

Although such general assertions are common throughout the book and can easily accompany multiple choice questions or essay prompts, it is in some of the side stories about historical figures not often taught about that history teachers might find tasty additions to their curriculum. One in particular is Margaret Bourke-White, a photographer who, according to Freeman, “did more than any other to disseminate images of giant industry” (149). Bourke-White was one among many visual artists whose work helped shape public perceptions of global industrialism in the twentieth century. Her story alone is well worth reading the book as she is rarely if ever mentioned in a high school history text. *Behemoth* is a simple yet informative work that should easily make its way into any U.S. history teacher’s library.

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Matthew F. Delmont. *Why Busing Failed: Race, Media, and the National Resistance to School Desegregation*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2016. Pp. 304. \$29.95

Matthew Delmont’s *Why Busing Failed* corrects the common narratives about the failure to desegregate northern schools in the 1970s. Conventional histories present it as a case study in the limitations of educational and governmental reform, but Delmont marshals the cultural and historical context of desegregation to make the case that this narrative of failure is a false one that excuses complacency and discarding the goal of educational equity. Delmont’s claims hinge on dispelling three myths clouding the memory of busing: First, the crisis was about busing. Second, the North was innocent of segregation. Third, news media was a civil rights ally. In exposing these myths, Delmont argues this is not a historical failure of policy, but of will. The busing crisis teaches us little about education reform, but illuminates much

about American culture.

The first myth Delmont takes on regards the term “busing.” Delmont places “busing” within quotation marks to draw attention to its artificial nature and show how segregationists used the term to draw debate away from its goal, integration, to its method. This semantic change allowed northern White opposition to oppose integration without explicit racism and obscured the fact that there were multiple viable desegregation options being discussed in the 1970s.

The second section deals with Northern segregation. In contrast to *Brown v. Board*, cases like *Swann v. Board* and *Milliken v. Bradley* are not known by the average American, but, Delmont argues, these are the cases that govern schooling today. They limited the scope of *Brown v. Board* and provided a legal basis to oppose school desegregation in the North by reifying a distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* segregation, between segregation enumerated by law and that which occurs without legal imprimatur. Delmont demonstrates this distinction carries two pernicious implications. First, it implies that segregation can occur without being caused. This preposterous notion, which requires ignoring that segregation in Northern cities was underwritten by housing policies, governmental spending, and other legal forces, seems to absolve large swaths of the population from ameliorative social justice work. Second, it implies that segregation is not an inherent evil. Focusing on the cause of segregation suggests that “unintentional” *de facto* segregation is somehow better for people than its articulated *de jure* twin.

The third section of the book takes on the role of news media. The news, particularly televised news, is often credited with being a major contributor to the success of the Civil Rights Movement because it broadcast images of police brutality and affected public opinion. Delmont’s argument is that television broadcasts were driven by ratings, not altruism. He details the working of news stations in the 1970s, when only six cities had permanent TV crews, all fact-checking was done by a single employee, and production

times made it essential to *anticipate* rather than react to the news. In this context, planned protests and marches made for reliably good TV, and cameras were drawn to the spectacle regardless of whether they were for or against segregation. Segregationists knew this and consciously patterned their protests after Martin Luther King's. Delmont insists we remember TV crews going to Boston with the same zeal and regularity with which they once went to Birmingham.

These three theses offer a much-needed correction to the available narratives surrounding busing. Delmont traces the roots of the movement to and reaction against integrating schools and supports his thorough historical work with engaging portraits of key characters such as Irina McCabe, the anti-busing housewife, and Clay Smothers, the "most conservative Black Man in America." This story, of the cynical appropriation of Civil Rights tactics for segregationist ends and the broad complicity of Northern White society, ought to be known by all, particularly as America's public schools continue to re-segregate. Delmont persuasively argues that "school officials, politicians, courts, and the news media valued the desires of white parents over the rights of black children" (212).

Unfortunately, Delmont's tale is not as compelling as it is persuasive. The organization of the book is driven more by Delmont's argument than by chronology, and the frequent changes in geographic focus sometimes make the narrative hard to track. It is difficult to portray a national phenomenon with both depth and breadth, and the clarity of his theses are occasionally bogged down with detail and repetition. Despite these shortcomings, *Why Busing Failed* is an admirable book that brings historical clarity to an issue too often reduced to a talking point. It is recommended reading for anyone interested in education policy and the modern history of American racism.