This paper examines Margaret Haley's speech to the 1904 National Education Association (NEA) annual meeting on her views about teacher unions. Haley viewed organized labor as public school's partner in democratizing United States society. The first section outlined her political views on the relationship between democracy and education, noting teachers' responsibilities to advance both. Haley stated that neither unionism nor professional organizations could be vital or progressive if one or the other was absent. She suggested teachers needed to be organized as unionists and intellectuals. The second section of the speech outlined the need for teacher's unions, identifying conditions requiring reform (making wages correspond to the cost of living, improving job security and pensions, reducing class size, and making teachers participants in school decision making). The final section reexamined the relationship of democracy and education, discussing reasons why teachers had to understand the conditions needed to succeed in teaching. Haley suggested that through organization, teachers could learn to reach the public with accurate information. She combined her views about the irreconcilability of class interests with a critique of labor's limitations. This paper uses Haley's principles to draw conclusions about how teacher unionism might become the vehicle for educational and social reform. (SM)
TEACHER UNIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION:
RE-EXAMINING MARGARET HALEY'S COUNSEL ON COUNCILS

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The statement proposing the usefulness of this symposium observed that critical scholars in education generally have downplayed the significance of teacher unions as a force for democratic and progressive change in education, based on one or more of the following presumptions: (1) teachers unions represent the narrow or sectional interests of teachers rather than other disempowered groups in education, (2) they limit teachers' interests to "economistic" and "job control" issues rather than system restructuring, and (3) they lack substantial power within the highly-bureaucratized and top-heavy system of public education to challenge bureaucratic elite control.

Two different kinds of issues are embedded in these presumptions. The first relate to teacher unionism's potential as a vehicle for democratizing education; the second derive from teacher unionism's historical record as such a vehicle. Margaret Haley's oft-quoted speech to the 1904 National Education Association Annual Meeting, "Why Teachers Should Organize" addresses these critiques.

Although Haley's speech has been excerpted, quoted, and summarized in a number of historical studies, it has been misinterpreted, in great part because two key passages have been ignored. Their absence is curious because they explain a crucial element in Haley's educational and political philosophy as outlined in this speech. Indeed, these passages illuminate an aspect of Haley's commitment to teacher unionism and organized labor which merits closer attention: her prescience about their inherent conservatism. As her speech demonstrates, Haley viewed organized labor as the public school's partner in democratizing American society, but she also saw labor's deficiencies. Omitting
either one of these facets distorts our sense of Haley's world view and her work.4

Haley was forced to write and send her speech to the National Education Association (NEA) months before she delivered it in St. Louis. Haley used these NEA annual meetings, attended by activist teachers, to publicize unionism's benefits and attract recruits to her movement.5 She was acknowledged by supporters and opponents alike to be the consummate organizer, so we can safely assume that she was aware that her political foes in the NEA would pounce on every mistake. Because the meetings were important organizing occasions and her remarks would be the focus of much attention, it seems reasonable to take as a given that she gave careful consideration to the form and substance of her speech.

To begin we should note that she titled her address "Why Teachers Should Organize," not "Why Teachers Organize," because this difference is critical to understanding the text. This speech is, in fact, Haley's manifesto for teacher unionism, her vision of teacher unionism's pedagogical, social, economic, and political purposes. Thematically, it is divided in three parts. In the first section Haley outlines her political views about the relationship between democracy and education, and teachers' responsibilities to advance both.

In this portion of her speech Haley indicates that her ideological convictions about democracy and education are not shared by many citizens. Indeed, this is the meaning of the first
six paragraphs of her address, when she admits that "practical experience in meeting the responsibilities of citizenship directly, not in evading or shifting them, is the prime need of the American people." She explains that teachers must assume the role of educating citizens about their political responsibilities, to help provide the citizenry with the essential "practical experience" in exercising their democratic rights. Haley reiterates this message at the end of the first segment of her speech, explaining the significance of the Chicago teachers' tax crusade. Note that she identifies as the most important element in this achievement that it educated citizens to the democratic potential of the public schools. Haley points out that the movement she led exposed the facts and forced the corporations to "return to the public treasury some of their stolen millions," but the greatest significance of this victory was that "the public school, thru the organized effort of the teachers, was the agency which brought these conditions to the attention of the public and showed how to apply the remedy."7

In Haley's vision, teachers stand in the same relation to citizens as they do to students in their schools. The same principles of "scientific education" that dictate that students learn best by doing hold for teachers and citizens who learn best about democracy by engaging in struggles for democratic rights. As Haley observed in an interview held the following year:

Organization is itself educative. In accomplishing its work the federation has given to the teachers a practical knowledge of civic conditions and civic
needs, which has brought them into direct and vital relation with all the forces in the community working for the betterment of civic conditions. It is making the school, thru the work of the teachers, such a factor in the civic life of the community as it never was before.8

Haley is thoroughly dedicated to using teacher unionism to democratize the schools and the schools to democratize society, but she nonetheless admits that in this country "the sense of responsibility for the duties of citizenship in a democracy is...weak."9 Furthermore, she acknowledges that classroom teachers share the deficiency. We teachers, she says, share responsibility for existing social problems to the extent that the schools are undemocratic and we "have not made the necessary effort toward removing the conditions which make the realization of these ideals impossible."10 In this speech Haley does not specify why teachers have failed to live up to their civic responsibility, but she implicitly acknowledges that teachers as a group at the very least do not share the strength of her commitment to make the public school and teacher unionism vehicles for democratization.

As if in answer to many proponents of "critical pedagogy" who assign educators the task of transforming society, fusing the role of teacher and political activist, Haley outlines quite a different role for teachers in a democracy.11 Although Haley was herself a full-time political activist at the time she wrote this speech, she recognizes the difference between being an organizer and being a teacher.12 She holds teachers responsible only for
improving conditions in schools democracy is subverted when schools and teachers do fulfill their obligations to educate the citizenry. Moreover, teachers are not necessarily accountable for success in their struggle to reform the schools, only for making the "necessary effort." Haley thus recognizes that even the most militant and progressive teachers movement may fail to reform the schools; its prospects for success are bound up with the fortunes of other movements, a premise she discusses in the final segment of her speech.

Two other aspects of this first section should be noted. Haley does not argue that her ideals about democracy and education are the reasons that teachers do organize, but the reasons they should organize. They are her reasons, and nowhere in this address does she imply that they are commitments shared by all teacher unionists. Clearly, Haley thought that prospective activists should understand these principles but she understood that they were not universally accepted by the movement she organized and represented. Union activists, especially those who are organizing a new union, generally have a more developed ideology than those teachers whose activity is more limited. In this section Haley demonstrates that she understands this phenomenon and does not make assent with her philosophy a precondition for joining the teachers movement. In drawing this distinction Haley indirectly explains why any study of the reasons teachers join unions must examine the dynamic between the organizers and the organizees, and how the union changes and is
changed by those who join.13

The two key passages to which I referred earlier occur in this section dealing with the relationship between teaching and the democratic ideal. Because they are critical to understanding the address and Haley's work, I will quote both passages in full. In both of these passages, Haley argues that neither unionism nor professional organizations can be vital or progressive if the other is absent:

The character of teachers' organizations is twofold. Organizations on professional lines existed before the necessity became apparent for those for the improvement of conditions. The necessity for both is becoming increasingly evident, and the success of the one is dependent upon the success of the other. Unless the conditions for realizing educational ideals keep pace with the ideals themselves, the result in educational practice is deterioration. To know the better way and be unable to follow it is unfavorable to a healthy development. To have freedom in the conditions without the incentive of the ideal is no less harmful. It is, therefore, opportune that the occasion for organization in the newer sense, the sense understood in the subject of this paper, should be coincident with the formulation of the most advanced educational theory in a practical philosophy of pedagogy.14

The element of danger in organization for self-protection is the predominance of the selfish motive. In the case of teachers a natural check is placed upon this motive by the necessity for professional organization. The closer the union between these two kinds of organization, the fuller and more effective is the activity possible to each.15

One might argue that these statements represent no more than the astute organizer's effort to ameliorate the hostility toward unionism which NEA delegates would be expected to feel towards an organizational rival. In fact, in the first two lines of the first passage, Haley is saying exactly that: "Let me assure
members of the NEA, the teacher union movement recognizes that you were around before us, and we have no intention of replacing you. There's room for both of us." These first lines might be interpreted as a tactical device to win over classroom teachers who were not entirely hostile to the NEA, which Haley considered a "rotten old institution." 16

However, the rest of the paragraph reveals that Haley believes that some kind of organization "on professional lines," in addition to the teachers union, is essential. When she observes that "the necessity for both is becoming increasingly evident," she may mean that it is becoming increasingly evident to her as well as to others. Haley, like the rest of the membership of the union, might have been lately persuaded by Frances Temple that teachers needed some type of organization to discuss pedagogical concerns. 17

Nothing else in the rhetoric or substance of the speech is directed towards placating unionism's opponents. The document is a manifesto outlining Haley's principles for teacher unionism, and there is little reason to conclude that on the issue of organization she would diverge from this purpose for reasons of political expediency. In addition, she suggests a view of organized labor in these passages which is supported later in the text.

Taken together these two paragraphs demonstrate that Haley's concerns about union affiliation were more than strategic. She was "cautious yet consistent in recommending union affiliation." 18
because she understood that unionism does contain an inherently conservative pressure, in her language, caused by "the predominance of the selfish motive" in organizing for "self-protection." Haley argues that pressures to subordinate ideals to material objectives are "checked" by professional organization, which supplies "the incentive of the ideal." Conversely, professional organization requires a strong union movement to be successful so that "the conditions for realizing educational ideals keep pace with the ideals themselves," avoiding "deterioration" in "educational practice." Academic ideals cannot flourish without teacher unionism's ability to secure improved conditions, and teacher unionism requires the professional organization to keep it true to its ideals of democratic education.

In these passages Haley explains why under her leadership the Chicago teachers supported formation of teachers councils in schools to influence decisions on curriculum and other classroom matters. Teachers councils were an institutional manifestation of teachers organized to pursue professional issues, and it makes sense that Haley would support them, for two reasons. Haley believed that teacher unionism had a responsibility to democratize the schools, as she explains later in her address when she discusses the conditions which make teacher unionism essential; she describes how the teacher has been turned into an automaton, denied her rightful authority. Thus, teacher involvement in pedagogical decisions is essential for the teacher.
to perform her civic function of educating all citizens according to the principles of "scientific pedagogy." As she demonstrates in the first passage quoted above, Haley believed that teachers needed to be organized in two ways, as teacher unionists and as teacher intellectuals. She looked to this second type of organization to counteract the "selfish motive" which predominates in "organization for self-protection," that is, the union.

Haley's understanding of the inevitable pressures a union movement feels to protect its own members to the exclusion of other concerns, and the consequent need for a separate organization which devoted itself exclusively to the "motives and ideals" of teaching is the principle which Wayne Urban has found missing from the Chicago teachers' support of teachers councils. Political expediency and allegiance to Ella Flagg Young may have influenced the decision to support teachers councils, but Haley's address supplies a principled rationale as well.20

Urban's primary evidence that support for teachers councils was expediency is the Chicago teachers' consistent opposition to reform packages containing teachers councils, packages which they perceived as "anti-teacher," despite inclusion of councils.21 However, Haley's address explains that teachers councils cannot play a progressive role without a teacher union movement which can secure the conditions for realizing educational ideals to which it should be devoted. "The success of the one is dependent on the success of the other," Haley states. Indeed, Haley's
analysis predicts the fate of teachers councils later in the century, a fate which Urban documents. "As the threat of unionization subsided in the early 1920's, superintendents felt freer to ignore or even abolish the councils." Later they used teachers councils to "neutralize teacher unions."  

Haley's understanding of the regenerative relationship between professional and union organization was prescient in other regards as well. She anticipated the political results of teacher unions gaining ascendancy without the concomitant growth of independent professional organizations. This has occurred in New York City, which like most school districts, has no academic councils or faculty organizations which can influence academic policies. In addition, the collective bargaining agent, the United Federation of Teachers, has established committees of subject area teachers which have supplanted independent professional organizations. As a result, in public discussions of educational reform, New York City's public school teachers speak with a single voice on pedagogical issues, and as Margaret Haley predicted, it is a voice in which the union's motives predominate. New York City teachers have one institutional vehicle, the UFT, for discussing and influencing curriculum and all other educational concerns, issues which arguably merit some debate on purely philosophical and pedagogical grounds, like testing or curriculum; these are all debated in terms the UFT sets.  

Margaret Haley warned that the danger in organizing for
self-protection was that as educators teachers would consider only their needs narrowly-defined, and indeed, the teacher union movement which developed a half-century later quickly assumed the very self-conception which Haley labeled "selfish." Teacher unions today serve two roles: they "operate as political interest groups" for teachers and "meet members' demands in the type and level of benefits they obtain and the services they provide."

Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), explained his view of teacher unionism's political responsibilities this way in 1975:

...I have frequently been asked whether the [union's 1975 legislative] program is not in the self-interest of teachers and frequently those questions are meant as a kind of attack... All unions are organized for the purpose of advancing the self-interest of the members in terms of their salaries and their working conditions and their job security... Now occasionally an opportunity arises when an organization can simultaneously pursue both the self-interest and the public interest. And those occasions are the happiest of times... We should not be ashamed to say that we have the interests of our members at heart. But we should be proud to say that most of the time the interests of our members and the interests of the children we serve are not in conflict with each other but they are the very same interests and this program is a perfect example of that.

It is informative to compare Shanker's analysis of teacher unionism's political responsibilities and its relation to the rest of organized labor with Haley's vision, explained in the second half of her address. After pointing to the educative value of the Chicago teachers' struggle to win increased corporate funding of public education, Haley enters the second portion of
her address which outlines the need for a teachers union. She argues that schools receive neither the financial nor moral support they deserve. She identifies four conditions requiring reform and explains each at length: (1) making wages correspond to the cost of living and educational requirements for teaching positions; (2) improving job security and pensions; (3) reducing class size; (4) making the teacher a participant in school decision-making.27

Teacher unionism's functions as Shanker outlined it in 1975 corresponds to the first three purposes Haley sets forth. However, Haley also includes a fourth function, that of defending the teacher's right to be included in making educational decisions, being an "educator" rather than a "factory hand." More recently, Shanker focuses on this fourth function when discussing teacher unionism's political role, arguing that the future of education "depends very heavily on making teaching a profession and giving teachers a modicum of control over their environment." However, an image problem, that of being self-serving, is "standing in the way of our achieving professional status for not only must we act on behalf of our client, we also must be perceived as acting that way."28

Insofar as contemporary teacher unions accept the self-conception which Shanker has outlined, teachers assume a political relationship with citizens that is based on the professional/client model. Teachers must be sure that they are perceived as "professional," that is, acting in the interest of
their clients. What is left ambiguous is the issue of whether they and their unions should continue to be "self-serving" but not appear to be so, or whether they should cease to be "self-serving," that is, relinquish the functions of unionism which Shanker advocated some years before and which Haley defends in her speech.

After she has remarked upon the conditions which dictate that teachers unionize, Haley returns to the theme with which she began her speech, the relationship of democracy and education. Haley begins this segment by repeating her argument about the need for professional organization to furnish "the motive and ideal which shall determine the character and methods of the organized effort of teachers to secure better conditions." She compares this task to the responsibility of the "educational agencies in a democracy," like the schools and the press, (which she has noted earlier is an educative agency), to "furnish the motive and ideal which shall determine the character and methods of the organization of its members for self-protection."29

In comparing the professional organization's relationship to teacher unionism to the school's relationship to organized labor, Haley is emphasizing the importance of maintaining institutional independence between the agencies of "self-protection" and those which are responsible for ideology, or in her language, "motive and ideal."

While these agencies must be institutionally separate, they must also cooperate. Thus, this portion discusses the
reasons that teachers must understand the conditions they need to succeed in teaching and know how such conditions are lacking, but must also, through their organization, "know how to reach the public with accurate information" concerning these conditions, which is "the most difficult of all." The vehicle for communication and collaboration is organized labor, with the public school and union movement being "two great educational agencies" of "manual and mental labor." And the link between these is public school teachers. In sharp contrast to Shanker's conceptualizations of teacher union's political role, Haley's schema contains no contradictions --or happy coincidences-- between the goals of teacher unionism and the interests of citizens, not as long as public school teachers recognize that "their struggle to maintain the efficiency of the schools thru better conditions for themselves is part of the same great struggle which the manual workers have been making for humanity." The key to the relationship between the teachers, their union, and organized labor is the mutuality of their struggle, the synergy between three movements: one for greater political and social emancipation, waged by citizens; another to improve conditions in schools, led by teachers; another to improve the economic and social well-being of working people, fought under the banner of organized labor.

In this section of her address Haley outlines the motivations for her close work with the Chicago labor movement, which has been well documented. But two points in this segment
of Haley's remarks are critical, for they illuminate the kind of relationship she thought teachers and teacher unionism should have with organized labor. She minimizes the importance of labor affiliation as a "mere matter of detail and method to be decided by the exigencies in each case," indicating that what was most critical was the political consciousness of teachers and not their organizational ties, which might shift, depending upon circumstances.\textsuperscript{33} The other, related idea is that teachers have a special social role; they are intellectuals with a particular responsibility, or to use Haley's language, their "special contribution to society is their own power to think, the moral courage to follow their convictions, and the training of citizens to think and to express thought in free and intelligent action." So when Haley observes that "society" must understand the labor movement's limitations and the reasons for them, and by "just, judicious, and helpful criticism and co-operation" assist them to "feel the inspiration of higher ideals, and to find the better means to realize these ideals," she is actually outlining the special mission of teachers and their unions.\textsuperscript{34}

Haley uses the pronoun "we" on only two occasions in this speech, referring to teachers in both. In the first she identifies with teachers to share responsibility for the movement's shortcomings. She notes that "we teachers are responsible for existing conditions to the extent that the schools have not inspired true ideals of democracy."\textsuperscript{35} Although teachers have not fulfilled their political and social
responsibility as she has outlined it, Haley still aligns herself with this movement, assuming part of the blame for its shortcomings. In closing her speech, Haley uses "we" again, this time addressing herself to teachers as colleagues and challenging them: "Today, teachers of America, we stand at the parting of the ways. Democracy is not on trial, but America is."36

In her use of "we," Haley places herself in the same relation to the movement she is building as she has demanded teachers stand to organized labor: She has analyzed its limitations and offered "just, judicious, and helpful criticism and co-operation." I suggest that the role of critical scholars in education should be similar in analyzing the history and tasks of teacher unionism. Haley's vision of teacher unionism is as relevant today as it was when she explained to the NEA "Why Teachers Should Organize." What is needed is not an alternative vision but an understanding of how Haley's perspective might be realized in existing conditions.

An analysis of Haley's speech would not be complete without discussion of the total absence of any direct reference to women's rights and the ways she believes that gender should influence women teachers' motives for organizing. We know that Haley was thoroughly committed to expanding women's rights and in her union work made alliances with women's organizations, for the mutual benefit of both movements. Why then in this speech does she make no explicit reference to women? She does, in fact, make two mentions of gender. One occurs in the first segment of
her remarks, when she quotes Ida Tarbell and Lincoln Steffens' disclosures about corrupt practices of "our so-called 'good business men.'" The other reference to gender is a remark towards the end of her address, when she notes that when "men organize and go out to kill, they go surrounded by pomp, display, and pageantry, under the inspiration of music and with the admiration of the throng." She compares this army of "men" to another army - that of "industrial toilers," who are not defined by gender. This "army," led by organized labor, has been responsible for raising the standard of living of the "poorest and weakest members of society," she notes. The two ideals that she sees struggling for supremacy, commercialism and democracy, are fought for by two armies, and in these battles teachers must choose one side or the other. There is no middle ground, for women or for teachers: they must choose the side led by organized labor, one in which gender is not distinguished, or they will be grouped with the male camp, which Haley depicts as corrupt (with its "good business men") and militaristic.

Haley combined her views about the irreconcilability of class interests with a critique of labor's limitations. Understanding both of these aspects allowed her to support labor affiliation when it was tactically wise for women teachers and yet remain loyal to labor when it refused to support extending suffrage to women, which she argued was wrong-headed. Haley's single reference to gender reveals that supporters of suffrage
and women's emancipation, in her eyes, could not support the "army of men" and were thus compelled to march with the army of industrial workers, under the banner of organized labor.

If we use Haley's address as a statement of principles, we can draw several conclusions about how teacher unionism might become the vehicle for educational and social reform Haley believed it should and could be. Teacher unions themselves must be reinvigorated, and one way to restore this "motive and ideal" of teacher unionism is to encourage the separate, independent professional organization which Haley advocated. The organization may take a variety of forms, but public school teachers require institutional vehicles for clarifying their philosophical and pedagogical concerns and for influencing policy accordingly. The union should not try to serve this function although it should use its strength to create the independent organizations or structures which do. Professional organization is not an alternative to teacher unionism but its alter-ego.

Margaret Haley's assessment of teacher unionism's potential depends on a synergy between teacher unionism, an active citizenry, and organized labor. By examining these forces in isolation from each other and in stasis, many proponents of critical educational studies have failed to understand how a different dynamic between them might develop. They fail to see, for example, why teachers unions must vigorously pursue issues of salary and job security as part of the educative process of struggle, why these struggles are "economist" only when the
dynamic is halted so that the struggle advances no further. "Why Teachers Should Organize" explains how a militant, progressive teacher union movement might cooperate with disempowered citizens and a dynamic labor movement to reform the schools, radically, in the true public interest. At any point in history, the prospects for such cooperation seem more or less hopeful, because all three elements must be present for success; the absence of one diminishes the synergy, and in some cases, destroys it. Haley's speech reminds us that the mutually regenerative struggle is possible and offers an understanding of how it is achieved, when it is.


4. Marjorie Murphy, in Blackboard Unions (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1990), accepts the standard interpretation of Haley's speech, although the premise of her study, that professionalism either "broadens to obscure the division between teachers and the community or it...separates the teacher from the client community" (p.265) is supported by my reading of Haley's remarks. In a footnote which contains no further elaboration in the book, Murphy observes that "Haley was extremely cautious yet consistent in recommending union affiliation," (p.53). My reading of Haley's address contradicts Wayne Urban's analysis of Haley's response to teachers councils in Why Teachers Organized (Detroit:
Wayne State Univ. Press, 1982).


11. I discuss the implications of making the teacher a "change agent" by fusing the roles of educator and political activist in "Perspectives on Preparing Teachers of At Risk Students in Urban Schools, 1960 - 1990" (Ed.D. dissertation, Harvard Univ., 1990), ch. 4.

12. From 1900 until her death, Haley was the paid organizer for the Chicago Teachers' Federation, as Robert Reid notes in his introduction to *Battleground: The Autobiography of Margaret Haley*.


15. Haley, p. 147.


17. See her discussion of Frances Temple's advocacy of teachers councils in Robert Reid, *Battleground*, p. 113-114.


23. Urban, p. 159.


34. Haley, p.150.

35. Haley, p. 145.


38. Haley, p. 150.