University of New York Press, 1998); D. Mogadime, "Racial Differential Experiences of Employment Equity for Women Teachers: One Teacher's Narrative of Resistance and Struggle," *Journal of Black Studies* 39, no 1. (2008): 85–108, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934706296682>.

women educators' layered relationships with their families, communities, and public educational institutions. The narratives presented in the book require readers to bear witness to the ways Black women educators not only thrived but also ushered pedagogical and policy transformation within a hostile education system and country. Themes of belonging, discrimination, and identity weave through each chapter, challenging readers to reckon with the ways Black women teachers navigated post-World War II Canada.

In Canada, limited archival and numerical data is available on the experiences of Black educators between the 1940s and 1960s. Accordingly, chapter 1 uses oral histories, newspaper articles, teachers' college yearbooks, and education reports to chart Black women's journeys into the teaching profession. In this chapter, Aladejebi engages readers in discussions around early Black women educators' identity formation and understandings of Canadian-ness.

Chapter 2 traces Black women educators' progression from teachers' college into Ontario schools from 1965 to the 1980s. Against a backdrop of increased immigration to Ontario in the 1960s, this chapter highlights how entrenched notions of racial categorization were taken up in school settings and hyper(in)visibilized Black women teachers.

Chapter 3 envisions how Black women understood and navigated their othered experiences within and across Ontario schools. This chapter foregrounds the evolution of Black women teachers' educational philosophies. In particular, Aladejebi explores how Black women teachers both used and rejected provincial curricula.

Chapter 4 focuses on Black woman's lives as professional teachers beyond school spaces. This chapter explores the continuum of Black activism in education from the 1960s to the 1970s. In this chapter, Aladejebi centres educational programs established in Toronto by Black Canadians, some of whom were Black women educators. The chapter highlights how the challenges and diverging philosophies among Black activists in Toronto informed Black women's pedagogical work within classrooms and the larger community.

Chapter 5 analyses Black women educators' engagement in the Canadian women's movement in the late 1970s to 1980s. In this final chapter, Aladejebi describes the ways in which activism and identity informed Black women educators' involvement in the women's liberation movement. Black Canadian womanhood, Aladejebi explains, "was part of, but also stood separate from, larger social justice movements in the late twentieth century" (146).

As Robyn Maynard's *Policing Black Lives* itemizes, Black Ontarian teachers and students continue to disproportionately face systemic forms of racism and prejudice.⁸ I, along with other Black women educators, witness the over-policing of Black students and the disregard for our leadership. *Schooling the System* allows contemporary Black women educators, like me, to locate our teaching experiences within a longer, more complex story about separate schooling practices, teacher training, and

8 Robyn Maynard, *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present* (Fernwood Publishing, 2018).

racial and gender bias in Ontario's education system. Aladejebi presents the ways Black women have long combated hostile spaces within Ontario schools and beyond. *Schooling the System* calls on us all to fully acknowledge and address Canada's long history of antiblackness. It is only then, Aladejebi reminds us, that we may begin to reimagine schooling with and for Black women educators and students.

Stephanie Fearon
York University

Janice Harvey

Their Benevolent Design: Conservative Women and Protestant Child Charities in Montreal

McGill-Queen's University Press, 2024. 420 pp.

Janice Harvey's rigorously researched monograph, *Their Benevolent Design: Conservative Women and Protestant Child Charities in Montreal*, pulls back the curtain on Montreal's nineteenth-century charitable institutions to explore the creation, management, daily life, and impact of the Protestant Orphan Asylum of Montreal (POA) and the Montreal Ladies' Benevolent Society (LBS) between 1815 and 1920. In contrast to the bleak picture that would be painted by subsequent reformers who favoured a placing-out system of family-based foster care, Harvey depicts the two institutions—which cared for orphans and the children of destitute widows, respectively—as earnest attempts by privileged women to provide a home-like atmosphere for vulnerable children. She concludes that while the POA and LBS were far from perfect, within the bounds of their conservative views and the economic strictures they faced they were surprisingly child-centred in their policies. Although Harvey does not explicitly say it, one gets the impression that a child could do far worse than to live in either institution.

The heart of the book comprises seven thematically based chapters that focus first on the women who ran the POA and LBS and then on the children and families they served, bookended by an introduction and conclusion, plus an epilogue that carries the story into the mid-twentieth century. The end matter includes an appendix of contemporary charitable institutions in Montreal, extensive endnotes, a full bibliography, and an index that helpfully includes concepts such as “agency of client families” (382) and “children, socialization of” (385). The bibliography makes clear the book's grounding in a huge array of international historiographies, including those of women, children, the family, economy, labour, charity, social services, health, religion, and urban development. The history of education is not a major focus but is well represented in a variety of source material that falls primarily in one of these other categories.

The POA and the LBS were important components of the sectarian (Catholic; Protestant) system of charitable poor relief that emerged in Canada's largest city