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Teacher Unions conflict in New York City, 1935–1960

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ABSTRACT

While studies of the New York City Teachers Union (TU) generally attribute its eventual demise to the Red Scares of the 1940s and 1950s, this article situates the TU in the history of New York City teachers' associations more generally. It argues that the Union's fate was a consequence not simply of anticommunism, but of competition between the Union and other city teachers' associations. In particular, the Teachers Guild fought with the Union for the mantle of teacher radicalism. While the two organizations fought for some of the same issues, the liberal Guild was accommodating to the government, while the radical Union was confrontational. When it came to the Union's ideology, however, the Guild consistently sacrificed its commitment to academic freedom by collaborating with public authorities to reveal the extent of the Union's Communist commitments. Using archival data – private correspondence of teacher unionists, minutes of Union meetings, and articles from the teachers' unions' official periodicals – this article documents the Guild's efforts at subverting the Union, particularly at moments when the Union's political commitments became salient in public affairs.

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Introduction

Over the past few years, a number of scholars have turned their attention to the role of New York City teachers in thinking through the tangled relationship between class, race, civil rights, and left-wing politics during the postwar years.¹ While their precise emphases vary, they all bear one striking similarity: a concern with the particular role of the New York City Teachers Union (TU). This organization, much maligned by a previous generation of historians (and raised to sainthood by a handful of hagiographers), is an understandable focal point. Founded in 1916, the TU was one of the first American Federation of Teachers (AFT) locals and among the most militant teacher organizations in the USA for decades, fighting not only for better salaries and working conditions for teachers but for education reforms, like the purging of racism from school textbooks, political change, in the form of greater community participation in education,² and professional dignity, in the form of more robust participation in municipal politics. Prior to legalized collective bargaining in the public sector, and with teachers' involvement in public politics being viewed with suspicion

by the “Progressive” education reformers of the age, these stances attracted public notice disproportionate to the union’s small numbers. During the 1920s, its reputation for militancy and defending teachers’ academic freedom attracted Communists to the organization. The Communists became increasingly numerous and vocal teacher unionists, culminating in a clear and fraught division between them and their noncommunist colleagues. As happened in so many other labor struggles during this era, this division fragmented the movement. In 1935, the TU split into separate organizations, with the noncommunist leftists forming the New York City Teachers Guild (TG). This left the TU as the most militant teacher organization in the city, and also the most persecuted, as its affiliation with the Communist movement left it vulnerable to attack by city, state, and federal authorities.

While previous scholarship has presented caricatured or severely truncated accounts of the TU, recent work has offered a more nuanced view of the organization.³ Rather than label the TU an instrument of Soviet subversion or a progressive force for civil rights in NYC, Clarence Taylor’s magisterial *Reds at the Blackboard* sees the TU as a reflection of the myriad tensions that permeated the early and mid-twentieth-century American left. The TU was embroiled in conflicts over the character of leftist radicalism, the role of Communism in the labor movement, the position of organized labor in American international affairs (and World War II in particular), and the divisions of race, religion, and gender, all of which Taylor documents. The book shows how the union and its members navigated the tensions of the era’s leftwing politics, before the postwar Red Scare diluted the union’s power and eventually gave way to the collective bargaining movement among city teachers, spearheaded by the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). Taylor suggests that the TU was a forerunner of “social movement unionism,” combining the bread-and-butter emphases on salaries and working conditions with community activism geared toward broader social change.⁴ With its unprecedented attention to such a broad range of themes and the depth of the archival research that informs it, *Reds at the Blackboard* is and will remain the definitive book about the TU.⁵

The current article does not break with Taylor’s overall assessment of the TU as a path-breaking union that was a force for social justice, a Communist-affiliated organization, and a victim of the Red Scares. However, I suggest here that the less radical teachers’ organizations of NYC played a more important role in the destruction of the TU than has previously been acknowledged. I argue that the trajectory of the TU was a reflection not only of local, state, and federal anti-subversion politics and the rhythms of pre-*Brown v. Board* civil rights activism, but of the divisions within the municipal teachers’ movement. At no time in the history of the TU was the union the only organization representing city teachers and, after 1935 in particular, city and state governments became more inclined to engage with other teachers’ associations than with the union, whose flirtations with American Communism increasingly isolated it. The TU faced opposition not only from the Board of Education, the government of New York State, and even the federal government during the late 1940s and 1950s, but from other teachers’ organizations in the city. In particular, the TG remained hostile to the TU for two decades after the union’s 1935 split. The chilling environment of postwar anti-Communism and the legacy of the 1935 split left the TU isolated in city and state politics by the mid-1950s, with decimated membership and ongoing investigations into its members’ political commitments. The Guild positioned itself as a progressive anticommunist force for teacher militancy, but its anticommunism also rendered it useful in the state and municipal governments’ campaigns against the TU. By pushing against the boundaries of political orthodoxy, the TU induced the city government to deal with

the moderate teachers' organizations, thereby isolating the already-stigmatized TU in city politics.⁶ The TG, meanwhile, spearheaded the movement to unify teachers during the late 1950s, eventually forming the UFT, which continues to represent city teachers to this day. By situating the trajectory of the TU in the history of conflicts among teachers' associations, this article suggests that the TU's destruction was not simply the obvious consequence of anticommunist politics during the cold war. Rather, its downfall was bound up in the competition between radical and liberal understandings of the boundaries of political orthodoxy among American schoolteachers.

After reviewing the state of prewar teachers' organizations and the circumstances surrounding the 1935 split within the NYC teachers' movement, I proceed to discuss the conflict between the TU and the other teachers' organizations. Although I do not limit myself to the TG, I do focus on it because of the peculiar tension between it and the TU: the TG's progressive pretensions and its focus on social change coexisted with an interest in distancing itself from its mother organization's Communist affiliations and internal factionalism. Drawing on the private correspondence of TG officials, as well as the major TG and TU periodicals from the early 1930s to the 1950s, I document the Guild's consistent hostility toward the Union. Although there are certainly instances in which the competing unions collaborated to fight battles of mutual interest, these instances should not obscure the fact that, in its effort to carve out a distinct niche in city politics and in the labor movement, the Guild actively subverted the Union during the 1940s. During those times when either the state or city government targeted teachers with questionable politics, the TG consistently sided with the government, notwithstanding its rhetorical support for academic freedom and the freedom of teachers to join the organizations of their choice. I provide an overview of TG leaders' privately expressed hostility toward the TU before moving on to examine two three-year time periods—1940–1942 and 1948–1950—during which the TU's political commitments became highly salient in state and local politics. During each of these periods, either the Guild or prominent members thereof collaborated with public authorities to implicate the TU. After a brief discussion of the Guild's ongoing targeting of the TU in the lead-up to the formation of the UFT, I conclude with some remarks about the importance of the teachers' movement's radical flank during the postwar years and the legacy of the Guild's conflict with the Union.⁷

The TU from its founding to the split

Two NYC high school teachers, Henry Linville and Abraham Lefkowitz, founded the union initially in 1913 as the Teachers' League. Linville and Lefkowitz imagined the organization to be a militant alternative to the so-called "professional" associations of NYC teachers, the women teachers whose political advocacy was limited to "equal pay for equal work" campaigning, and the Teachers' Council which was essentially a tool of the city's Board of Education.⁸ It attracted some luminaries of the city's teacher-activists like Charlotte Perkins Gilman and John Dewey, the latter becoming one of Linville's closest confidantes. In 1916, the Teachers' League became the Teachers' Union, and when several thousand teachers broke with the National Education Association (NEA) to form the AFT, the TU became one of its charter members as Local 5. While the TU was certainly concerned with wages and working conditions, its agenda had less to do with economic advancement than with protecting teachers' legal rights, getting teachers represented on the Board of Education, promoting teachers' voice in determining school policy, freeing teachers from arbitrary administrative authority, and

advancing democratic education within the schools. Its commitment to academic liberty and free speech drew sympathizers of the recent Bolshevik Revolution into its ranks. The influx of Communists and Communist allies into the TU made it a target for State Senator Clayton Lusk's investigation of "seditious activities" among city teachers.⁹ Between 1919 and 1923, the Lusk Committee's investigations resulted in many prospective teachers being denied certification and the firing of many working teachers. After the Lusk Committee disbanded in 1923, Linville and Lefkowitz fought, unsuccessfully, for restitution for the teachers who had lost their jobs during the Lusk years. This battle cemented their reputation as dangerous subversives among city and state administrators.¹⁰

During the 1920s, Local 5 was only one of around 70 organizations representing city teachers. Most of these groups were apolitical in nature, devoted to the advancement of narrow professional goals (like the High School Teachers' Association (HSTA) and the Kindergarten-6B Teachers' Association) or to the collective identity of ethnic and religious groups within the teachers' corps (there were four separate Jewish teachers' associations during the 1920s alone). They had overlapping memberships and, very often, competing goals. This heterogeneity made it difficult for the group to speak with a single voice. In 1924, the leader of the HSTA, William Lasher, formed an umbrella organization called the Joint Committee of Teachers' Organizations (JCTO) to represent city teachers in dealing with the Board of Education and with state legislators in Albany.¹¹ This group accumulated a record of modest legislative successes through the end of the 1920s and into the 1930s: a successful salary campaign in 1927, the legal extension of New York state authority over salary schedules negotiated with the city, a fraught battle against Mayor James Walker's proposal to induce all city workers to "voluntarily" give up a month of salaries in 1933, and so forth. However, the JCTO stuck close to political orthodoxy on the question of loyalty to the USA. For example, it supported a 1934 bill which required all public school teachers in the state of New York to swear loyalty oaths, a position which put it at odds with its most militant affiliate.¹²

The TU became a JCTO affiliate in 1927. This made the TU the only member of the JCTO that was an actual trade union. Unlike the "professional" associations that constituted the rest of the JCTO, the TU formed alliances with blue collar labor unions in the city, it voiced public positions on the most important political issues of the day, and it was a robust advocate for academic freedom and freedom of speech for city teachers, freedoms that the Lusk Committee had so clearly threatened. Its alliance with the New York Federation of Labor gave it a political advantage over other teachers' associations in dealing with the state legislature, and it pulled this advantage with it into the JCTO. The TU's leadership became increasingly instrumental to the JCTO's legislative successes. While most of the JCTO's leaders were politically inexperienced, Lefkowitz and other union officials were veterans of city and state politics. They took charge of many JCTO initiatives, and their legislative delegates became frequent visitors to Albany.¹³ At the same time, Local 5's own constituency was fairly narrow, representing mostly male Jewish high school teachers, many of whom had far left politics. Those qualities ensured that state legislators in Albany and municipal schooling authorities in NYC would sooner deal directly with the JCTO than with the TU. Furthermore, the JCTO could more credibly claim to be a truly representative body than the TU, since the former comprised organizations that represented the vast majority of city teachers and the latter did not. During the late 1920s, the TU's leaders lobbied for the reinstatement of teachers who lost their jobs as a result of the Lusk inquiries, but the JCTO wanted nothing of that battle.

Academic freedom was the TU's turf, and the "professionals" of the JCTO, many of whom were NEA members and/or affiliates, laid low.

The fragmentation of Local 5 was the eventual outcome of friction between Linville and Lefkowitz, on the one hand, and the union's Communist membership, on the other. Since the Lusk Committee investigation had depleted the TU's ranks, and threatened its very existence, Linville had steered the TU in a more moderate direction. He remained a fellow traveler of sorts, sympathizing with the Soviet experiment, although reluctant to take a hard line on socialist politics. Until 1929, the TU's Communist members constituted the "Progressive" wing of the organization, a loyal opposition to Linville and Lefkowitz that wanted to push the union into the more militant stances that it took prior to the Lusk investigations. But in 1929, a leadership struggle within the American Communist Party generated tensions that eventually fragmented the union. After the young upstart Jay Lovestone failed to displace the Stalin-favored William Foster from leadership of the American Communist Party, a process of "Bolshevizing" American Communism began.¹⁴ The TU's Communists were entirely Lovestoneites and were able to largely avoid the Stalinist movement until 1931, when William Foster's allies began entering the TU. They were regular attendees at general membership meetings, and soon the Lovestoneite "Progressives" and the Foster-Stalin "Rank-and-File" projected their factional battles into the affairs of the union. While the Progressives disagreed with the TU leadership's moderation, they also believed that, in the context of the economic crisis of the early 1930s, the most important goals were strengthening the labor movement and attracting political radicals to the union fold. They avoided outright challenges to Linville. The Rank-and-File, on the other hand, lashed out at both the Progressives and the union leaders for their moderate stance, advocating "direct action" tactics to bring about political change in NYC.

Communists of both factions became regular attendees of general membership and delegate assembly meetings, and their behavior led to a pitched battle between the youthful opposition and the more senior union leadership. The Communists filibustered, shouted from the floor of meetings, and generally obstructed union business in order to push their views onto the agenda. In response to intensified Communist activism in the early 1930s, Linville consolidated formal power in Local 5

through constitutional revisions that limited general membership meetings, allowed tighter control of discussion at those meetings, ended recall of the Executive Board, and gave the board power to fill its own vacancies (previously the responsibility of representatives from each school).¹⁵

He defended his power-consolidation maneuvers as necessary responses to the Communists' obstructionism. His opponents accused him of Red baiting, dictatorship, and elitism. Matters came to a head in 1933, when Linville called for the expulsion of six of the Communist opposition leaders. Charges of "disruption" were filed and, in accordance with the union constitution's provisions for expelling members, the executive board commissioned a grievance committee to consider the charges and offer a recommendation to the membership. Linville appointed his old friend and charter TU member John Dewey to chair the committee. Dewey made a presentation before 800 members of the union on 29 April 1933. His report was clearly sympathetic to Linville's position and contemptuous of the opposition groups.¹⁶ Dewey and his colleagues recommended, first, that basic union powers be vested in a delegate assembly, in order to prevent coherent minorities from taking over union decision-making power, and, second, a six month suspension for the six teachers on trial. As

far as the suspension of the teachers was concerned, “the vote of 451–316 was a few short of the two-thirds majority needed, under the union’s constitution, to convict.”¹⁷ The vote precipitated angry debates and recriminations. Accusations of obstructionism met with accusations of red-baiting and, right after Dewey’s report was adopted, attendees began leaving the hall.¹⁸

The TU’s executive committee—Linville and his allies—now found themselves in a difficult position. The Communists were a minority in Local 5, but they were much better organized and politically active than the union administration and its supporters. Communist activists flooded union meetings and dominated the proceedings, refusing to give up the floor when they were granted it, and shouting and chanting when they couldn’t get it. “More than a half-century later, [future TG leader] Rebecca Simonson recalled: ‘The fights were wild, absolutely wild If you rose to vote against their position, [the communists] literally took you by the coat and pushed you down to your seat.’”¹⁹ While Linville was committed to Local 5 being a democratic organization, he found this sort of behavior distasteful. As the problem was put in the union’s official publication in 1932, “the question which our Union members must settle is how to deal with teachers who in general in our meetings refuse to recognize as valid any of the principles of common decency and cooperation.”²⁰ The final straw came in 1935 when a debate arose over whether to accept substitute and unemployed teachers into the union, as well as the thousands of Works Progress Administration (WPA) teachers who had come to NYC that year. Given their interest in mobilizing “the masses” and seeking new allies for their various causes, the Communists pushed for a definition of teacher that included all of the above. Linville and his allies stuck to a “professional” stance, arguing that only properly credentialed and employed teachers deserved union membership.²¹ In the face of Linville’s refusal to abandon this position, the Rank-and-File Communists formed independent associations to mobilize the excluded teachers, much to the outrage of both the Progressives and the union’s executive board.

By this time, Linville and Lefkowitz realized that their standing in Local 5 was irreparably damaged. The success of the Communists in pushing their minority agenda had tarnished the union’s reputation in the labor community. When American Federation of Labor (AFL) president William Green wrote a letter to the local, urging the expulsion of Communists from the union, the union’s delegate assembly rejected the mild response that Linville had drafted. In its place, the assembly passed a resolution that not only opposed “any discrimination or disciplinary action against any worker because of his political opinions or activity,” but also called President Green’s correspondence “a Red-Baiting letter, which is in violation of Union democracy and Union principles.”²² “In my judgment, you are out of place in your affiliation with the AFL,” Green responded. “You properly belong to the communist organization and the communist movement.”²³ “Local 5 thus went on public record as condemning the president of the AFL for ‘red-baiting’ and ‘anti-union activities.’”²⁴ With that, Linville had lost his battle with the minority. When the AFT convened in Cleveland that year, he turned on his own organization, recommending that the AFT revoke Local 5’s charter, a position that Green supported. Linville told the convention that if his recommendation was denied, he and the other union officers would resign their posts and leave the union. The vote went 100–179 against revocation and, on September 5, Linville followed through with his promise. He and nearly all the other officers of the union left the TU, and nearly 800 of the 2200 union members followed. The organization they founded on the first day of October, the TG, quickly emerged as the face of noncommunist teacher militancy in New York.²⁵

How the city teachers' associations fought the New York City TU

In the two decades following the split, the TG fought for the mantle of radicalism among city teachers' associations. Its chief rival for this reputation was its parent organization, the TU. Indeed, many of the TG's rhetorical commitments resonated with those of the TU. Chief among the Guild's goals were cooperation "to the fullest extent" with the labor movement and working "for a progressive labor philosophy" and "labor consciousness" among teachers.²⁶ The TG also promoted "the concept of education as a public agency" and aimed at the furtherance of socialist goals: "a social order in which use and human welfare will replace the present-day motives of profit and exploitation."²⁷ Like the TU, it spoke out for more funding for public education, an end to loyalty oaths, the freedom for teachers to affiliate with the political organizations of their choice, and an end to discrimination on the basis of gender and skin color.²⁸ "Teachers should be free to handle controversial subjects impartially," the Guild asserted, "and to participate, without limitation, in any activities open to other citizens."²⁹ The TG maintained this rhetoric all through the 1940s and 1950s, but its actions tell a different story when it came to racism and free speech, as I show in more detail below.

The TG's involvement in the case of Gustav Schoenchen belied its antiracism credentials.³⁰ Schoenchen was the principal of P.S. 5 in Manhattan when, on 21 October 1936, he allegedly beat up a 14-year-old African-American child named Robert Shelton in his office. An affidavit from two physicians attested to injuries to the child's left forearm, left shoulder, ribs, and lacerations on his scalp "one and a quarter inches long in the left frontal region and another almost one-half inch long about three inches posterior to the aforementioned."³¹ But Schoenchen denied any wrongdoing, and the Board of Education defended him. The TU's Permanent Committee for Better Schools in Harlem, formed by the union after the 1935 split to improve the overcrowded and underfunded Harlem schools, helped organize a rally calling for Schoenchen's dismissal. They picketed P.S. 5 for months, along with Harlem parents and civic organizations. In response to the dismissal of charges against Schoenchen in January of 1937, the Permanent Committee helped set up a mock trial of the Board of Education, attracting around 2000 Harlem residents. Reverend Adam Clayton Powell served as judge, and the jurors, including A. Phillip Randolph among others, found the Board guilty of perpetuating racial inequality through its neglect of the Harlem schools. The Guild, however, did not attend these rallies. While the historical record is unclear as to what actually happened in the Schoenchen incident, the Guild defended Schoenchen. It accused the TU of "promoting race riots and class war."³² It approved of the police being called to break up the TU-led pickets in front of P.S. 5, and it argued that everyone should respect the results of the official inquiry into the case.³³ Schoenchen claimed that *he* was the victim, not Shelton and his family, and he thanked the TG for its support.³⁴ For the Guild, standard due process was the way to solve political problems. The possibility that racism prevented due process from generating justice was not part of the Guild's considerations.

The Schoenchen case attests to the fact that, on the question of tactics, the TG was more temperate than the TU. When it was clear in late 1936 that the Union wanted to push for more delegations to Albany, the Guild advised that "unwanted delegations at Albany would create irritations that would have unfavorable effects not only on salary legislation situations, but also on other matters of interest to teachers" and that the Guild should "await the recommendations of the Joint Committee in the campaign for full salary restoration."³⁵ Deferring to the JCTO became a default strategy for the Guild (a new JCTO member) on many issues,

particularly after Lefkowitz became vice president of that body. Upon returning from a trip to Albany where he learned that “the general trend was a determination to kill every bill that involved expenditures,” he urged the TG executive board to “contribute funds to the Joint Committee and to follow faithfully the instructions of the Joint Committee in this fight for what is right and just.”³⁶ The early TG balanced rhetorical militancy and advocacy for a better, more just society with a measured, practical approach to public politics—“effective militancy and solidarity rather than mass disorder and rioting.”³⁷ As if to demonstrate such a commitment, when the JCTO notified its affiliates that Governor Herbert Lehman had a salary bill on his desk that had been passed by both houses of the state legislature, Linville notified JCTO Chairman Arthur Bowie that the TG executive board had “voted to request the Joint Committee to prepare for a large but orderly demonstration of teachers and other civil service groups wherever possible at Albany and in New York” in order “to impress public opinion with the justified demand of teachers and other employees for salary restoration.”³⁸ When, in 1939, at a dinner given in honor of Colonel Walter Jeffreys Carlin, a long-serving Brooklyn member of the Board of Education, Martha Byrne, the register of New York county, told the audience of 1500 teachers, to “push hard enough, and forget that you are ladies and gentlemen, and use the tactics of the clenched-fist people,” TG President-to-be Rebecca Simonson registered her disapproval before the TG’s delegate assembly.³⁹ “Such tactics are the tactics of Fascists and Communists,” Simonson asserted. “If these dangerous methods are pursued, teachers will be torn in factional strife and school morale will be badly shattered.”⁴⁰ While the TG was hardly a conservative organization, especially compared to other teachers’ organizations in NYC, its adherence to the political orthodoxies distinct to American liberal democracy in the 1930s and 1940s clearly blunted its radicalism.

Notwithstanding the Guild’s efforts at carving out a distinct niche in New York teachers’ politics, its animosity toward Communism and public disorder betrays its heritage. Each of the Guild’s leaders between 1935 and 1960—Henry Linville, Albert Smallheiser, Rebecca Simonson, and finally Charles Cogen, who was responsible for the settlement between the Guild and the HSTA in 1959 and 1960 that created the UFT—had left the TU in 1935 to form the TG, and the factional struggles clearly left a residue.

The TG’s desire to distinguish itself from the TU is clear above all in the TG leaders’ disdain for their former colleagues. The private correspondence among Guild leaders in the first few years after the split shows how deep the animosity toward their parent organization ran. “A few members [of the TG] continue to look back with mixed feelings,” Linville wrote to John Dewey several months after the split, “including some indications of longing regret, to our inglorious past, but that uncertainty will doubtless fade in time.”⁴¹ He later claimed that “if another local of the AF of T neglects to see the lesson of Local 5, it deserves to be destroyed.”⁴² “There may never be another political movement as malevolent as the Communists are,” Linville went on,

But they may make more trouble than we can handle, teachers being as slow of comprehension as they are, before the real criminality of these devils becomes generally known It would be better that there be no local in New York than one of the kind existing at present. The present deluded members do not know it, but time will tell the certain story of failure.⁴³

Selma Borchardt, one of Linville’s allies in the Washington, D.C. local and an AFT vice-president, referred to Local 5 as “a weird combination of Lovestoneites, Rank and File, Militants, and lots of other maladjusted, psychopathic human material.”⁴⁴ “I do not share the views of those of our own group who want to soft pedal the Red issue,” she wrote to Linville. “I

shall do nothing to hide it; nothing to minimize it."⁴⁵ She expressed frustration with the idea "that to oppose dishonest Reds is any less liberal than to oppose any other dishonest person."⁴⁶ When the TU, itself burgeoning with new members in 1936, published a statement claiming 4001 members, "including over 600 WPA workers," Linville, now outside the AFT for the first time since 1916, sent a message to "Our Friends in A.F.T. Locals" to inform his allies that "[t]he Guild does not admit WPA workers, because they are not teachers in the professional sense" and that Local 5's new affiliation to the American League Against War and Fascism shows the group's true colors, since the League "is not a peace organization" but "is a Communist set-up."⁴⁷ And when the International Ladies Garment Workers invited Linville to help organize a new "labor drama" association, he noted the absence of his former organization. "Apparently the Teachers Union had not been invited which may indicate that after all labor affiliation is built on friendship as much as anything else."⁴⁸

Although, as *Reds at the Blackboard* makes clear, there was much more to the post-1935 TU than its Communist affiliations, it was certainly those Communist affiliations that polarized it from other teachers' organizations. In 1936 and 1937, Local 5 began affiliating with groups that had Communist commitments or leadership, groups that Linville and Lefkowitz never would have countenanced, like the aforementioned American League Against War and Fascism (later renamed the American League for Peace and Democracy). In March of 1938, a representative of the HSTA tabled a motion to expel the TU from the JCTO, and the delegates of the city's teacher associations voted 82–25 for expulsion. The JCTO argued that the TU "deliberately sabotaged the committee's efforts," both by presenting "a parallel legislative program in direct opposition to the vote of 75 other organizations" and by asserting in front of the Mayor that "the Joint Committee was a 'paper organization.'"⁴⁹ Meanwhile, the TU's politics came to reflect the Soviet Union's geopolitical position. While the TU was pro-Roosevelt, pro-New Deal, and anti-imperialist for the first few years after the split, the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939 induced an unprecedented pacifism in the union. "Teachers must be especially aware of their function in maintaining and strengthening forces that work for peace,"⁵⁰ the TU periodical *New York Teacher* claimed. When the TU publically protested against President Roosevelt's defense program in 1940,⁵¹ Lefkowitz claimed it was "important for the Guild to issue a statement to offset the effect upon the public of" the protest, for while "it is contrary to the policy of the Guild to participate in things of this kind, these are unusual circumstances calling for unusual action."⁵² The JCTO issued its own message to President Roosevelt, repudiating the union's opposition to US rearmament.⁵³ Then, in June of 1941, the TU turned on the dime of the Nazi invasion of the USSR. When war broke out at the end of December, the TU announced that the teachers were ready to serve their country.⁵⁴ To be sure, the TU did not merit the label of "Communist organization." Despite allegations to the contrary, its executive board and membership were a politically diverse lot,⁵⁵ and its community activism extended far beyond Communist Party propagandizing or indoctrination. But its willingness to take political cues from the USSR when it came to foreign policy certainly damaged it.

The animosity that Linville and his associates expressed toward their former organization was matched by their collaboration with public authorities and the national teachers' movement in isolating it. In what follows, I focus on two three-year time periods: 1940–1942 and 1948–1950. During each period, the question of teachers' political ideology became unusually salient.⁵⁶ In the 1940–1942 period, the context was the simultaneous investigations into the teachers' political commitments by the New York state government and the movement

within the AFT to eliminate Communism from its affiliates. The 1948–1950 period constitutes the beginning of the Second Red Scare as it pertained to NYC teachers. While the Dies Committee (later known more famously as the House Un-American Activities Committee) had begun its work in the late 1930s, and Joseph McCarthy did not rise to national prominence until 1950, state and local legislation targeted city teachers as early as 1948. By the end of 1950, state and city government efforts to ruin the TU and its members had assured its political marginalization for the remainder of its existence. In what follows, I show how other city teachers' organizations, particularly the TG, were complicit in the TU's fate.

1940–1942

On 29 March 1940, the New York State Legislature created a special joint committee for the purpose of investigating school financing and subversive activities throughout the state. Assemblyman Herbert Rapp took responsibility for a subcommittee devoted to the former, while Senator Frederic Coudert chaired a subcommittee assigned to the latter. Between September of 1940 and December of 1941 (when the Pearl Harbor bombings redirected the government's attention), the Coudert subcommittee interviewed over 500 individuals with regard to their alleged Communist Party membership, sympathies with Communism, or affiliations with Communists. It focused most of its attention on the TU, along with Local 537, the college professors' union which had split off from the TU in January of 1938. The subcommittee subpoenaed both locals for their membership lists, along with minutes from their meetings and their financial records. Drawing from the information thus gained, the committee released a report arguing that it was not possible to be a public school teacher while also being a Communist Party member. It asserted that "the Communist method is the method of conspirative fraud," requiring "discipline and a course of conduct which are incompatible with the public service, in that they are thereby obliged to do improper acts in furtherance of those objectives."⁵⁷ Over 50 professors at City College alone were dismissed from their jobs as a direct result of the Rapp-Coudert Committee, and the committee's work became a template for subsequent inquisitions at the federal level, including the HUAC and McCarthy hearings, along with the less-heralded, but no less important sessions conducted by the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, chaired by Patrick McNamara, during the 1950s.

The TU, of course, fought the Rapp-Coudert Committee from the very beginning. It resisted the order to give up its membership list, although the New York Court of Appeals compelled the union to abide by the subpoena in a January 1941 decision. As former TU activist and American Communist Party member Bella Dodd recalled, the Communist Party quietly worked with TU activists to create a "Friends of the Free Public Schools" committee, which raised \$150,000 to fight Rapp-Coudert, and a series of "Save Our Schools" community clubs consisting of parents, students, teachers, and unionists.⁵⁸ With reference to Assemblyman Rapp's charge, the TU also distributed pamphlets advocating free public schools to other teachers' organizations, trade unions, women's clubs, and public officials. It called attention to the relationship between the state's persecution of political undesirables in the schools and the justification of cutting state aid to education and denying teachers' demands for salary raises. It also put these proceedings into the perspective of its own organizational history, as a defender of academic freedom in the face of the Lusk Commission, of which Rapp-Coudert was a "lineal descendant."⁵⁹ The TU accused the committee of being soft on

fascism and anti-Semitism and, after the committee had ceased its work, the union called for reinstating the teachers who had been fired as a result of the Rapp-Coudert proceedings.

A number of organizations, including the AFT, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Lawyers' Guild, the City Industrial Council, the New York State Federation of Labor, and the Teamsters' Local 807, showed solidarity with the teachers in one way or another: sending petitions to the state government and various media outlets in support of the teachers' right to withhold their lists, helping the union in its legal battle with the state, and sending delegations to Albany to protest Rapp-Coudert's activities.

But within the community of city teachers' associations, the TU was isolated. At the Bronx Boro-Wide Association of Teachers' third annual luncheon, in the midst of the Rapp-Coudert investigations, JCTO officials and local councilmen spoke out against the union and in favor of weeding "subversives" out of the school system.⁶⁰ While, during the 1930s, the TG had spoken up on matters of academic freedom, its support for that principle in 1940 and 1941 was less clear, as the matter of Communist "subversion" became politically salient. The Guild leadership saw itself as trying to undo the damage the TU had done to teacher unionism, and unionism in general, through the Guild's "professional and economic program."⁶¹ In practice, that meant cooperating with the government to expose the TU's association with Communism in an official forum. The Rapp-Coudert Committee's report specifically noted Henry Linville's participation in helping bring the story of Communism in the city teachers' corps to light.⁶² Benjamin Mandel, a former Lovestonite who had left the TU with Linville and Lefkowitz in 1935 and participated as a staff member on the Dies Committee in 1938, presented evidence that the Communist Party had a distinct position on how to use the schools to further the party's goals, and he also advised Rapp-Coudert's investigators to interview Lefkowitz for more information to implicate TU members.⁶³ The Guild was later happy to find that many of its own school financing policies were endorsed by Rapp-Coudert in 1943.⁶⁴ As discussed earlier, TG members had been trying to subvert the union almost from the moment Linville and his colleagues abandoned it. The Rapp-Coudert Committee gave TG leaders a chance to simultaneously retaliate against their former organization, which was now a competitor, and promote their anticommunist bona fides. In the wake of the Smith Act of 1940, which established criminal penalties for anyone who advocated the use of force or violence to overthrow the US government, the TG followed in the unfortunate footsteps of liberal organizations that sacrificed freedom of expression for political orthodoxy.⁶⁵

The TG reaped the benefits of its anticommunist position in 1941 and 1942 when the AFT fulfilled one of the Guild's most important political goals. The AFT executive committee voted at its meeting of 29 December 1940, to hold a referendum on the expulsion of Local 5, Local 537, and Philadelphia's Local 192. The AFT charged Local 5 – by then the second largest AFT local – with an inability to stem factionalism in its internal affairs, disruption of the AFT's decision-making process, bad publicity directly resulting in loss of membership, failing to win reinstatement to the Central Trades and Labor Council following the local's 1938 expulsion from that council, and, finally, engaging in "certain organized tactics and practices inimical to democracy."⁶⁶ "By ridding ourselves of this influence," the AFT's executive council declared, "we are wresting from reaction the strongest weapon it has against us."⁶⁷ Two months later, TU president Charles Hendley officially appealed to the AFT "on the principles of tolerance and democracy" to cease its course, accusing the federation of ignoring "the advance of fascism right in your own field of education" and underestimating the resolve of the minority groups

to acquiesce in the executive board's decisions.⁶⁸ "Did you think we would be so overawed by you," he asked, "that we would be speechless and helpless in the face of any move you would make to eliminate us from the scene?"⁶⁹ Robert Speer, a professor of elementary education at NYU and chair of the Committee to Save the AFT, similarly argued that the AFT was adopting a "totalitarian attitude" and accused the executive board of subverting the federation's own constitution in order to expel undesirables.⁷⁰ But their efforts were in vain. In May of 1941, the AFT officially expelled the three locals from its ranks. The following year, President Roosevelt spoke at the annual AFT meeting in Gary, Indiana and challenged the teachers to focus on the war with Germany and Japan, prompting delegates to commit to fighting "against totalitarian tendencies at home." When several resolutions came up "for the instatement of, or for cooperation with, ex-locals 5, 192, and 537" the delegates "voted non-concurrences with all such resolutions."⁷¹ After the TU's unsuccessful effort to get the AFT to reverse its decision, it became Local 555 of the CIO, a then-rival of the AFL.⁷² By this time, the TG had become Local 2, the AFT's new NYC affiliate. The rival teachers' unions were now embedded in different branches of the American labor movement. Linville himself did not live long enough to see the empowerment of the TG in the wake of the TU's downfall; he died in an automobile accident on 1 October 1941.

1948–1950

The Rapp-Coudert hearings were part of a long and continuous pattern of antiradical and anticommunist repression, in which the more famous McCarthy era was a moment of inflection. During these three years, state and municipal governments enacted a series of "mini-HUACs" across the country, many of which were modeled after Rapp-Coudert, and New York was no exception. The Feinberg Law empowered the state Board of Regents to label any school employees "subversive" and design procedures for how to deal with their dismissal. The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 required all union leaders to declare that their organizations were not Communist Party supporters, nor supporters of any organization seeking the "overthrow of the United States government." The Hartley Labor Committee in charge of implementing this act subpoenaed TU members in response to a five week long picket at the Radio Electronics School of New York, organized by the TU's private school unit. It also interviewed the Superintendent of Schools, William Jansen, about Communism in the schools. While Jansen refused to indict teachers before the committee, instead praising TU members for their professionalism and leadership, he also began summoning suspected Communist teachers to his office for interrogations. These teachers included Abraham Lederman and Samuel Wallach, both executive board members of the TU. After Jansen threatened first-grade teacher Minnie Gutride with conduct unbecoming a teacher, Gutride went home that evening and committed suicide, eliciting condemnation of Jansen's investigations both from the TU and from the *New York Times*.⁷³ On 3 May 1950, he suspended 8 members of the TU's executive board, for refusing to answer questions about their Communist Party affiliation, officially terminating their employment in February of the following year. Finally, and most destructively for the TU, the NYC Board of Education passed the Timone Resolution on 1 June 1950, which committed the Board and its affiliated personnel never to "negotiate, confer, deal with or recognize" the TU or any other front for a Communist, fascist, or otherwise "subversive" organization.⁷⁴

The TG, in spite of some of its members' reluctance and public affirmations of the value of political liberty, again collaborated with state and local governments against the TU. After he initially demurred, the Hartley Subcommittee subpoenaed TG stalwart Abraham Lefkowitz to offer testimony in 1948 to implicate the TU. By this time, Lefkowitz was no longer a classroom teacher, having become the principal of Samuel J. Tilden High School. He related the story of the TU's history of Communist affiliations, dating back to the 1920s. His reluctance was clear. "I have not much confidence in committees of a reactionary anti-labor Congress," he said before beginning, "who rely upon guilt by association instead of time-honored legal methods."⁷⁵

However reluctant he might have been to offer official testimony about the TU and its history, Lefkowitz did not show similar reluctance in the case of Louis Jaffe. Jaffe was a social studies teacher at Samuel J. Tilden High School, where Lefkowitz was principal, teaching allegedly leftwing versions of recent history, particularly with regard to the then-new United Nations. He was also a TU member and, when his department supervisor had him transferred, the union accused Lefkowitz of having a political agenda.⁷⁶ The TG struck back, accusing the TU of using the "Jaffe case" as a political tool to "attack Lefkowitz and, through him, the Guild."⁷⁷ Jaffe was eventually transferred to Brooklyn's Erasmus Hall High School in September of 1948, but the animosity engendered by the case spilled into the daily newspapers. Lefkowitz defended his own actions in open letter of 11 October, not only arguing that Jaffe offered "biased" lectures that "harmonize with the Soviet Union viewpoint" to "the detriment of the viewpoint of his own country," but also lashing out at the TU, which was defending Jaffe. "They merely follow the Lenin line," he wrote, claiming that the TU "developed lying to a fine art and concede their expertness due to their long practice and to their philosophy."⁷⁸ As Clarence Taylor points out in *Reds at the Blackboard*, the Jaffe case was a "small scale confrontation" that "resonated in the context of the nation's cold war anxieties."⁷⁹

The Guild's support for the freedom of teachers to affiliate with the organizations they wished was similarly equivocal. The TG came out against the Timone Resolution in a short column in the *Guild Bulletin*, the TG's monthly four-page periodical, arguing that the Resolution impinges the right of teachers "to select freely organizations of their own choosing" and that it unfairly abridges the right of groups to present their views at public Board hearings, simply because of political differences.⁸⁰ However, in a subsequent column, three times the length of the first, the TG revealed a bigger problem with the Timone Resolution: its tacit assumption that, in general, the Board of Education welcomes dealing with teachers' organizations. The TG reminded its readers that the Board forbade teachers' organizations from intervening in the grievance cases of individual teachers. "It is no secret," the *Bulletin* asserted, "that the effect of this non-recognition resolution will be felt mainly by the Guild; for the Guild tops all the teacher organizations in the number of grievances handled."⁸¹ Thus did the TG interpret an act explicitly directed at its enemy as an attack on itself. While Rebecca Simonson used her monthly *Guild Bulletin* column to warn against "Fanatical Allegiances . . . witch hunts, and guilt by association, and other undemocratic practices widely exercised by totalitarians,"⁸² she also refused to support a "united front" of teachers, for fear of "strengthening a group to whose means and ends" it took exception.⁸³ When State Senator Fred G. Morrill of Brooklyn created a special committee to fight against the Feinberg Law, he recruited Simonson and Lefkowitz to be a part of it. But he also invited several TU members, including TU legislative representative Rose Russell, and several members of the American Labor Party to be a part of the committee. Simonson and Lefkowitz abandoned it only a few days after its foundation,

with Simonson remarking that “[t]here are on the committee those who have not proven themselves to be true defenders of democracy.”⁸⁴

The TG’s complicity with the Red Scare dismissals of NYC teachers stems from the tensions built into the Guild’s history. Essentially, the TG sought to build an anticommunist alternative to the TU, representing many of the causes that the TU fought for, but without the stigma of Soviet influence and intimations of social revolution and with a basic commitment to procedural democracy and the status quo hierarchy within the public education system. Its simultaneous desire to fight for the bread-and-butter issues of traditional trade unionism, be a force for social change, and participate in the city’s politics of public education reform, all while maintaining a rigid line on “subversives,” yielded contradictions that could only be sublimated when Communism was not salient in public affairs. As these two time periods suggest, the TG’s politics ultimately veered toward the accommodational liberalism of era. That this liberalism was multifaceted and internally diverse has been argued before, particularly with regard to its unfortunate tendencies with regard to Cold War-era public education.⁸⁵

From the guild to the UFT

The investigations of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, also known as the McCarran Commission, eliminated whatever vigor that remained in the radical teachers’ movement. Congress created the McCarran Commission in order to fulfill the promise of the Internal Security Act, which was passed over President Truman’s veto in the fall of 1950.⁸⁶ This Act required Communist and front groups to register with a Subversive Activities Control Board and open their membership lists, forbade Communists from holding government jobs, eased the rules for deporting aliens, and created a bureau of passports and visas under the auspices of the State Department. The Commission also had the authority to investigate “subversive activities” more generally. Many NYC teachers with a history of Communist Party membership were called before the McCarran Commission. These appearances essentially ended teachers’ careers: admitting to Communist affiliation disqualified teachers under the Smith Act, while “pleading the Fifth” triggered Section 903 of the NYC Charter which made city employees’ refusal to answer questions from a federal official on Fifth Amendment grounds about their conduct insubordinate, thereby terminating their employment without any review required. Years later, Harry Slochower, a professor of German and comparative literature at Brooklyn College, launched a legal challenge to the subcommittee after he suffered a “903 dismissal,” a challenge that wound up in the Supreme Court. *Slochower v. U.S.* (1956) declared such dismissals unconstitutional on due process grounds. But by then, the damage had been done, with hundreds of teachers dismissed, their teaching careers terminated, and the TU rendered politically powerless.

While the Guild certainly rejected McCarran and McCarthy – the latter being the subject of Lefkowitz’s three-part “Who is McCarthy?” series in the *Guild Bulletin* in 1953⁸⁷ – it also used the McCarran Commission proceedings as an opportunity to attack the TU yet again. It rejected the use of Section 903 to dismiss teachers, on account of such dismissals allowing the Board of Education to override tenure law provisions and deny pension payments to teachers, but it also agreed in principle with the plight of teachers who refused to answer questions before the McCarran Commission. “If innocent of CP membership, the members can prove it and maintain their jobs,” the *Bulletin* asserted, thereby upholding the witch-hunters’ logic that CP membership was itself a crime and violating the associational freedom that

the TG claimed to be fighting for.⁸⁸ The TG thereby made itself complicit in the government's abandonment of due process in favor of guilt by association. With the exception of those few active TU members who were also candidates for public office on the Communist Party line or were Party officials, along with those who had renounced their past affiliation, the investigators never uncovered legal evidence of Party membership.

After Charles Cogan became TG president in 1952, the TG's primary goal became securing unity among teachers' organizations, in an effort to push the city toward collective bargaining in education. Such a goal required cultivating an image of unquestioning loyalty to the USA, and any signal of sympathy with Communism had to be eliminated. In practice, this meant that the TG's campaign for collective bargaining included affirmations of its benign stance toward the homeland. The mayor's office issued an executive order in 1954 that it called its "interim industrial relations policy," refusing to recognize any workers' association

if it is motivated, controlled, or dominated by fascist, communist, or other organizations or groups which advocate, advise, teach or embrace the doctrine that the government of the United States or of any political subdivision thereof shall be overthrown or overturned by force, violence, or any unlawful means.⁸⁹

The TG was responsive to this order. When it held open hearings on the desirability of collective bargaining in 1955, it supported the freedom of teachers to affiliate with whatever organizations they wished, but it also declared that "the privileges of recognition which an organization enjoys should be restricted to those organizations which conform to democratic practices in the conduct of their affairs."⁹⁰ While "all pedagogical employees of the Board of Education, regardless of race, religious faith, or political activities or beliefs," ought to be included in a bargaining unit, the TG also asserted that "the organizations shall exclude from membership applicants who belong to organizations that are subject to totalitarian control, such as fascist, nazi, or communist."⁹¹ That same year, a TG press release affirmed its "disapproval of attempts by the New York City Board of Education to force teachers to 'tattle' past membership of their colleagues in organizations which are now considered to be subversive."⁹² In May of 1957, the TG sent a message to the Urban League's leader Ed Lewis, "criticizing his greetings to TU."⁹³ While it continued to fight for teachers' professional autonomy, through arguing against arbitrary transfers and dismissals, and in favor of due process rights, the Guild's vision of teachers' collective power had become ever more closely tied to the goal of collective bargaining between a unified teachers' union and the city administration. For the Guild, the battle for collective bargaining was too uncertain to allow the history of factionalism and Communist affiliation within the teachers' movement to poison the waters. Hence, despite the damage already done to the TU, the TG did not miss an opportunity to attack it, so as to emphasize its own political orthodoxy.

To an extent, of course, the TU's Communist affiliations, however much government officials and some scholars have exaggerated them, overdetermined its fate. More so than in other areas of the American labor movement, however, Communism greatly damaged the teachers' movement in New York City. Given public school teachers' subjugation to the Progressive ideology of professionalism, kept alive through the NEA's emphasis on the hierarchy of administrators over classroom teachers, crossing the boundaries of political orthodoxy could trigger a backlash quite easily. The TU's unfortunate alliances ensured that municipal and state governments would not only target that organization but would stigmatize the NYC teachers' corps as a whole. The TG and its members consistently rejected Communist organizations, ideology, and political movements, thereby enabling them to avoid the TU's fate and,

during the late 1950s, engineer an alliance among the city teachers' associations. The task would have been impossible with the taint of Communism lingering over the organization. Thus did the presence of the TU unintentionally legitimate a form of public claim-making among teachers, by giving their competitors a target to prove their loyalty to the country.

Conclusions

This article places the subjugation of the TU to anticommunist politics in the context of New York City's broader teaching community. Previous studies of the TU have marginalized the role of the TG and other city teachers' organizations in understanding its rise and fall. Here, I suggest that the existence of the more moderate teachers' groups, and the Guild in particular, constituted a de facto ally of municipal and state governments when they threatened the TU for its Communist affiliations. Although the Guild and the Union sometimes worked together in the same struggles, when it came to a matter of existential threat for the Union – its association with an ideology that straddled the boundaries of political orthodoxy (and, during the Red Scares, clearly crossed them)—the Guild worked against the Union. To an extent, this was a legacy of the 1935 split in the radical teachers' movement. The Guild's effort to construct a militant public identity bore the tension ingrained in its founding. The personal animosity of the pre-1935 union leaders toward the radicals that took over the organization is clear in the archival record. However, there were also differences of ideology and political strategy at stake. In 1940–1941, the opportunity to dislodge the TU from the AFT was appealing to the TG, given both the TG's commitment to an anticommunist teachers' movement and the possibility of the Guild becoming an AFT affiliate. In 1948, the relatively innocuous Louis Jaffe was fodder for the Guild in its effort to prove its anti-communist credentials at the dawn of the McCarthy Era. However rhetorically committed the Guild may have been to a progressive vision of teacher unionism that included the freedom of classroom teachers to affiliate with the political organizations of their choice, its actions did not match its rhetoric. As others have shown in more detail,⁹⁴ the Guild's liberal-not-radical approach to civil rights and academic freedom yielded accommodation to the municipal government, in contradistinction to the Union's more confrontational stance.

This article also shows that the TG was its own distinct political force between 1935 and 1960. Previous scholarship dealing with the role of teachers in city politics during this period considers the Guild to be essentially the UFT in utero.⁹⁵ But prior to the movement to build the UFT, the Guild sought to create an independent identity for itself: social democratic, willing to fight for better salaries and benefits, robust in its defense of teachers' rights, and an advocate for academic freedom. But it stopped short of defending its members' colleagues in the communist-affiliated TU and, in fact, sought to undermine its competitor. A more complete narrative of the Guild's role would account for these complexities, and I have only sketched the beginning of such a narrative in this article. Further scholarship ought to for the TG what Clarence Taylor's *Reds at the Blackboard* has done for the TU. While Taylor and others have shown the depth of the TU's internal contradictions and its polyvalent public performances, the Guild (not to mention the JCTO) has a fascinating history to match. Its history is the link between the vibrant political activism of the radical teachers' movement and the decidedly liberal political settlement that yielded the UFT as NYC teachers' collective representative.

Notes

1. Deery, *Red Apple*; Heins, *Priests of Our Democracy*; Cain, "Unionised faculty and the political left".
2. This would become the issue that would divide the teachers' movement from the African-American community in the late 1960s, in the form of the Ocean-Hill Brownsville strike. In this event, the union sided with administrative authority against local communities' demands for greater involvement in staffing their schools. See Podair, *The Strike That changed New York*.
3. Cole, *The Unionization of Teachers*; Feffer, "The Presence of Democracy"; Iversen, *The Communists and the Schools*; Murphy, *Blackboard Unions*; Zitron, *The New York City TU*; Urban, *Why Teachers Organized*.
4. Taylor, *Reds at the Blackboard*, 1–8. The term "social movement unionism" goes at least as far back as Waterman, "Social Movement Unionism." For an influential formulation, see Moody, *Workers in a Lean World*. For a useful overview of the concept's history, see Waterman, "Adventures of Emancipatory Labour Strategy".
5. Along with Taylor, *Reds at the Blackboard*, see Heins, *Priests of Our Democracy* for a nuanced account of the TU's role in debates over academic freedom and Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights* for an account of both the TU's role in understanding the friction between teacher unionism and civil rights activism that pays more attention to the TG's role than most such accounts.
6. The process by which a social movement's division between a moderate mass and a radical fringe impacts the capacity of the movement to form alliances with third parties and bargain with governments is known in the social movements literature as the "radical flank effect." The concept goes back to Haines, "Black Radicalization and the Funding of Civil Rights." For application of this idea to teachers' movements in France and the U.S., see Toloudis, *Teaching Marianne and Uncle Sam*.
7. What follows is *not* meant to be a definitive statement about the TG, the Joint Committee of Teachers' Organizations (JCTO), or any other teachers' association. Such a project would require a more systematic study of such organizations' committee meetings, political campaigns, periodicals, leaders, and rank-and-file members. Rather, this is an examination of how the moderate wing of the teachers' movement isolated the radical flank and, in so doing, insured the destruction of the radical teachers' organization, thereby opening the way to collective bargaining between the moderates and the city government.
8. For more on the women teachers' equal pay for equal work campaign, see Carter, "Becoming the 'New Women'" and Doherty, "Tempest on the Hudson."
9. *Report of the Joint Legislative Committee Investigating Seditious Activities, filed April 24, 1920, in the State of New York*, 4 vols. (Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company, 1920).
10. Pfannestiel, *Rethinking the Red Scare*.
11. This group was initially called the Joint Teachers Salary Committee before changing its name. To avoid confusion, I consistently refer to it as the JCTO.
12. City teachers had a loyalty oath requirement since World War I. For more on this matter, and the Lusk Committee that investigated teachers, see Pfannestiel, *Rethinking the Red Scare*.
13. Zeller, *Pressure Politics in New York*.
14. This was the "third period" of American communism, which reacted against the capitalist moderation of Lenin's New Economic Program by reasserting the need for revolution and embracing direct action tactics, organizing general strikes, and the leadership of vanguard parties. For more on third period communism in the USA, see Ryan, "A Final Stab at Insurrection."
15. Feffer, "The Presence of Democracy," 83.
16. *Union Teacher*, May 1933, 2–4.
17. Taft, *United They Teach*, 34.
18. For more details about Dewey's report and the showdown within the union, see Feffer, "The Presence of Democracy" and Leberstein, "Shooting Rabid Dogs," 290–3.
19. Jack Schierenbeck, "Class Struggles: The UFT story, part 3." <http://www.uft.org/your-union-then-now/class-struggles-uft-story-part-3>.
20. *Union Teacher*, June 1932, 6.
21. This point is discussed in more detail in Toloudis, *Teaching Marianne and Uncle Sam*, Chapter 6.

22. Wagner Archives, UFT Series (WA/UFT hereafter), Box 10, Folder 54, letter from Clara Naftolowitz, secretary of Local 5, to William Green, January 1935, 14.
23. WA/UFT, Box 10, Folder 54, letter from Green to Naftolowitz, January 1935, 21.
24. Iversen, *The Communists and the Schools*, 50.
25. "Teachers Who Quit Union Form Guild," *New York Times*, October 1935, 2.
26. WA/UFT, Box 7, Folder 34, "The Aims and Objectives of the New York Teachers Guild," adopted at the organization meeting, 1 October 1935.
27. Ibid.
28. Alone among scholars of pre-UFT teachers' politics in NYC, Joanna Perrillo notes the tensions and complementarities between the TU and TG on matters of race and civil rights. She shows that, while the two organizations were quite similar in their commitments to multiculturalism and integrated schooling, the Guild's commitment to teachers' rights led it to a more accommodating relationship with the Board of Education than the Union's commitment to social justice, which led it to closer community relationships and on-the-ground work in Harlem. While the Guild fought against transfers of teachers to Harlem and for teachers who sought transfers out of Harlem, the Union supported the city's policy of involuntary transfers as a way of staffing "difficult" schools. See Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights*, *passim* Chapters 2 and 3.
29. WA/UFT, Box 1, Folder 4, delegate assembly minutes, October 1937, 13.
30. *New York Age*, November 1936, 7, 6; *New York Teacher*, December 1936, 5–6; March 1937, 9–10. For more on the Schoenchen case, see Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights*, 15–20; Taylor, *Reds at the Blackboard*, 288 and 289; Leberstein, "Shooting Rabid Dogs," 297–299.
31. *New York Teacher*, March 1937, 9.
32. Cited in Leberstein, "Shooting Rabid Dogs," 299.
33. Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights*, 18.
34. Leberstein, "Shooting Rabid Dogs," 299.
35. WA/UFT, Box 1, Folder 4, delegate assembly minutes, December 1936, 18.
36. WA/UFT, Box 1, Folder 4, delegate assembly minutes, March 1939, 8.
37. Cited in Taft, *United They Teach*, 52.
38. WA/UFT, Box 5, Folder 62, letter from Henry Linville to Arthur Bowie, May 1936, 20.
39. WA/UFT, Box 1, Folder 4, delegate assembly minutes, May 1939, 10.
40. Ibid.
41. WA/UFT, Box 3, Folder 55, letter from Henry Linville to John Dewey, December 1935, 19.
42. WA/UFT, Box 3, Folder 38, letter from Henry Linville to Helen Taggart, July 1936, 24.
43. Ibid.
44. WA/UFT, Box 3, Folder 38, letter from Selma Borchardt to Henry Linville, 4 February 1936.
45. WA/UFT, Box 3, Folder 38, letter from Selma Borchardt to Henry Linville, February 1936, 10.
46. Ibid.
47. WA/UFT, Box 3, Folder 38, letter from Henry Linville to "Our Friends in A.F.T. Locals," March 1936, 24.
48. WA/UFT, Box 3, Folder 55, letter from Henry Linville to John Dewey, October 1935, 4.
49. WA/UFT, Box 5, Folder 66, *Bulletin of the JCTO*, April 1938, 25.
50. *New York Teacher News*, April 1942, 5.
51. For the first four years after the 1935 split, the TU backed Roosevelt's New Deal and supported the idea of standing up to aggressor nations. This enthusiasm evaporated in response to the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939 and was replaced by pacifism. The pacifism vanished not in response to D-Day, but in response to the June, 1941 Nazi invasion of the USSR.
52. WA/UFT, Box 1, Folder 4, delegate assembly minutes, June 1940, 14. One TG member "objected to Dr. L's giving as the reason for the issuance of a statement the issuance of a platform by the TU. The Guild should accept leadership – not act as an opportunist."
53. "Teaching Group Backs Defense," *New York Times*, June 1940, 17.
54. *New York Teacher News*, January 1942, 3.
55. This was a political diversity of the left: socialists, Trotskyites, and "independent" leftists, along with Communists. See Leberstein, "Shooting Rabid Dogs," 300.

56. Attacks on the TU—both by the TG and by the Board of Education—in between these two periods were relatively rare and subdued, though not nonexistent. As Clarence Taylor suggests, this “may have had less to do with patience than with a lack of opportunity,” given the wartime US-Soviet alliance. See Taylor, *Reds at the Blackboard*, 113.
57. State of New York, *Report of the Subcommittee*, 22.
58. Dodd, *School of Darkness*, chapter 9.
59. *New York Teacher*, January 1941, 23.
60. “Lyons Demands Loyal Teachers,” *New York Times*, January 1941, 26.
61. *Guild Bulletin*, 22 October 1943, 2.
62. State of New York, *Report of the Subcommittee*, 178 and 179; *New York Teacher News*, December 1940, 15.
63. Iversen, *The Communists and the Schools*, 212; Leberstein, “Shooting Rabid Dogs,” 306.
64. *Guild Bulletin*, 12 April 1943, 3.
65. The ACLU, for example, expelled the labor activist and ACLU co-founder Elizabeth Gurley Flynn from the organization’s executive board in 1940, due to her Communist Party affiliation.
66. Hearings Before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws United States Senate, 1952, I, 313.
67. *Ibid.*, 305.
68. *New York Teacher*, March 1941, 10.
69. *Ibid.*
70. *New York Teacher*, March 1941, 13–14, 28.
71. *Guild Bulletin*, 19 October 1942, 1.
72. At the time, the Communist Party actually discouraged teachers from joining the CIO, seeing in the AFT a foothold with which to gain influence in the AFL. See Murphy, *Blackboard Unions*, 158–159 for more on this point.
73. *New York Teacher News*, January 1949, 8; “Teacher’s Suicide is Laid to Inquiry,” *New York Times*, December 1948, 25.
74. Taylor, *Reds at the Blackboard*, 163–165.
75. *Guild Bulletin*, October 1948, 1.
76. “TU Scores Lefkowitz,” *New York Times*, October 1948, 14; *Teacher News*, September 1948, 18, 1–2; WA/UFT, Box 5, Folder 13, “The case of Mr. Louis Jaffee: From Appeal to Inquisition,” from the TU, Local 555, UPW_CIO, February 1949, 28. The *New York Teacher News* continued to run at least one column per issue devoted to the Jaffe case.
77. *Guild Bulletin*, October 1948, 4.
78. “Expert Lying Laid to TU,” *New York Times*, October 1948, 13.
79. Taylor, *Reds at the Blackboard*, 109.
80. *Guild Bulletin*, May 1950, 2. At a hearing on this bill, TG representative Albert Sayer argued that “when you whittle away the right of any group in a community you are endangering the rights of the entire community.” See *Guild Bulletin*, 1 September 1951.
81. *Guild Bulletin*, October 1950, 2.
82. *Guild Bulletin*, November 1948, 2.
83. *Guild Bulletin*, October 1949, 3.
84. “Teachers Guild Head Quits Moritt Group,” *New York Times*, October 1949, 8; *Guild Bulletin*, October 1949, 4.
85. In the area of public education, the most important recent argument of this kind is Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*. Hartman argues quite effectively for the implication of American liberals, “who did as much if not more than conservatives to guarantee a chilling classroom atmosphere.” See Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 74.
86. For more detail on the politics surrounding the McCarran Act and the Commission, see Ybarra, *Washington Gone Crazy*, 485–539.
87. *Guild Bulletin* of March, April, and May 1935.
88. *Guild Bulletin*, June 1953, 2.
89. WA/UFT, Box 3, Folder 5, “Interim Order on the Conduct of Relations between the City of New York and Its Employees,” City of New York, Office of the Mayor, July 1954, 21.

90. WA/UFT, Box 3, Folder 4, hearing on collective bargaining for city employees, "The Right to Organize": Statement of views of the New York Teachers' Guild, AFL, in regard to questions raised at the Mayor's Public Hearing on Collective Bargaining, held at City Hall, March 1955, 25.
91. Ibid.
92. WA/UFT, Box 7, Folder 7, "Teachers Guild Applauds Outlawing of Forced Informing By State Commissioner of Education," press release from 1955, otherwise undated.
93. WA/UFT, Box 1, Folder 2, administrative committee minutes, May 1957, 15.
94. See Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights*.
95. Cole, *The Unionization of Teachers*; Gaffney, *Teachers United*; Taft, *United They Teach*. For a partial exception, see Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights*.

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