

Birch, Howard and Christopher Phelps. *Radicals in America: The US Left Since the Second World War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

This book attempts to provide a comprehensive history of radicalism in post-war America, examining the interplay between the mainstream left and radical fringe groups of American society. Tinged with a left-wing bias, this story nevertheless presents a scholarly assessment that explores the limits of reform within American democracy. Although it does not focus on socialism, the book provides valuable commentary on views of feminism within anti-capitalist movements as well as an examination of McCarthyism. While Birch illuminates competing assessments of the relationship between gender and economic exploitation, these dynamics remain distant from the Socialist Party that employed Myers. On the topic of McCarthyism, this book makes an argument more directly applicable to my topic: that McCarthyism, while directed primarily against the Communist Party, successfully stigmatized other left-wing elements and curbed basic freedoms of press and assembly.

Boss, M. Kenneth, and Jerome Breslaw, Jack Cypin, A. Garick Fullerton, Kie K.S. Fullerton, James D. Garst, Rina Garst, and Robin Myers. *Robot Revolution: The Implications of Automation*. Pennsylvania: Socialist Society USA, 1955.

Published as a booklet and presumably circulated among party members, this document is exceedingly well-researched but also extremely accessible. Using forecasts from mainstream economists and publications, including Truman's economic advisers and *Fortune*, the pamphlet argues that automation and technological progress are going to accelerate rapidly, displacing

industrial workers across numerous fields and fundamentally changing the worker's relationship to production. The pamphlet argues in favor of increased economic planning and labor unity, and it claims that most people have not yet recognized the automation revolution that is already underway. According to the pamphlet's central argument, unions will decline if they do not make demands to shorten contracts, reduce working hours, and increase pay when productivity increases, or reach out to women and workers in service and clerical jobs. Although succinct, this analysis is almost prophetic, detailing the ways in which automation will increase unemployment and competition while undercutting union ability to strike for better wages and working conditions.

**“Censure of Norman Thomas.” Young People’s Socialist League Meeting Minutes.
Personal Papers of Darlington Hoopes, Reel 4. Microfilm. University of Oklahoma
Archives.**

In this meeting, the Young People’s Socialist League voted to censure Norman Thomas, who had been the torchbearer of the Socialist movement for a generation, over his criticisms that the Socialists were no longer a viable party. The resolution against Thomas is succinct and specific; he is to be censured for undercutting the Socialist Campaign, belonging to the Liberal Party, refusing to distance his views from those of somebody called Krougor, telling the Senate he ran as a third party candidate only to influence the politics of the two major parties, and neglecting to distance his personal views from those of the party.

Cromie, Leonard J. "Multi-Party System: The Fringes of the American Electorate Always Have the Chance to Voice Their Dissenting Views." *New York Times* (New York), June 15, 1952. Accessed November 15, 2017.

In this article, political pundit Leonard Cromie briefly and mocking describes the candidates and platforms of American's marginal parties. After several jokes at the expense of the Vegetarian Party, he comments that the Socialists have transitioned toward respectability. Cromie's assessment of the party's moderation and willingness to work within the existing political system corroborates the characters Myers herself ascribes the party. Written for a national audience, the article reflects a disregard for the Socialist Party, although it does not condemn or distort their ideology.

Darlington Hoopes to Dwight Eisenhower, September 30, 1952. From the Personal Papers of Darlington Hoopes, Reel 8. Microfilm. University of Oklahoma Archives.

In this 1952 letter to General Eisenhower, Socialist Party candidate Darlington Hoopes calls for Eisenhower and his campaign to stop equating socialism with dictatorship and correct previous statements to this effect, or else debate Hoopes in Reading. While attempting to remain polite and adhering to the facts of Eisenhower's past statements, the letter comes across as didactic and almost outraged. Hoopes writes that Eisenhower's experience in Europe should give him a more nuanced view of socialism, and he says that unless one believes the rich have an inherent right to rob the poor, then socialism does not inhibit freedom. I chose to include this document because it shows a Socialist reaction to Eisenhower's contempt, a contempt that much of America shared. It also illuminates the power disparities between an establishment party like

the Republicans and a third party like the Socialists; Hoopes sent a personal letter to Eisenhower, and the only type of communication from the Eisenhower campaign to Hoopes that I could find was a staffer's response to an open letter. In this response, a staffer said only that Eisenhower did not have time to respond personally to a different letter the Socialist Party had sent him.

Darlington Hoopes to Robin Myers, November 6, 1952. From the Personal Papers of Darlington Hoopes, Reel 8. Microfilm. University of Oklahoma Archives.

In this letter, Hoopes tells Myers that the electoral outcome for his own presidential campaign looks bleak; the votes the Socialists received were “negligible,” by his assessment. Contrary to the friendly and businesslike tone of his other correspondence, Hoopes seems downright despondent in this letter. He says his interview with a television station was a flop and that he hopes Milwaukee will host the National Executive Committee meeting so that Zeidler will be able to attend. Finding a city to host the party convention was a frequent topic of correspondence between Myers and Hoopes, and Hoopes' inclusion of his post-election speech is also typical. In many of the letters I've read, Hoopes and Myers frequently send drafts of correspondence to each other and discuss speaking engagements for Hoopes. In the conclusion of his letter, Hoopes' expresses his hope that Myers will be able to take a rest, which is noteworthy because Hoopes and Myers both comment frequently on Myers' workload.

“Financial Report, May 15-December 1.” National Action Committee Meeting Minutes. December 6-7, 1952. Personal Papers of Darlington Hoopes, Reel 4. Microfilm. University of Oklahoma Archives.

This document of party finances reveals the Socialist Party spent more than it collected. Its largest expense is the salaries of its employees, which included Robin Myers, who worked for the party for much of her adult life. Interestingly, the party's next largest expense was "Dinner," which cost \$1,163 dollars, although the document does not explain the occasion or the number of people who attended. The largest sources of revenue are the Campaign and Convention Fund, party dues, and the election fundraising drive. Given the emphasis on collecting dues in early documents, I was not surprised by their importance in overall party finances. Using US Inflation Calculato.com, I determined the money the party spent in 1952 was equivalent to \$125,929.19 in 2017 dollars, which is more than I expected but still miniscule compared to the spending levels of major parties.

"Material Available from the National Educational Committee of the Y.P.S.L." Young People's Socialist League. November-December 1952. Personal Papers of Darlington Hoopes, Reel 4. Microfilm. University of Oklahoma Archives.

This reading list provides a highly international body of socialist texts, divided into several categories: basic, advanced, Fabian Pamphlets, foreign socialist works, and miscellaneous ones. From the authors who have been included, it is clear the YPSL has an academic bent and an alignment with traditional Marxism. Given the specific and policy-based platforms the Socialist Party advocated in many of the other primary sources I have read, I was somewhat surprised to find such a doctrinaire and theoretical list. Nonetheless, there is no evidence on whether many party members read these texts and no indication as to the influence they might have had on debates within the party. Interestingly, the list also includes Titoist Pamphlets, although it notes that these are for discussion purposes only, indicating an eagerness

to discuss ideas rather than adhere to orthodoxy. Myers herself has reflected upon this ability to debate, giving the party an academic and democratic hue that counters the red-baiting directed against it and the monolithic anti-communism of much of American culture.

Myers, Robin. *America Arms the Schools*. Young People's Socialist League. Chicago: 1937. Digital. Northwestern University.

This pamphlet was written by Robin Myers in 1937 (while she was still in college) and published by the Young People's Socialist League. Using a Marxist framework, it denounces war as the byproduct of capitalism and claims that President Roosevelt is America's most powerful militant. Primarily, the pamphlet argues against the existence of the ROTC on college campuses, especially at schools who have made it mandatory. Myers quotes government documents, ROTC pamphlets, and public officials. She also includes a graphic linking Yale trustees (who support the ROTC) to their business ventures, which would profit from war. Although extremely well-researched, the pamphlet makes several leaps between the actualities of the ROTC and the authoritarian values Myers claims it works to entrench. The language and arguments are more radical than most documents from the Socialist Party, illustrating the differences between anti-war YPSL action in the 1930s and Socialist Party platforms of the 1950s.

Henderson, Paul J. *Darlington Hoopes: The Political Biography of an American Socialist*. Glasgow: Humming Earth, 2005.

This book focuses on the life and writings of Darlington Hoopes, who was the Socialist Party's chairman from 1950 to 1968. A close friend and colleague of Myers, Hoopes rose to prominence within the party for his support of continued electoral action. Henderson

offers a detailed analysis of Socialist Party policies in the early 1950s that I found helpful, and he also mentions Myers several times. Written with extensive primary sources, this book includes a fascinating level of detail, describing how the party was so poor by the early 1950s that Myers turned off the telephones.

McReynolds, David. *National Executive Committee Meeting, Socialist Party*. New York: 1957. David McReynolds Photos. Web. Accessed Nov. 29, 2017

In this picture, Robin Myers sits at a conference table during a National Executive Committee meeting. Although the photo was taken after Myers's tenure as National Secretary, she nonetheless sits at the center of this photo, staring at something on the table and looking as if she is concentrating deeply. The photo is candid but also high-quality, with a beam of light illuminating Myers. She is forty-one and looks relatively business-like. Her sweater and large earrings help to historicize the photo. It was taken by David McReynolds, who took 50,000 photos throughout his forty-year career in activism, including involvement with the Socialist Party. His name pops up in a few of the letters Hoopes and Myers wrote to party members, and he was the party's candidate for president in 1980.

Myers, Robin. "A Strong Socialist Movement Can Defeat 'Class Warfare' of Reactionaries." *The Call* (New York), May 30, 1952. Accessed November 17, 2017.

This article, which is an excerpt from the report Myers delivered at the most recent party meeting, briefly describes the conservative backlash against socialism and other liberal programs. Myers writes that the status quo of the past two years opposes the previous expansion

of public responsibility for welfare. Specifically, she accuses the current political climate of demonizing public housing and “socialized medicine” and sacrificing civil rights for states’ rights. While she ends with a call for socialism to replace the existing political system, Myers also makes clear that this conservative backlash targets not only socialism but also political and material gains the left has made over many generations.

Myers, Robin. "Interview with Miss Robin Myers." Interview by Betty Yorburg. June 9, 1965, 1-53. Print, Columbia University.

In this interview, sociologist Betty Yorburg asked Robin Myers about her experiences with the Socialist Party and the reasons for its decline. Myers explained how she became interested in leftist thought during college and worked for Young People’s Socialist League and the New York Socialist Party after graduating. She described how the relative economic prosperity of the United States made it hard to recruit people, especially young immigrants who tended to be committed to the idea of the American Dream. Myers also said she would have expected the labor movement or the Civil Rights movement to embrace socialism more than it did, but she thought the New Deal and the Great Society successfully co-opted socialism’s best ideas. When the interview was conducted in 1965, Myers still saw the need for socialism in America and in the international system.

National Action Committee Meeting Minutes. January 6, 1953. Personal Papers of Darlington Hoopes, Reel 4. Microfilm. University of Oklahoma Archives.

In the minutes of a meeting Robin Myers attended, the National Action Committee of the Socialist Party held a vote on whether to go ahead with plans to merge with the Social Democratic Federation and Jewish Socialist Verband or to defer this discussion until the party meeting in March. The document also mentions the party's financial struggles and claims it will soon begin collecting dues again. Although brief, this document explores two key issues of the Socialist Party in the 1950s: mergers and financial decline.

No Author. "Bao Da: Aid Held Useless." *New York Times*. October 18, 1950. Accessed November 23, 2017.

This article, which is only two paragraphs long and buried on page twenty of the *New York Times*, contains one of the first criticisms of the Vietnam War. On behalf of the Socialist Party, Myers condemns the waste of American blood and resources to stop communism in Vietnam. While she says the party does not support the spread of aggressive communism, she does not mince words in calling Vietnam an outpost of colonial mismanagement. This article shares many continuities with Myers's earlier antiwar activism on behalf of the YPSL and preempts a decade of domestic turmoil over the Vietnam War.

No photographer listed. *Thomas with Harry Fleischman and William Gausmann*. Reading, 1948. Courtesy of Harry Fleischman. In *Norman Thomas: The Last Idealist*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976.

This picture shows several prominent socialists at their party convention of 1948, the last year Norman Thomas was the party's nominee for president. In the corner of the image, there is

a sign that says "A Woman for Vice Pres," and there is a woman sitting in the foreground of the photo, facing away from the camera. Initially, the New York Times announced that Robin Myers was going to be the party's vice presidential candidate in 1952, but this was not the case.

Although she was considered for the nomination, Harry Fleischman, who is in the right of this image, was nominated instead. I included this image because I think the woman might be Robin Myers, as no other woman has been mentioned in the party literature I have read.

Robin Myers to Socialist Party Members, c. 1952. From the Personal Papers of Darlington Hoopes, Reel 8. Microfilm. University of Oklahoma Archives.

This letter reveals the small size of the Socialist Party operation, for Myers provides a detailed list of what she wants from the party members, and her methods of advertising buttons and stickers are a far cry from the DNC emails I receive. Myers says that buttons are available and cost three cents apiece, and that the party will only order stickers if convinced of sufficient demand. She also instructs members to send in clippings of the Socialist Party advertisements they find, since the party is not sure which publications print their messages. I was surprised by the disorganization of the operation, even though the communications I have read from Myers and Hoopes suggest that the two of them did the bulk of the work for the party. Additionally, the letter makes clear that communications between the central party structure and the local chapters are struggling; many chapters have not confirmed the candidates' tour schedule, and they also have not reported their local candidates to the party and *The Call*.

Ruch, Walter J. "Socialists Reject Thomas' Program." *New York Times* (New York), June 4, 1950. Accessed November 17, 2017.

Although brief, this article ran on the front page of the New York Times, implying that its content was significant to a national audience. It chronicles the Socialist Party's decision to break with Norman Thomas, who had been the party's nominee for president in the past six elections, over electoral policy. While Thomas stated his intention to remain in the party, he said he found their decision to continue electoral action unrealistic. Robin Myers is not named in the article, but she supported the continuance of election action and became executive secretary after this resolution passed.

Socialist Party (US). *Electoral Action for Socialism: A Policy for the Socialist Party*. New York: 1951. Microfilm, Arizona State University.

This pamphlet justifies the decision to continue electoral action, acknowledging the long odds the party faces but claiming it is important for the Socialists to talk about the issues that are important to them. More so than any other piece of literature I have read of theirs, this document is highly critical of the Democratic Party, accusing its reform efforts as nothing more than pork-barrel appeasement of important interest groups. Pre-empting many counterarguments, the pamphlet is thoughtful and surprisingly blunt in its assessment of party weakness. Contrary to my expectations, this blunt assessment was typical of many of the letters I read as well.

Socialist Party. "May Day Rally Flyer." Socialist Party of America. New York: 1952. Personal Papers of Darlington Hoopes, Reel 4. Microfilm. University of Oklahoma Archives.

This flyer depicts workers holding hands over a torch, appealing to sentiments of worker solidarity and American freedom. These ideas are echoed in the text that appears below the illustration, claiming the rally supports laborers, peace, and freedom while rallying against totalitarianism and Soviet aggression. Given the vagueness around the rally and its political platforms, the flyer seems to appeal to a base of workers broader than its traditional membership. Although the Socialist Party is the first host listed, the flyer also names 5 others and mentions that other labor groups are also involved. Emphasizing partnerships with other labor groups, the flyer underscores the Party's desire to form alliances and strengthen its base however possible.

Socialist Party (US). *Platform of the Socialist Party*. New York:1952. State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Microfilm, Brigham Young University.

In this pamphlet, the Socialist Party details its main platforms, which include anti-militarism, resource conservation, the right to a job and fair working conditions, more public housing, more education spending, a higher minimum wage, and equal rights for African Americans. Although careful to distance socialism from communism, which they claim has only ever triumphed over socialism by using extreme force, most of the pamphlet advocates concrete public policy rather than economic reorganization. The pamphlet is clearly written but the language is not incendiary, and it seems to be well-researched, with qualitative and quantitative data. Most notably, the pamphlet continually equates socialism with democracy, arguing that socialism is based on individual freedoms and structured to help each individual achieve his or her full potential.

Socialist Party (US). *Your Questions Answered*. New York: 1952. Microfilm, Arizona State University.

This document is a political pamphlet with several amusing illustrations, including a tiny Socialist figure staring down an imposing portrait of Stalin. The description below the image clearly denounces Stalin, which was a frequent theme within the Socialist literature I read. The rest of the document provides succinct descriptions of Socialist Party platforms, which are clearly written and not incendiary. Although lighter in tone than many of the other documents I have read, the clear writing and straightforward policies are fairly typical.

Yorburg, Betty. “Socialists View the Problem.” In *Failure of a Dream? Essays in the History of American Socialism*. Garden City: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1974. Reprint from *Utopia and Reality: A Collective Portrait of American Socialists*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

This chapter explains the basic factors that lead to the decline of socialism in the United States: success of the New Deal in achieving pro-worker reforms, factionalism within the party, failure of labor movements to fully embrace socialism, relative fluidity between social classes, and the two-party electoral system. Many of Yorburg’s ideas originate from socialist leaders whom she interviewed, including Robin Myers. Although no excerpts from Yorburg’s interview with Myers appear in this chapter, other party members expressed similar sentiments. Perceptions around the ways in which the New Deal appropriated socialist ideology presents the most striking continuity between Myers and these other thinkers.

Yorburg, Betty. *Utopia and Reality: A Collective Portrait of American Socialists*. New York: Columbia University Library, 1969.

As a sociological approach, this book emphasizes the emotional and moral dimensions of Socialist Party involvement, focusing more on human behavior than political philosophy.

According to Yorburg's assessment, the Socialist Party was based more upon populism than Marxism, and it was primarily the Eastern factions who were concerned with immediate social reforms. From her own interview with Yorburg, Myers seems to embody this Eastern faction who had become disillusioned with Marxist doctrine and therefore focused on political reforms.

Additionally, Yorburg concludes that members who joined the Socialist Party in the interwar years, a group that includes Myers, were most likely to drop out of the party, although none of them disavowed socialism completely. Myers herself fits this pattern, resigning from the party in 1958 but telling Yorburg that she still saw a need for socialism in America. This book was useful in contextualizing Myers's experiences with those of her peers and explaining how she and other party members retained social and intellectual ties to one another even after leaving the party.