



Enough Blame to Go Around: The Labor Pains of New York City's Public Employee Unions

Richard Steier

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Veteran labor journalist Richard Steier explores the tensions between New York City's public employee unions, their critics, and city and state politicians.

Since 1980 Richard Steier has had a unique vantage point to observe the gains, losses, and struggles of municipal labor unions in New York City. He has covered those unions and city government as a reporter and labor columnist for the *New York Post* and, since 1998, as editor and featured columnist of the *Chief-Leader*, a century-old independent newspaper that covers city and state government in greater detail than today's mainstream news organizations. Drawing from his column with the *Chief-Leader*, "Razzle Dazzle," *Enough Blame to Go Around* describes in vivid terms how the changed economy has drastically altered the city's labor landscape, and why it has been difficult for municipal unions to adapt. There can be no doubt, he writes, that public employee unions have contributed to the problems that confront them today, including corruption and failed leadership. But at the same time and for all their flaws, he believes unions represent the best chance for ordinary people to receive fair economic treatment.

"No one knows New York City's working men and women better than journalist Richard Steier. Whether he's depicting the heroic exploits of legendary union leaders or exposing the excesses of corrupt labor bosses or recounting pivotal battles over labor contracts, Steier always provides fresh, behind-the-scenes insight into the vast world of municipal workers, a group that too often is unfairly maligned. And he does it all with a powerful bare-knuckle style that will leave you wishing for more." — Juan Gonzalez, staff columnist, *New York Daily News*

"If you want to know about municipal unions in New York City, you need to read Richard Steier. I sometimes disagree with him, but for more than two decades he has been one of the most informative and provocative chroniclers of the ins and outs of public sector labor." — Joshua B. Freeman, author of *American Empire: The Rise of a Global Power, the Democratic Revolution at Home, 1945–2000*

"New York City's labor unions have been luckier than they deserved to have had reporter and editor Richard Steier around to spotlight their occasional triumphs and their much more frequent failures. Like Murray Kempton, another great New York columnist who loved the men and women of labor but who never suffered the fools who sometimes ran their unions, Steier's columns are filled with news, insight, and always compassion for those who ride (and drive) the early trains and buses to work." — Tom Robbins, CUNY Graduate School of Journalism

"Steier presents an impassioned case for public sector unions and the benefits they have won, along with fascinating tales of the machinations inside several of the largest unions in New York City—District Council 37, Transport Workers Union Local 100 and the 2005 strike that paralyzed the city, and the United Federation of Teachers." — Alair Townsend, former New York City Budget Director and Deputy Mayor

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