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# SSS Organizes on National Scale.

by William Kruse †

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On July 27th and 28th, 1918, there came together in the People's House, New York City, one of the most remarkable gatherings ever held in the Socialist movement. It was a convention, or conference rather, of people interested in the education of children in particular and of the movement in general. Delegates were present from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Brooklyn, and the National Office.

The first session was held on Saturday afternoon, July 27th. Dr. Antoinette Konikow, of Boston, was elected chairman, Robert Spector, Executive Secretary of the Manhattan YPSL served as secretary. National Secretary William F. Kruse, of the YPSL, explained the need of coordinating the work and the steps that the National Office was preparing to take in this direction. Dr. Elizabeth Baer, of Philadelphia, then explained the work that had been done in Philadelphia and the necessity of training teachers to take charge of the school work. Samuel Slavsky explained his pedagogical method in connection with a Self-Culture Club group in Brooklyn, while Rudolf Blum, of Pittsburgh, told of the experiences with the very successful SSS organization in Pittsburgh.

An organization committee consisting of Bertha Mailly, Executive Secretary of the Rand School, and Comrades Blum, Ulrich, Bolton, Spector, and Halpern was elected. A curriculum committee had Dr. Konikow as chairman, together with Dr. Baer, Honack, Slavsky, and Rose Kisselhoff of the Brooklyn YPSL. The conference then adjourned until the following morning to permit the committees to finish their work. Two committee meetings were held that evening.

The following morning, Comrade Kisselhoff

served as Secretary in Spector's place, league work preventing his attendance. The curriculum committee reported a plan of dividing our study material into three groups at least, with various subdivisions as the needs and equipment of the school may make possible.

## Advised Curriculum.

*Group 1 Includes children between 6 and 10 years of age, if possible divided into two parts, children 6 to 8 in the first, and 8 to 10 in the second. The lesson material is to include:*

**I. Nature Study.** — Text: The Katherine Dopp series of four books, *The Tree Dwellers*, *The Cave People I and II*, and *The Sea People*.

**II. Fairy Tales.** — Bibliography: Oscar Wilde's *Fairy Tales*, Tolstoy's *Bear Hunt*, Maeterlinck's *The Bluebird*, and Fairy Tales by Harrison, Anderson, and Nordau. Additional material in course of preparation.

**III. Stories of Things About Us.** — Reference: Tyndall's *Fragments of Science*. Comrade Slavsky will prepare this course.

*Group 2 is to include children between the ages of about 10 to 13. Their lesson material and curriculum will include the following:*

**I. The Development of the Tool.** — A course of 20 lesson leaflets for pupils and teachers to be prepared by William F. Kruse.

**II. The Development of Society.** — A course to be prepared by Dr. Elizabeth Baer.

**III. Biographies of Labor's Fighters in All Ages.** — To be prepared by Dr. Konikow.

†- Although unsigned in the original, this article has been attributed with reasonable confidence to YPSL National Secretary, Circulation Manager, and Editor William F. "Bill" Kruse. The acronym "SSS" refers to "Socialist Sunday Schools."

Group 3, consisting of children between 13 and 16 years of age, to be taught along the following lines:

**I. American History and the Workers.** — Ameringer: *Little History for Big Children*; Oneal: *Workers in American History*; Henry George, Jr.

**II. Modern Drama and Poetry.** — The study and criticism of short plays by Lord Dunsany, Ibsen's "Pillars of Society" and "An Enemy of the People," Kennedy's "Servant in the House," Mrs. Traubell's "Towards Humanity," Hauptman's "The Weavers." Poetry: Tagore, Sinclair's "The Cry for Justice," Gilman's "In This Our World," Braley's "Songs of the Workday World," Shaw's "Widower's Houses," "Major Barbara," Gogol's "The Inspector," Galsworthy's "Justice," Strife's "The Silver Box." Further list to be prepared by Clara Ruge.

**III. Elementary Civics.** — Reference: *American Citizenship* by Beard.

*And in addition to the above the committee recommends the following to be used for all grades and ages:*

1. **Current Events.**
2. **Mottos to be worked out by the children.**
3. **Dramatic Work.**
4. **Games.**
5. **Outings.**
6. **Physical exercise and athletics.**
7. **Celebration of Socialist Holidays.**

### **Organization Committee Report.**

The organization committee recommended that the National Office issue a leaflet giving ways and means of organizing and maintaining the SSS, this leaflet to give at least two methods that have been found successful in actual practice. Teachers should be well grounded socialists, wherever possible, except in cases where purely technical training such as music or athletics is desired. There should be uniform record cards and other supplies issued directly by the National Office.

### **Cut Out the "Sunday" from the SSS.**

The conference decided that the word "Sunday" had better be deleted from our name as it served no useful purpose and only hampered our work in many cases. On the other hand it is recognized that the initials "SSS" have come to hold a very real significance in identifying our movement. No substitute for a name was agreed upon but the most favored was "Socialist Schools of Science" and this name will until further notice be employed by the National Office in designating this work. All schools are requested to follow this suggestion.

### **Plans for National Organization.**

As a means of perfecting our necessary national organization, the conference elected a temporary National Executive Committee, consisting of Dr. Konikow (Boston), Chairman; William F. Kruse (Chicago), Secretary; and Rudolf Blum (Pittsburgh), Bertha Mailly (New York), and Dr. Elizabeth Baer (Philadelphia). The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party is asked to give recognition to this committee at least until a national convention of SSS delegates perfect their own organization.

In the meantime all schools now in existence are asked to register their adherence to the national movement by sending a complete list of their officers, time and place of meeting, and other information to the Young People's Dept., Socialist Party, 803 W Madison St., Chicago, Ill. It is not at present the intention of making the SSS an iron-bound Party affair, but there must be some central point of contact between the various school organizations and it is but right that, as in the case of the YPSL, this point be the Young People's Dept. of our Party. Details of finances and management will be worked out later, the first step is registration. Has your SSS registered with the National Office?

*Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.*

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