

remaining property were turned over to a Harvard history professor with the stipulation that the records would remain sealed until 2000.

The author succeeds in writing an entertaining and interesting story regarding a higher education piece of history easily presented for public consumption and scholarship alike. The narrative is meticulously researched, documented, and well written. The author describes a rich history of privilege at one of America's oldest institutions of higher education. The book is enjoyable to read and provides a comprehensive account about the making and breaking of a centuries-old secret society, and it provides historical perspective regarding the role of power and prestige in elite higher education in the US.

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Leanne Kang. *Dismantled: The Breakup of an Urban School System, Detroit, 1980–2016*

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Leanne Kang, a former doctoral student of Jeffrey Mirel, positions her new book *Dismantled: The Breakup of an Urban School System, Detroit, 1980–2016* as the sequel to his *Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907–1981* (1993) because it examines what happened to Detroit Public Schools (DPS) after 1980. She argues a “market regime,” composed of state legislators, philanthropists, and educational foundations, coalesced to upend school board governance in the city to establish a new era of governance that relied on the market, rather than locally elected leaders. Using previous scholarly research, newspaper reporting, and various documents from government agencies and conservative think tanks, Kang makes a compelling case for how state and private actors outside Detroit “dismantled” DPS and established a market system of education that some have labeled the “Wild West” of school reform.

In the two chapters following the introduction, Kang describes the fault lines fashioned in Detroit's school board regime during the Progressive Era and the board's “decline” in the late 1980s. She provides a brief overview of the establishment of professionalized school boards in the early twentieth century and how this more hierarchical system, indifferent and hostile to Black Detroiters, deepened inequality. Kang sees Black Detroiters' efforts to desegregate the city's schools and secure community control as efforts to upend school board governance. The political backlash to these efforts, the swelling of Detroit's suburbs, and the Supreme Court's preservation of the urban-suburban divide in its *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974) ruling imperiled DPS's

financial situation and its ability to provide quality education. Kang contends that after the experiment in community control, the remaining pillars of Detroit's school board regime – the Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT) and the board itself – lost voters' support in the late 1980s and early 1990s because of financial mismanagement and the DFT's repeated demands for wage increases as the city's fiscal situation and schools deteriorated. Thus, by the early 1990s, Detroit voters wanted a change.

Although it was by no means the change they imagined, the passage of Proposal A and the imposition of state power through mayoral control in the 1990s dramatically altered DPS. In 1994, Republican governor John Engler marshaled through Proposal A, which ended the use of property taxes to fund schools, and, instead, increased the state's personal income tax by 2 percent. The proposal did more to distribute educational funds equitably throughout the state, but it also weakened Michigan's teachers' unions and established a new system of "choice and competition" by tethering tax dollars to students (p. 29). This model for funding based on enrollment was an important part of Engler's larger plan to create "a market of schools that would compete for students" (p. 30). As Kang points out, this had a devastating impact on DPS's financial situation because the district's ever-fluctuating number of students, exacerbated by school choice, made an accurate assessment of year-to-year enrollment impossible. Thus, as DPS continued to lose students, it accumulated debt.

After his reelection to a third term, Governor Engler pushed for mayoral control as a form of state takeover of failing districts throughout Michigan. Although the original legislation applied to any district that failed to meet certain academic and fiscal requirements, bipartisan negotiations led to an important revision in the bill that ensured it applied only to Detroit (p. 37). The bill called for the mayor to appoint school board members; however, it also provided the governor the power to appoint the board's seventh member, who held ultimate veto power in selecting the district's new CEO. Eventually, the new board hired Kenneth Burnley, who focused on reducing the district's debt and jump-starting capital improvements. Yet, the fiscal pressures imposed by Proposal A bled the district of students and funds, and, between 1999 and 2005, DPS lost roughly thirty-three thousand students and \$226 million in state funding (pp. 38–41). Detroit voters were able to overturn mayoral control in 2004, but, as Kang's analysis of Governor Engler's school reforms illuminates, state policies had already coupled a school choice landscape with a funding structure that caused DPS's debt to balloon.

In response to the district's growing debt and the 2008 economic recession, Democratic governor Jennifer Granholm appointed the district's first emergency financial manager, Robert Bobb, in 2009. Bobb came to Detroit after having worked under Michelle Rhee, who as chancellor of D.C.'s public schools, had cultivated a caustic style of education reform that denied parent and community input, attacked tenure protections for teachers, and led to the closure of more than twenty schools in three years. Following Rhee's lead, Bobb's immediate priorities in Detroit were to reduce the district's debt by increasing student enrollment, ratifying DFT contracts, and closing schools. He even suggested increasing the average high school classroom to sixty students to cut costs (p. 51). Resistance from city residents halted some of these reforms and compelled Bobb to resign in 2011. That same year, Governor Rick Snyder, who later oversaw the poisoning of Flint's main water source, took office

and completed the dismantling of DPS. Kang compellingly narrates how Snyder, a Republican, expanded the powers of the emergency financial manager to seize control of DPS to create a separate “turnaround district,” the Education Achievement Authority (EAA). Another assault on collective bargaining, the EAA proved to be a swamp of fiscal mismanagement and “deplorable learning conditions,” but it also siphoned students from DPS, exacerbating the district’s falling enrollment and growing deficit (p. 61).

By 2014, the district’s debt exceeded more than \$220 million, and Governor Snyder formalized a plan to address the debt once and for all. Kang deftly describes the ensuing battle as one between a Detroit-led coalition that sought to reinstall local control against advocates of school choice, like Betsy DeVos, who, far removed from the city, decried such democracy as “anti-student” (p. 68). In the end, DeVos and her allies prevailed. DPS now existed only as a financial entity limited to paying off more than \$500 million in debt with local taxes, and a new district, the Detroit Public Schools Community District, was created “to operationalize” schooling (p. 69). Kang’s documentation of these developments convincingly shows that through efforts stretching over three decades, school choice interests in the state dismantled DPS.

In a well-documented retrospective, Kang traces the fundraising and coalition building of Betsy DeVos among Republicans from the 1980s into the present that culminated in DPS’s dismantling. DeVos’s arc as a Republican lobbyist is important for Kang’s overarching argument that “the story of DPS’s dismantling is a partisan one and should bring our attention to the relationship between school governance and change and broader battles for political control” (p. 76). On the basis of this conclusion, Kang calls for building a broad coalition to establish a new “instructional regime” made up of local partners with immediate knowledge of students and their environment; teachers, administrators, professors, and researchers; and “foundations, businesses, and educational entrepreneurs” (p. 91). This coalition, Kang maintains, can “coalesce” around the question: “How do we perfect democracy and the ensuring of public rights while achieving capitalist markets?” (p. 91).

While the book thoughtfully documents how school choice interests exerted their will on DPS from afar, Kang’s conclusions rest uneasily against her earlier evidence. For instance, she describes the ultimate issue that led to the dismantling of DPS as a “partisan” one, even though many of the actions accelerating DPS’s dismantling were pushed on a bipartisan basis, such as the imposition of state intervention through mayoral control and the installation of an emergency financial manager. She even describes former secretary of education Arne Duncan’s advocacy for school choice in Detroit as a testament to the national scope of these changes. If the dismantling of DPS was a partisan Republican effort, then why was there so much Democratic support? Indeed, when so many urban centers are Democratic strongholds, why do their school districts devolve into market governance?

We might, as Noliwe Rooks suggests in *Cutting School: Privatization, Segregation, and the End of Public Education* (2017), understand Detroit’s dismantling as a continuation of a long history of “segrenomics,” or the ways White politicians and families have historically segregated schools to hoard resources, as well as how educational entrepreneurs have exploited segregated and unequal school systems for enormous profits. Rooks’s work makes clear the salience of racism in extracting

wealth through education and helps us understand why districts like Detroit are targeted for reform while others remain unchanged. Without attention to this kind of exploitation, the book misses the opportunity to fully interrogate the tensions between democracy and capitalism that underpinned the dismantling of DPS.

These reservations aside, *Dismantled* is an insightful read for historians of urban education seeking to understand how those promoting market efforts coalesced into a movement powerful enough to shape a state and its largest city's educational system into one of "choice and competition." Equally as important, Kang's work invites historians to think meaningfully about the interplay between state and local government to understand continuities and changes within school systems and how state policies can dismantle one district while fortifying others. For this reason, *Dismantled* is necessary reading for those contemplating our current educational situation through the past.

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Kathy Peiss. *Information Hunters: When Librarians, Soldiers, and Spies Banded Together in World War II Europe*

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Most books about World War II focus on military campaigns, battlefield heroics, and the advances in weaponry and technology that eventually brought an Allied victory. Less understood is how this was a "war of words." Beginning with book burnings in Germany during the 1930s, Nazi Germany kept a tight focus on controlling messages and information: libraries in occupied nations were closed or "reorganized"; archives were hidden, stolen, and/or destroyed; and propaganda leaflets were liberally dumped on civilians and troops across Europe. As precious artifacts and printed materials were lost or destroyed, the need to safeguard and preserve print culture swelled. In *Information Hunters*, Kathy Peiss provides a fascinating account of how the Library of Congress partnered with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), a wartime intelligence agency, to acquire publications, archival materials, and records from Germany and the occupied countries of Europe. Meticulously researched and intricately detailed, *Information Hunters* chronicles this seemingly forgotten chapter of World War II, safeguarding the story, itself, for future generations and historians.

Information Hunters traces the origins of wartime information-gathering and the unlikely coupling of librarianship and spycraft. There was little doubt that the United