the educational costs of societal and institutional racism in Chicago’s schools throughout the period she examines.


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Why has the U.S. labor movement declined since the 1960s? Why did the Democratic Party lose its traditional standing among white workers? What stoked the antagonism between the formerly allied civil rights and labor movements?

Paul Frymer’s answers to these questions in his book *Black and Blue* are rooted in neoinstitutionalism and American political development perspectives. In his view, it is vital to understand the institutional context for the civil rights movement’s turn toward litigation against trade unions. Frymer’s argument is sometimes too narrowly focused, but it is fresh and clearly argued and should provoke considerable debate and discussion.

According to Frymer, legal efforts to remedy trade-union racism were tragically confounded by the division of the legal institutions for dealing with labor and with civil rights into separate spheres. Labor’s sphere was that of congressionally legislated labor law shaped by the Wagner Act of 1935, the rulings of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), and the actions of the Department of Labor. These institutions spawned by the Wagner Act generally represented organized labor. The civil rights movement’s sphere emerged decades later, created by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and later legislation. Initially a Democratic Congress included many loopholes and restrictions in the Civil Rights Act; Congress wanted to reap the benefits of supporting civil rights without angering other groups, including labor. But this sphere was soon taken over by the legal system. Paying no heed to congressional loopholes, the judiciary took the initiative and made civil rights policy proactive.

Historically, judicial institutions had ignored union/race relations. For much of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, American unionism had been dominated by the skilled workers of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and had long excluded African-Americans, women, and Hispanics. In contrast, in the 1930s the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was founded, based on the principle of industrial unionism. Organizing industries that included substantial numbers of African-Americans, the CIO sometimes reached out to civil rights organizations, mainly the NAACP, and in some areas labor and civil rights organizations formed alliances. Competing with the CIO, the AFL followed suit. Even at its height, in the 1940s, this alliance ignored a pervasive white racism. In all
Finally in the mid- and late 1960s, frustrated by decades of fruitless efforts, civil rights organizations sued unions. Unlike appeals to labor unions, the NLRB, the Labor Department, or the Fair Employment Practices Committee, litigation worked. Lawyers took advantage of new legal opportunities. Congressional legislation that standardized federal civil procedures across jurisdictions and legal decisions that awarded substantial monetary compensations and back pay to civil rights plaintiffs had created a new and profitable legal arena. Judges used formidable tools—mainly financial—to force unions to comply. Judges compensated individual victims of union racism, fined resisting trade unions, forced unions to pay plaintiffs’ legal fees, and sometimes imposed new leaders on unions.

However necessary in combating racism, these decisions came at a price. The legal system that successfully forced unions to integrate espoused an individualist view of racism. Judges often decertified unions upon evidence of racism among prounion workers without considering whether such sentiments were held by those in power. The NLRB possessed a more sophisticated view of institutional racism, but its ability to deal with racism was legally restricted. The judicial system lacked the NLRB’s theory of an institutional racism that demarcated structures of power in which those individuals who occupied powerful positions were considered far more accountable than rank-and-file workers. This scattershot approach punished unions for actions outside of their control. Such policies weakened unions and heightened antagonisms between unions and minorities.

While Frymer makes many solid points, his single-minded focus on legal institutions often ignores vital context. Absent from this study is significant attention to the Democratic Party, which figures in the title of the book but hardly appears in its pages. At times the party appears as innocent bystander, wounded in the battle between labor and the civil rights movement. But the party’s failure to design or promote legal strategies to reconcile labor and the civil rights movement was massively irresponsible. Why a party so beholden to labor and African-Americans finds it so hard to represent their interests remains a pressing question. The party’s efforts to repeal antilabor legislation and to pass legislation encouraging union organization that might expand the power of integrated unions are mainly symbolic.

Arguments like Frymer’s that identify a set of uniquely American institutions to explain working-class quiescence and the lack of a large socialist or labor party have been labeled “American exceptionalist.” Focusing on the role of distinctive American institutions, Frymer propounds a classic American exceptionalist argument at a time when America seems less exceptional than ever. The unique role of the American legal establishment has been frequently cited as an example of exceptionalism. But since the 1980s, the decline of strike activity and union membership has
become a trend in Western industrialized countries; the growing role of migrants from culturally dissimilar regions, the growth of an underclass in urban areas, and the expansion of world markets are factors that need to be taken into account. In the 1960s and 1970s, judicial rulings may have reduced labor militancy significantly. U.S. labor militancy and organization decreased during these decades, while there was unusual militancy and growing union membership among European industrialized nations, but the decline in the last two decades has been widespread among Western industrial nations and suggests that other, transnational factors, may be at work.

Nonetheless, this is an exceptionally interesting book. Frymer makes new arguments, uses fresh evidence, and addresses important questions. He casts new light on the historical relationship between labor and the civil rights movement.

*Affirmative Advocacy: Race, Class, and Gender in Interest Group Politics.*

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Dara Strolovitch’s *Affirmative Advocacy: Race, Class and Gender in Interest Group Politics* is a major new work that advances our understanding of “intersectional” approaches to understanding power and inequality. Though written by a political scientist, the book easily crosses over to sociology, and it has won awards from the American Sociological Association’s section on Race, Gender and Class as well as the American Political Science Association’s section on Political Organizations and Parties.

The focus here is on advocacy groups that represent marginalized groups in American society—especially the poor, racial minorities, and women. Strolovitch notes that these groups have enjoyed decreasing legal exclusion in recent years—but also increasing inequality in their populations. This means that there is diversity within these populations, and thus diversity of problems and priorities. Given this diversity, which battles do advocacy groups choose to fight? Which groups and which problems within marginalized populations get the most attention? Building on work by scholars such as Cathy Cohen, Strolovich helpfully frames the universe of policy options for any advocacy group. An advocacy group may pursue policies that benefit all within the group’s mandate (universal issues), or most of the members (majority issues), or only a minority (either advantaged subgroup or disadvantaged subgroup issues).

In asking questions about the choices made by advocacy groups, Strolovitch is addressing the problems of the “intersectionally” marginalized: