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Website Reviews

50 website reviews will focus on valuable online resources for studying and teaching the history of childhood and youth in world history. Written by professional historians, these reviews will describe online primary source archives, evaluate resources, and provide classroom suggestions. Teachers and students will be able to browse by time period or use the advanced search.

featured review

Lorem Ipsum Dolor Sit Amet



This website offers substantial excerpts and more than 120 writings from around the world. Its most valuable feature is this abundant accumulation of texts that women themselves have generated from such a wide array of times and places... [Continue reading](#)



Reviews by Period

-  [The Beginnings of Human Society](#)
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-  [Expansion, Exchange & Encounter, 300–1000 CE](#)
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-  [Emergence of the First Global Age, 1450–1770](#)
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-  [The World Since 1945: Promises & Paradoxes](#)

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WEBSITE REVIEW

Eternal Egypt: Toys and Games

REVIEWED BY: NANCY L. STOCKDALE, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

One of the most comprehensive online collections of Egyptian material culture, the *Eternal Egypt* website provides invaluable information and photos of many thousands of artifacts from all historical eras of the Egyptian past. Fortunately for scholars and educators of childhood, there is an easy-to-use portion of the website devoted to games and toys, bringing to life the leisure pursuits of children who have lived in Egypt through history.

The Toys and Games component of the *Eternal Egypt* website is an easy-to-navigate collection of 21 artifacts, mostly from the Pharaonic era, used as toys or games by children of the past. Visitors may click on any artifact to be taken to a new page dedicated to explaining the toy or game in question. Expert information is provided, including the era of the toy, the materials from which it was made, where it was discovered, and in which museum or collection it currently resides. Clear images are provided as well, along with descriptions of the toy in question and explanations about how it might have been used. A handy zoom feature allows viewers to explore the item up close, making small details very clear. Moreover, IBM Text-to-Speech technology has been integrated into the site, making it possible to listen to descriptions while you are exploring the zoom imagery. These are the same descriptions given to visitors of the Egyptian Museum of Cairo, giving remote viewers a similar experience to those fortunate enough to encounter these artifacts first-hand.

Each page also provides links for more information about the time during which the toy was made and enjoyed, as well as the technique used for manufacturing it and the materials from which it was created. For example, the “child’s spinning toy” from the 18th Dynasty allows modern children to compare and contrast their own spinning tops by interacting with those of ancient Egyptian children. Maps and timelines are also provided, as well as key topics for further exploration of the society and history of the toy’s era. All of these features are fantastic teaching tools and will serve educators well. Students and teachers may also register to create and store their own “collections” of artifacts on the website. This allows visitors to save items most interesting to them and helps them curate their own virtual museum of Egyptian artifacts.

An interesting classroom exercise might include an examination of the popular themes of historical Egyptian toys. For example, students visiting the site will quickly notice that monkeys and other primates were popular themes for historical children’s entertainment. They may compare their own society’s fascination in primate-themed toys and try to determine the reasons for this similarity. Another productive exercise may be to recreate some of the popular toys of the past—such as Senet and Backgammon—in a classroom setting, giving students a hands-on experience related to the pastimes of their historical counterparts.

This site is a fantastic resource for educators who want to infuse their classrooms with a sense of humanity. Teaching the past—particularly the ancient past of a foreign country—can be a challenge, but by integrating the material culture of entertainment, and especially that of children, teachers can better humanize their subjects for their students. *Eternal Egypt* is a wonderful resource for those educators and scholars who would like to get “up close and personal” with the material culture of the Egyptians in the comfort of their own classrooms.

Read a review of the entire *Eternal Egypt* website on *World History Matters*.



“Eternal Egypt is a wonderful resource for those educators and scholars who would like to get ‘up close and personal’ with the material culture of the Egyptians in the comfort of their own classrooms.”

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REVIEWS BY PERIOD:

A Half-Century of Crisis & Achievement, 1900–1945

SEARCH FOUND N RESULTS



Railway Women

Helena Wojtczak

This collection consists of photographs of and newsclippings about women railway employees in Britain from before 1915 through the present day. It includes 32 photographs from World War I and 46 photographs from World War II, and a variety of photographs and clippings on topics such as... [\[more\]](#)

Website last visited 2004-03-03.



Emory Women Writers Resource Project

Emory University

This project is a collection of largely unedited texts by female authors from the 17th to the 20th centuries. There are 75 texts, most of them written in English in the United States and Great Britain. The majority of the authors are Caucasian, but the site... [\[more\]](#)

Website last visited 2004-03-16.



Gifts of Speech: Women's Speeches from Around the World

Sweet Briar College, Virginia

This site offers an archive of speeches by "influential, contemporary women." Almost all of the speeches in the collection come directly from the authors themselves or from the organizations representing them and have not been published elsewhere. The main focus is the period since 1900, although... [\[more\]](#)

Website last visited 2004-03-16.



Canadian Women's History

Early Canadiana Online and Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions

This comprehensive database documents women's history in 19th-century Canada. It provides access to nearly 700 texts, including diaries, novels, travel writings, recipe books, histories, parliamentary acts and debates, medical and religious tracts, and sermons. "Canadian Women's History" allows... [\[more\]](#)

Website last visited 2004-03-16.



Jewish Women's Archive

The Jewish Women's Archive (JWA), a national non-profit organization, seeks to "uncover, chronicle and transmit the rich legacy of North American Jewish women." This group of Boston-based historians and educators ably accomplishes this objective through its online exhibits, oral history... [\[more\]](#)

Website last visited 2004-03-16.



From History to Herstory: Yorkshire Women's Lives Online, 1100 to the Present

West Yorkshire Archive Service, United Kingdom

This site showcases the lives of women in Yorkshire, England, from the 2nd century CE to the present day. The site presents 85,000 digitized images and microfilmed documents from the collections of the archives and libraries in and around Yorkshire. Among the women featured are some extremely well... [\[more\]](#)

Website last visited 2004-03-16.

CASE STUDY

The Rules of the Thälmann Pioneers

BY: ELIZABETH A. TEN DYKE, PH.D., VICE PRINCIPAL
J WATSON BAILEY MIDDLE SCHOOL, MERILINA AVENUE EXTENSION
KINGSTON, NY

Why I Taught This Source

National and state level world history curricula include study of 20th century political and economic regimes, namely communism and capitalism. As students learn about these political ideologies and economic systems, they often embrace black and white thinking. They are easily persuaded that communist societies were (are) totalitarian and unjust while capitalist societies were (are) democratic and just. This thinking may be supported by learning about the activities of state security agencies, secret police, and other arms of the state that sustained communist regimes through intimidation and terror.

Under these circumstances, though, how can students explain the trauma and confusion many people of central and eastern Europe experienced after the collapse of communism in 1989? How can they make sense of the continuing appeal of communist parties and ideals in many central and eastern European societies? By examining a source that focuses on youth organizations in East Germany, students can develop a more nuanced view of communist society. It helps students see that communist organizations offered positive experiences that supported values they share. This helps students develop empathy for individuals who lived under communism, and paves the way for understanding the enthusiasm with which some individuals lived in communism, and the ambivalence many experienced at its end.

How I Introduce This Source

To introduce this topic, I ask students to identify the youth groups that exist in our democratic society (Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H, community based organizations, etc.). We talk about why young people participate in the organizations (have fun, be with friends). We talk about the symbols and rituals of the organizations (uniforms, pledges, moving up ceremonies, bronze/silver/gold awards in Girl Scouts, Eagle Scout award in Boy Scouts) and their social meanings. We also talk about the kinds of activities young people participate in through the groups.

I explain that communist societies had similar organizations in addition to the official organizations of the communist party with which students are already somewhat familiar. I explain that in the German Democratic Republic, elementary and middle school students (using American terminology) belonged to a group called the Ernst Thälmann Pioneers, while students in high school and older (again, using American terminology) belonged to a group called the Young Pioneers. Children generally joined the organizations through school. They received uniforms, met regularly, and participated in activities including recreation, community service, day trips, camping and other excursions.

Reading the Source

The source is set up almost like a catechism, in a “call and response” format. I have one or more students take turns reading the statements in bold type, while the other students in the class respond out loud with the statements in regular type. After reading the source out loud, the students work in groups to summarize its main ideas and to discuss questions such as: What are the values conveyed by the source (pride, respect, discipline, cleanliness)? Who or what should Thälmann Pioneers love, respect or honor (their parents, the Soviet Union, their bodies, health)? What is the main symbol of the Thälmann Pioneers, and what does it stand for (the red scarf, the working class). What other themes or main ideas can the students find here (opposing imperialists, loving peace, study and learning, etc). I have students chart or list their observations, then comment on them. What, if anything, do they agree with? What, if anything, do they disagree with?

Reflections

To reflect, I ask students to return to the conversation we had prior to our study of the source, and think again about youth groups in the United States. I ask, rhetorically, who wouldn’t want to be a part of organization that all your friends were a part of, that conveyed such positive values, and offered fun activities and service? Students overwhelmingly embrace the idea of the Thälman Pioneers. Then we discuss some of the differences between American youth groups and comparable organizations in communist societies.

The first divergence is the intense social and political pressure to join, as well as disadvantages experienced by those who did not participate (being left out, ostracism, pressures felt by parents at work, limits placed on educational and professional opportunities later in life). Second, youth groups in communist societies had a strong political dimension (refer to the students’ analysis for examples). Third, for these reasons, communist youth groups served to coordinate and indoctrinate youth in values and ideals that supported the state regime.

Students begin to see that the picture is no longer black and white—even among East German youth. The youth groups offered fun, social experiences for young people—yet participation was almost compulsory. In addition, it was very hard for many people to experience the problems of daily life in communist society, and at the same time embrace the positive beliefs included in propaganda such as this. Many young people participated in communist youth groups with a high degree of cynicism, which, in the long run, served to undermine the state.

I find students are very responsive to the source and the conversations we have about it. They appreciate the insight into the daily life of young people in a communist society. Many become curious about this and other youth organizations. They may make comparisons to youth groups under National Socialism, if they learned about them previously. This is a rich, interesting activity for high school students that sharpens critical thinking by drawing upon an already familiar aspect of youth culture.

The Rules of the Thälmann Pioneers

Source: German Propaganda Archive
Calvin College

www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/tp.htm



This stamp was published by the Deutsche Post der DDR (German Post of the GDR)