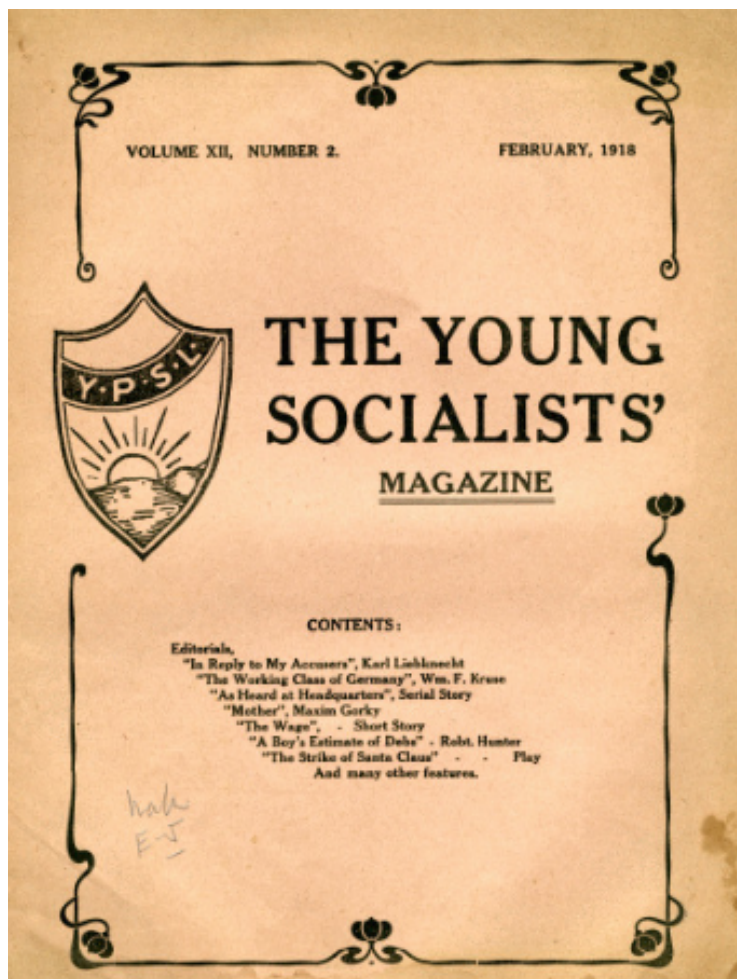


# RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

## A Radical Culture for Children of the Working Class: *The Young Socialists' Magazine, 1908-1920\**

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THE YOUNG SOCIALIST, VOL. XII, NUMBER 2. 1918

Education is traditionally seen as a contested site, a place where multiple views of the past, present, and future are explored and challenged. However, the reality is often quite different. Politics and power play a leading role in determining what is taught in our schools and which books are appropriate for children and young people to read.

As a sixties radical educator, a professor of education for 35 years, a teacher of seven-year-olds for ten years, and a mother and grandmother for over fifty years, I constantly ask myself and my students to examine the ways we, as educators, can open up and challenge the current climate in schools and how we can bring a critical perspective to the education of our young people. As we continue to live under a racialized capitalism with expanding inequality where books such as *Maus* and *The Bluest Eye* are banned in some states and where teaching about the history of slavery is wrongly redefined as "Critical Race Theory" and, therefore, banned in some schools, we need to rethink and reexamine our role as radical educators.

These are, however, not new questions or concerns for socialist/radical educators. During the Progressive Era at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, again during the Great Depression, and during the 1960s alternative school movement they created curricula that questioned the fundamentals of our political, economic, and educational system. Some of us may recall the impact of alternative institutions as *This Magazine is About Schools* published in Toronto in the 1960s as well as the 1960s Freedom Schools of Mississippi, the curriculum of which is included in issue 40 of *Radical Teacher*.

In the 2016 presidential campaign Senator Bernie Sanders and House Representative Alexandria Ocasio Cortez continued in this tradition by raising questions concerning the exploitation of the working class, the increasing disparity of wealth, the lack of access to adequate healthcare particularly during the pandemic, and inadequate education for the poorest children, who often go to bed hungry. As radical teachers, these concerns are our concerns as well as the philosophy of Socialism. Within this context *The Young Socialist Magazine*, 1908-1920 emerges as a significant archival resource for activist educators who are rethinking curricula in a more radical, challenging, and inclusive way.

While some of the material in the magazine may seem dated, many of the stories and activities can be reconfigured or reimaged to promote critical thinking and a questioning attitude toward today's gross inequality, sexist rhetoric, and racialized economic/political system.

Sometimes pedantic, often instructive, and at times greatly inspiring, *The Young Socialist Magazine* provides an important model by including sophisticated reading materials by prominent literary figures and politicians such as Leo Tolstoy, Maxim Gorky, and Eugene Debs. In this way the magazine inspired and expanded the children's knowledge base while encouraging a critical examination of the political/economic system. Too often teachers today ignore or water down controversial issues. Seldom are the critical voices of prominent literary figures, historians, or political activists brought into the classroom. Too often only

uncritical and distorted views of America's past and present are taught. *The Young Socialist* magazine challenges us as radical educators to bring big voices to young people. As Bernie Sanders argues, confronting today's fictions must be the basis of our teaching as radical educators.

From 1908 to 1920 members of the American Socialist Party published *The Young Socialists' Magazine*, the first working-class children's magazine in the United States. Designed to "make young rebels who would put an end to the capitalist system" (Kruse *YSM*, XI.1), the magazine encouraged a critical perspective in its young readers while also constructing a radical culture and politics for working-class children and youth. This article examines the ways in which *The Young Socialists' Magazine*, an alternative working-class children's publication, constructed a complex culture and politics, distinct from the dominant culture and appropriate for working-class children and socialist politics. Through an analysis of the materials in this magazine, we can examine how marginalized groups generated new categories of thought, new cultural forms, and new imagery for children. We can also understand how cultural issues can be tied to a politics committed to altering oppressive living conditions.

In my research for this article, I examined *The Young Socialists' Magazine* from its inception in 1908 until its demise in 1920. I also read extensively in the children's magazines of the period and on the history of anarchism and socialism. To present this research and analysis of the magazine, I divided the articles in *The Young Socialists' Magazine* into two categories: those materials that emphasized such cultural issues as history, values, and character development, and those articles and stories that overtly proselytized socialism as the only solution to working-class exploitation. I have done so because I am interested in understanding the ways in which a children's press links cultural identification with a political assessment of power and domination so that children learn not only their history but also how to challenge domination through political movements designed to change society. *The Young Socialists' Magazine* is a useful vehicle for developing this understanding because it represents a historical model of a community in struggle against cultural and political domination.

British-Canadian educator Harold Entwistle has pointed out the relevance of earlier working-class institutions to present social and cultural movements: "Although 19<sup>th</sup>-century working-class institutions may be obsolete and irrelevant to 20<sup>th</sup> century needs, it is not clear how disadvantaged groups could liberate themselves without similar if different socio-political institutions." He suggests that liberatory institutions adopt organizational forms and cultural ideas used by workers in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, while updating content to be more appropriate to the history and culture of marginalized groups today. From this perspective, an analysis of *The Young Socialists' Magazine* could be relevant today. The magazine presents a model for challenging domination through the reconstruction and recovery of the historical and cultural experiences of marginalized groups. In addition, it provides a critique of domination and a vision that includes alternative possibilities for a social democracy.

*The Young Socialists' Magazine* began publication in 1908 and continued through 1920. This was a period of intense political activity and social change: there was mass immigration (20 million immigrants arrived between 1890 and 1920), the growth of slums in cities, and intense radical political activity. Women such as Margaret Sanger and Emma Goldman crisscrossed the country advocating free speech and birth control. Strikes broke out throughout the United States with major showdowns between labor and management at Homestead, Lawrence, and Paterson, and in the Rockefeller-owned mines of Colorado. It was a time when radicals like Big Bill Haywood, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and Eugene Debs organized workers into the IWW or the Socialist Party. It was also a time when socialist mayors were elected in Milwaukee and Berkeley, and Eugene Debs received over a million votes as the Socialist Party candidate for president. The mainstream children's magazines and schools often ignored these events. The articles in *St. Nicholas*, one of the more popular children's magazines, emphasized the virtues of rural American family life and ignored the immigrant experience, as well as labor strikes.

When poverty or working-class people became the central focus of a story in a mainstream children's magazine, they were often romanticized. In these stories the strong and honorable rose above the hardships of their class through hard work, honesty, and thrift, or through the benevolence of a concerned boss. In one story in *St. Nicholas*, the benevolence of the boss was made apparent when a miner was rescued from the mine. The often distorted messages presented to Americans claimed that capitalist benefactors looked out for workers, and that if these workers were honest, diligent, and virtuous, they too could succeed and leave the working class.

These messages, which were also commonplace in other children's magazines of the period, were antithetical to the socialist ideal. Socialists argued that the "master class" was using the printing press with its books and papers for its own class interest and "feeding dope to the young, day and night, so as to keep them in subjugation by means of funny papers, baseball and other forms of ball, motion pictures and the tango craze .... The young have no time and no energy and no thought for vital things" (1915, VII.8).

If their children were to become involved in "vital things," socialists believed they needed to wage war against the imagery, ideology, and history found in mainstream texts or popular magazines by creating their own alternative structure consisting of Sunday Schools, children's magazines, and youth groups. In 1908 members of the Socialist Party began to publish a small 15–18-page newspaper called *The Little Socialist Magazine for Boys and Girls*. The magazine defined itself as an organ of the Socialist Sunday School movement and the Young People's Federation. Both groups were affiliated with the Socialist Party and were established in order to bring socialist ideas to the youth. The Socialistic Cooperative Publishing Company located in New York, published the magazine, and it was sold for 5 cents a copy or 50 cents for an annual subscription.

The purpose of this newly created magazine, though stated differently in different periods, was essentially to bring socialist politics to the consciousness of working-class

children and to help them understand their class history and culture. In 1915 the magazine defined itself as "a magazine for the young socialist by the young socialist" (March, *YSM*, 18). In 1917 editor William Kruse broadened this perspective when he defined the aims of a socialist education and implied they were the goals of the magazine. In his editorial he stated, "The first aim is to get the children to think for themselves, to subject everything that is presented to them in the light of reason, to refuse to believe anything merely because it is said to be so and to fearlessly question.... The second great aim is to get children to feel themselves a part of the great community of work folk that live and toil all over the world" (1917, *YSM*, XI.10).

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Each issue of the magazine was composed of about 15–18 book-size pages and contained interesting graphics, pictures of party leaders, cartoons, photographs, essays, and stories. It was often sophisticated, intellectually challenging, and international in scope. Stories and poetry of well-known writers like Leo Tolstoy, Maxim Gorky, and Eugene Debs were a regular feature, while socialist theorists like Morris Hillquit simplified complicated social and political ideas for the children.

Though *The Little Socialist Magazine for Boys and Girls* was geared to the younger reader, it included a column for older students entitled "For Our High School Reader" that featured excerpts from novels such as *Call of the Wild* by Jack London and *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair. Photographs or paintings were used to talk about moral values and the meaning of socialism followed by discussions of issues such as laziness or drunkenness. Editorial pages addressed current political issues like Roosevelt's imperialist policies. The stories in the magazine covered a wide range of subjects and were often fanciful morality tales or realistic fiction. The magazine's monthly columns reported on the activities of Socialist Sunday Schools in the United States and Europe. Fred Kraft's column "A History of Our Country for Boys and Girls" reinterpreted American history from a socialist perspective. Articles focused on the daily lives of the settlers rather than on wars or presidents and were critical of the government. In the back pages of the magazine, progressive reading material for both adults and children was advertised.

As the targeted readership of the magazine changed, the format also shifted. In June 1911, when the magazine became known as *The Young Socialists' Magazine* and the material became oriented toward an older audience, the magazine began to include more information on the Young People's Socialist League (the youth group was the arm of the Socialist Party). A new page entitled "Your Own Page" provided space where children could publish their original

essays and stories. In January 1918, when the magazine became the organ of the Young People's Socialist League, the number of articles on movement activities and political theory increased, although the column entitled "The Little Comrade" was retained for the younger readers.

The magazine reached many children. In the early years the readers of the magazine were encouraged to show the magazine to their friends and were told they would receive "a handsome storybook" when they sent in the names of ten new yearly subscribers. In addition, the magazine was part of the curriculum of over 100 English-speaking Socialist Sunday Schools that existed in over 64 cities of the United States from 1900 to 1920 (Teitelbaum 547, 554), reaching over 2,000 children in these schools including foreign language schools (Patterson 25). By 1915 the magazine was available to a substantial number of youth in the Young Socialist League, and in 1918 its editor, William Kruse, asserted that the magazine was reaching over 5,000 young people (Editorial, 49).

The editors of *The Young Socialists' Magazine* took seriously the task of creating an alternative worldview for children. They argued that socialism not only transformed economic power from a system based on private property to one on state ownership but also included an ideological construct and world view that could reshape the character of young children. The intention was to create a "new person," one who embraced communal values, heroism, selflessness, and a genuine concern for the fate of working people and worked for the socialist transformation of society.

In order to create this "new person," the magazine included two different types of materials: those that fostered identification with working-class culture and those that explicitly advocated socialism. Materials that emphasized cultural identification focused on areas such as the history of working people, the contributions of workers to society's daily life, and character development. More political materials proselytized socialism as the only solution to working-class exploitation. Although the distinction between the cultural and political materials of the magazine is not entirely clear-cut, it provides a useful framework for examining the magazine's form and content and for understanding the ways in which children's material can tie together cultural and political issues.

Unlike mainstream children's publications, which advocated escape from working-class life through upward mobility, *The Young Socialists' Magazine* promoted identification with the working class through stories, poems, and articles that valued work and emphasized working-class history and culture. In these materials, working-class culture was associated with workers' activities in and around the workplace, the home, and the community. Working people were presented as having a unique history and a distinct relationship to other social classes. It was believed that through cultural articles the magazine could create a common set of values and experiences that would help children identify with the working class as distinct from other classes whose ideas and interests were often different from and in opposition to their own. The magazine constructed working-class culture out of historical experiences of

working people and offered stories or articles that never appeared in mainstream magazines. Through short stories, parables, poetry, songs, illustrations, and historical pieces, the magazine persuaded children of the value and importance of their class history and background. It created a "world view" that could guide socialist children as they grew and related to the surrounding world.

A central theme of these cultural materials was the dignity of work and of the worker. Manual labor was not presented as alienating or degrading; on the contrary, manual laborers were applauded for their contributions to furthering the progress of society. Work that was frequently invisible to the children of an industrial society was made visible through the stories in the magazine. Some stories highlighted simple products that children used in their daily life, describing the labor required to produce them. For example, one article emphasized the labor involved in producing a bar of chocolate and traced the history of the chocolate bar from its beginnings on a cocoa tree in the Caribbean. This essay focused on the hard work required to pick the beans, ship the beans, and transform them into the candy bar that children bought at the corner store (Wainwright, 25-27). In a parable, "The Story the Needle Told," a needle talks to a thread about how she was manufactured, polished, and used until she arrived at her present sewing machine. The thread compliments the needle, "And you are getting lovelier every day through the work you are doing here" (1912, *YSM*, V.9).

At the same time, articles dealing with manual labor often emphasize that, despite enormous contributions, workers remain exploited, and their bosses become rich off their hard labor. In a series on international labor, the activities of longshoremen are described, and the owners of the steamship lines criticized. The author, in talking about the bosses, states, "Why, they even say they work harder than the longshoremen and yet if you look at their hands and their faces you will notice that they are white and clean. The longshoremen's look like alligator skin, all crusty and cracked" (1910, *LSM*, II.6). Another article on shipbuilders asks children to look at the huge ships these men had built and realize the significance of their work when they think about how these ships carry people, machinery, and coal: "they never stop to think of all these wonderful things they see made by the men in overalls, the sturdy ship builders and other mechanics who swing the heavy sledgehammers all day and who get very little pay for building such wonders" (1909, *LSM*, II.3). In these articles, workers are neither daring nor exotic, but productive, hard-working people who do not receive a just reward for their labor.

Similar work themes were the focus of the fiction and folktales in *The Young Socialists' Magazine*. In "The Triumph of Labor," Maxim Gorky describes the perseverance, heroism, and exploitation of the laboring man when one of the laborers who had worked his way through the side of the mountain died before the project was completed (1914, *YSM*, VII.5). In another piece of realistic fiction, about a dying young girl, Fred Powers describes the extreme suffering of the poor. He makes it clear that life in this bleak setting is a result of the uncaring employers. When the hod carrier's daughter is dying, he cannot stay home to comfort her for fear of losing his job; he is forced to come home after

she has passed away. The story closes with the following statement: "Her father and mother said they will tell everyone to change the world so that no people need be so poor and suffer so much" (1909, *LSM*, II.6). In "The Working Girl and the Judge," one of the few stories in which the heroine is a female worker, a young girl loses her finger because of a faulty machine. The court refuses to award her compensation; the story ends with an iconoclastic comment: "And the worst of it all is that God does not punish the rich man nor help the poor." This story, with atheistic overtones, implies that the poor must struggle to secure justice for themselves" (1910, *LSM*, III.13). Sometimes religious symbolism is used to highlight specific working-class issues. In the parable, "The Passing of Judas," the author describes a scab who crossed the picket line as Judas and the working class as Christ. The story states, "And if he was Judas, the Christ he sold for thirty pieces of silver was the cause of the working class" (1914, *YSM*, VII.7).

The French sculptor Constantine Meunier and French painter Jean-Francois Millet are also praised: Meunier for capturing the dignity of labor, and Millet for highlighting the daily life and work of ordinary peasants. The cover story of one issue honors Meunier because his sculptures (The Miners, The Sowers, and The Fishermen) illustrate the dignity of the worker. Meunier is valued as a working-class artist who "finally came to think and see all things in terms of labor" (1918, *YSM*, XII. 2-4).

In the middle years of *The Young Socialists' Magazine* poetry was used to illustrate the life of the working poor. The front page of each edition had a drawing of a worker and a poem about work. "Slaves of the North" compares the life of a worker to that of a slave. In "The Worker," Berton Braley states,

I have broken my hands on your granite  
I have broken my strength on your steel  
I have sweated for your pleasure . . .  
And what is the way you have paid me?  
You masters and drivers of men.

How to transform working-class life rather than how to make it out of the working class is also featured. Characters who attempt to rise out of the class are portrayed as class traitors who seek to advance their own interests at the expense of their fellow workers while vivid reports of workers' struggles encouraged working-class identification in young readers. A series of articles on the history of labor include material on strikes won and lost and the fight for the eight-hour day.

An article on the Ludlow Massacre (1914), as the strike in Colorado came to be known, reports from the workers' perspective the murder of striking workers in Rockefeller-owned mines. The article, written by a Senator from the state of Colorado, is radically different from reports presented in the mainstream press because it describes the violence of the bosses and the suppression of the workers by the economic interests of the country and concludes by saying, "All evidence shows the gunmen and mine guards in the pay of the operators with headquarters in Wall Street"

(1914, *Robinson VII*, 3). While the article at times seems rhetorical, it critically dissects the perspective of mainstream news that blamed the workers for the troubles in the mines. An article on the Lawrence Strike extolled the virtues of class solidarity by describing how the children of the Lawrence strikes were housed, fed, and cared for by workers in other cities when their parents were out on strike. The workers were "infused with a boundless faith in the love and comradeship of the working class" (1912, *YSM*, V.13). This series of articles presented positive perspectives on working-class solidarity and strike activities. Class identification was also reinforced through the creation of new holidays and the revitalization of traditional working-class holidays. The holiday of May Day received a huge spread on the front page of the magazine. In the May 1910 edition, an article about May Day introduced the holiday to the children by saying, "Many of you say you never heard of the holiday and that schools are not closed on that day. True. Because the working people do not make official holidays" (1910, *LSM*, III.10).

A new holiday, Children's Day, was created to spread the spirit of socialism in youth and replace Christmas. On Children's Day movement leaders spoke directly to children in the Socialist Sunday schools and celebrated the day with cakes, candles, dancing, and songs. The Socialist Party newspaper also published a children's edition in honor of the day. Other articles in the magazine debunked patriotism and poked fun at traditional American holidays like July 4. These articles questioned America's commitment to freedom and liberty on a day when it was shooting and arresting striking workers.

Fred Kraft in his column "The History of Our Country for Boys and Girls" demystified historical heroes: "The more we study history the so-called great patriots and statesmen always become great either by deception, brutality, or some evil propensity." Kraft described President Washington as someone who was not the hero that he had been made out to be, particularly in his relationship to Native Americans: "Sly and tricky as any other white man he saw his opportunity to gain their friendship" (1910, *LSM*, III.5). On the other hand, John Brown, who was often portrayed as a madman in mainstream texts, was recreated as a hero who was a genuine friend of the Black man. The installments of Kraft's revision of American history spanned the pre-Revolutionary War period through Reconstruction. While these revisions sometimes seem simplistic, they always provided a critical vantage point from which to examine traditional historical writing.

Historical data was also featured in a monthly column of important dates to remember. In the column "December Events," John Brown's birthday, William Lloyd Garrison's birthday, and the day the Czar was assassinated were highlighted (1909, *LSM*, II.2), while the May events included the uprising of workers in Barcelona, Spain, and Robert Owen's birthday (1910, *LSM*, III.13). These columns emphasized dates, people, and events significant to working people but omitted from traditional school texts.

Another type of cultural article found in *The Young Socialists' Magazine* sought to develop the character and personality traits appropriate to the new individual who

would transform society. These articles demonstrated a socialist awareness that the transformation and creation of a new social order required more than a restructuring of economic and political power relationships:

Let us not forget: Socialism is not merely the adoption of a system of government, based on common ownership of the means of production and distribution of the necessities of life. Political socialism, in order to be a success, must be preceded by psychological socialism. In other words, the human family must learn to think socially instead of individually as it now does (1917, *YSM*, XI.8).

While these socialists spoke of psychological socialism, the language of their discourse remained rooted in cognitive and rational terms and ignored the emotional and irrational dimensions of the subconscious. Their use of the terms "personality," "psychology," and "character" reflected a model of character training common to textbooks of the late nineteenth-century. In these books, personality and character traits were believed to be consciously developed through controlling the child's environment and finding role models that helped children emulate desired behaviors. Socialists labeled these traits "psychological," when they really reflected a cultural orientation concerned with shaping values and beliefs through role models and value clarification.

Reading biographies of movement heroes and heroines, artists, and historical figures was the most popular method used by *The Young Socialists' Magazine* to generate role models for its young readers. These biographies illustrated examples of industriousness, idealism, and positive action. For example, a biography of the sculptor Rodin focused on Rodin as a rebel and hard worker. The article said to "every young socialist" that "nothing will take the place of persevering in study and understanding" (1918, Kruse, *YSM*, XII.2). A short biography of John Brown described his rebel spirit and indomitable courage: "He was as firm as a rock in his convictions and his principles, and his tactics were in complete accord with his innermost nature" (1917, Baginsky).

Role models were also presented through the magazine's fiction and in a column for younger readers entitled "Little Comrade," a series of folktales, advocating values appropriate to the new world view. "The Selfish Little Woodpecker" emphasized the importance of communal efforts over individual accumulation. It ended with the moral that those who do not work shall not share in the products of labor (1919, *YSM*, XIII.9). In another parable, a king and a bootblack argue over who would enter heaven first. In the end the bootblack entered first because he was judged to have sacrificed the most in the face of great suffering for the new society (1910, Rusetter).

The story, "The Only Hero," pointed out that character formation was a function of social environment. In this story, the young "fighter hero" tried to find a place for his aggressive instincts in a world where aggression was obsolete. Having found no men interested in a hero, he searched for a woman, claiming that all women love heroes. However, in the new society, the women asked him what he

could do or make rather than how strong he was. He replied that he could not do or make anything, but only fight wars. The women answered that since there were no more wars and everyone lived in peace and harmony, there was no need for a hero, implying that being a hero was anachronistic. The story showed how a changed social order might induce children to grow up without aggressive, combative, and destructive traits. The story ends by saying, "You are the only hero. Go to the museum with the other specimens" (1917, *YSM*, XI. 4-5). The stories demonstrated those traits needed to bring about the new society such as rebelliousness, diligence, hard work, and leadership, as well as those traits that would ensure the continued existence of a cooperative commonwealth based on cooperation, communal activity, and a sense of social justice.

In addition to providing role models, the magazine published lists of books whose main characters exhibited the values prized by the socialists and that countered the "pernicious influence" of mainstream texts whose heroes and heroines embodied competitive and aggressive individualism. Letters of praise from parents were also published. One letter stated, "I am glad I subscribe to *The Little Socialist Magazine*. It is instructive for young and old, and I hope it will help to kill the poisonous American literature for young folk" (1915, *YSM*, II.5).

The magazine also included articles that specifically linked class pride to socialist political activity. Underlying the political articles was a set of specific principles: that working-class liberation would come through socialism; that poverty was the result of the organization of work rather than a lack of individual initiative or skill; that workers must develop a healthy respect for the dignity of labor and the laboring classes; that workers must condemn those who leave their class rather than work for its liberation; and, most significantly, that capitalism created the poverty and social injustice that only socialism could transform. In these articles, socialism was advocated as the only way to alter the exploitative conditions of work in America. Overtly political, they utilized socialist code words and phrases like "cooperative commonwealth," "industrial democracy," "exploitation," "sharing," and "worker control" to counter the code words and phrases of the capitalist press, which included "pulling oneself up by the bootstraps," "individuality," "thrift," and "working hard to get ahead."

One technique for bringing socialist ideals to children was to imbue fables, fairy tales, and allegories with socialist doctrine. In the allegory "Two Steamers," a capitalist and socialist steamship were described. Children were directed, "When you read the story and think about it, you must tell your mother and father which ship you think would be best for most people to travel in" (1915, Montenore, *YSM*, IX.5). The capitalist ship was described as being made up of three classes. In the first class, there was room for 200 people, but only 68 passengers were accommodated. Meanwhile in the third class, over 400 people were forced to live in a space designed for 200. Illness and poor work conditions characterized the third-class section. In contrast, the owners of the socialist ship planned how to feed and accommodate a thousand people in a single class where no one had more than he needed. Here all the passengers were asked to make their own beds and help with tasks on the ship so that

everyone could enjoy the trip equally. The steamship allegory depicted socialism as the more appealing ship, showing a sharp distinction between the capitalist and socialist ways of life.

Another more complex allegory with a socialist message was presented in "The Common Man" by Walter Crane. In this story, donkeys roamed freely until two-legged men brought them hay and forced them to carry a load in return for some hay. As more men came into the area, the donkeys were forced to carry goods long distances, becoming "beasts of burden." When donkeys were forced to run in a cart race, they began to feel a return of their old freedoms. Quickly they rushed forward to overthrow their masters and refused to be subjugated again. An addendum explicitly explained the socialist message of the story: "If one should read 'natural man', or 'workers' for donkey, 'land monopolist' for the first master, 'capitalist' for the second, we can easily find the details to fit 'commercial competition', 'the industrial system', the relationship of labor to employer, etc. into this homey fable" (1919, *YSM*, XIII.15). Through the use of such allegories, *The Young Socialists' Magazine* presented to its young readers not only the terminology and ideas involved in capitalist exploitation but also complex ideas such as the rise of capitalism and the subjugation of the working class.

Dialogues between father and son attempted to foster socialist views and action in children. In "Inquisitive Tommy" by Ida Crouch Hazlett, a father and son discuss the fact that "Banker White" got the money to buy his beautiful new car by exploiting workers. The boy's father told him that the workers' plight could not be changed until there was socialism. The child responded, "Well, papa, I hope we will get socialism then," and was told by his father, "Then we must tell everyone to be a socialist." "Papa, I am going to do that," promised the son (1919, *YSM*, XII.4).

*The Young Socialists' Magazine* made socialist ideology more powerful to its readers by linking theory to movement activities. A column in the magazine explained ongoing socialist activities, international socialist events, and the activities of children in the Socialist Sunday Schools or in the Young People's Socialist League. Children were asked to participate in socialist projects like sending money or letters to jailed comrades. The pictures next to one article defined a comrade's responsibilities to the movement. It showed a man in jail; the heading underneath the picture stated, "Remember! We are in for you." The statement underneath the second picture of a forlorn woman behind bars is "While you are out for us" (1919, *YSM*, XIII. 4). Often, prominent leaders like Eugene Debs and Morris Hillquit addressed the children in a monthly magazine column. In this way, ideas were actively connected to an ongoing movement, and children were given the feeling that they were part of a larger sociopolitical community.

While *The Young Socialists' Magazine* was far-reaching in its linkage between working-class cultural identification and explicit socialist political theory and action, its treatment of issues such as racism and sexism was limited. Though the pages of *The Young Socialists' Magazine* made some attempt to confront the racism of the dominant society and to decry mistreatment of African Americans and Native Americans, these attempts were minimal. Sometimes issues of Jim

Crowism, slavery, prejudice, and the annihilation of Native Americans were discussed. Nevertheless, even in these discussions, the racism of the dominant society crept in through stereotypes of the stories' main characters.

"Black Rosie," which appeared in the June 1912 issue, demonstrated this limitation. Rosie, a young Black girl, was ostracized by white children in her neighborhood. She was befriended by a tough white girl who ultimately helped her win the friendship of the other whites in the community. While this story encouraged all races to play together, the details reinforced a number of racial stereotypes. Rosie was described as having short woolly hair and teeth that contrasted with her dark skin, a portrayal that remained within the bounds of racist stereotyping. In another section, Rosie's mother, a former slave, decried the horrors of slavery, saying, "You dear children, who look at me in wonder, can hardly understand today how such terrible things could have been true." At the same time the story took pains to point out that some whites were good masters and kept slaves only because everyone else did so. We are told that Rosie's mother refused to leave her wonderful mistress: "I don't want to be free. Let me stay with you!" In this way the story perpetuated the stereotype of the loyal Black "Mammy," faithful to her benevolent owner (1912, *Meta Stern, YSM*, V. 7).

In an article on "The Fate of the Indians" Charles Sprague calls on the reader to recognize their unhappy fate. Yet there was no active organizing by these socialists on behalf of the Indians. In fact, there seemed to be a fatalism about the inevitability of their demise and an acknowledgment and acceptance of this unjust situation (1910, *LSM*, III. 9).

Only occasionally did the magazine focus on the contributions of women. In the poem "Bread and Roses" by James Oppenheimer, a strong statement was made about the women involved in the Lawrence strike:

As we come marching, marching, marching  
We bring the Greater Days  
The rising of the women means  
The rising of the race.  
(1914. *YSM*, VII.1)

A dialogue entitled "Mother Goes to Work" offers a feminist analysis of housework: a young boy describes how he gets up at 5:30 to go to work and eats the breakfast his mother had prepared for him. When he and his father return from work, his mother fixes them dinner and tea, cleans up, and then continues with her sewing. Asked about his mother's wages, the boy replies, "She don't do no work" (1912, *YSM*, V.4). In this dialogue, the boy's statement was examined and the exploitation of women in the home made visible. However, materials such as this were the exception. In general, there were few stories with women as heroines and few articles about women leaders. The magazine remained geared to the white working-class male.

Not only did *The Young Socialists' Magazine* exhibit a limited understanding of racial and sexual oppression but also it offered only a limited model for developing an

alternative, oppositional culture. The magazine focused only on the rational aspects of consciousness and personality formation, ignoring individual creativity and the psychosexual basis of personality development. In this respect it differed from anarchist publications of the period, in which concepts of freedom, self-exploration, and creativity in education became a significant part of the political and intellectual orientation. Rather than exploring new forms of creativity in poetry and fiction, the material in *The Young Socialists' Magazine* remained conventional in form if radical in content. Today the YSM literature would be termed socialist-realist and would be distinguished from the experimental poetry or stream-of-consciousness writing that characterized anarchist and alternative magazines of the period.

In addition, while family life and schooling were critically examined and infused with socialist content, the traditional structure of these institutions was not questioned as they were in anarchist publications devoted to free love and libertarian schooling. In this sense, *The Young Socialists' Magazine* remained conventional.

In spite of its limitations, *The Young Socialists' Magazine* makes a significant contribution to the history of education and the teaching of socialism. It remains one of the few children's publications that challenged the power and domination of the elite classes by creating an alternative voice for the marginalized poor. Articles and stories captivated the children's imagination and promoted their identification with working-class culture, history, and politics.

*The Young Socialist Magazine*, 1908 -1920, provides numerous examples of intellectually and politically challenging curricula that confront domination and question competition through the recovery and telling of the historical experiences of the working class, through alternative visions of how we might all live together, as well as through the voices of prominent literary and political figures of the day, using stories, songs, historical analysis, poetry, illustrations, and texts by famous political and literary figures of the day, *The Young Socialist Magazine* provides a pungent critique of the society of its time and a positive approach to its transformation.

Shouldn't our children learn about workers that produce the sweaters they wear or about the child migrants forced to work in our factories, including the meat processing plants, for extremely low wages and under dangerous conditions. Stories in *The Young Socialist Magazine* revealed the underbelly of society and allowed children to explore issues usually omitted in children's reading materials. Through its articles, stories, songs, artwork, and poetry, the magazine encouraged young people to fight injustices and embrace a socialist democracy. For all of these reasons, *The Young Socialist Magazine* remains an important resource to encourage generating alternative/radical teaching materials for today's youth.

\* An earlier version of this article appeared in *Curriculum Inquiry*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Autumn, 1992), pp. 271-290.

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