

**Bibliography and Archival
Preservation of
Non-English-Language
Labor and Radical Newspapers and
Periodicals in North America,
1845 to 1976**

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The intention of this project is to provide a comprehensive bibliography and microfilm collections of the non-English-language labor periodical publications of the United States and Canada written for and by immigrants. This will serve as a basis for a comparative cultural history of immigrants that entered the North American working class, whatever their social origin in their respective countries of departure.

The importance of newspapers as sources for historical research has been recognized in recent years, so that there is no need for an extended discussion of their value. The newspaper preservation project developed by the Organization of American Historians, now under the supervision of the National Endowment for the Humanities testifies to this. In West Germany and in several other countries national libraries or associations of libraries have begun microfilming programs for their nation's newspapers. Also, nothing needs to be said about the sad state of preservation of labor and immigrant periodical publications in North America, notwithstanding the efforts of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Whi), a number of industrial relations libraries (Naas/Sakr bibliography), and more recently the Immigration History Research Center (IHRC) at the University of Minnesota.

Our project concentrates on labor newspapers and other periodical publications. Because of the almost cyclical economic recessions and depressions they were particularly shortlived; because of their lower class public and because of the general disinterest of libraries and archives they are in a worse state of preservation than other periodical publications. Within the group of labor newspapers we exclude the English-language publications. They are covered fairly well by

the Naas/Sakr bibliography, the Whi list, Goldwater's bibliography of radical periodicals after 1890, and my own list of 19th-century labor and radical newspapers published by the library of the Kennedy-Institute, Berlin-West. Presently I am working with the Microfilming Corporation of America, New York, on getting ready for republication in microform a set of these English-language labor newspapers. They will be issued as a sequel to MCA's "Labor Union Constitutions and Proceedings," publication date 1980 or 1981.

The historiographical developments of the last decade make this project the more important. There were several deep-reaching changes.

First, we recognize a change from the organizational approach to a cultural history of the working class. Even at a time when union structures and party organizations were still a central topic of North American labor historians, newspapers played a larger role among their source materials than in the case of their European colleagues,

- because the principle of industrial organization developed late and materials in union archives are comparatively scanty, frequently covering only short periods or small craft groups;
- because no workingmen's parties of extended influence developed so that archives similar to that of the SPD in West-Germany or the British Labour Party are not available;
- because the geographic mobility of immigrants after their arrival (and for that matter of American-born workers) made the preservation of personal papers even more difficult than it was elsewhere for men and women of the lower classes.

A second change is to be found in the new emphasis on the peculiar characteristics of each ethnic group in the North American societies, replacing the long dominant "melting pot" theory. (In Canada this seems to have been public policy and scholarly viewpoint earlier than in the United States.) While the ethnic groups of the old immigration, particularly the settlers in the West, have received considerable scholarly attention, those of the "new immigration" starting in the 1880s and closing only forcibly with the 1917, 1921 and 1924 immigration restrictions have received only limited attention until recently, notwithstanding the pioneering works of Edith Abbott and Victor Greene and a host of ethnically motivated doctoral dissertations. Since most of the new immigrants became workers, our program will rectify some of the imbalance in scholarly attention.

The third change in societal and scientific interests concerns the emergence of the lower classes, down to the lowest rungs, as a subject matter of scholarly investigation and social policy programs. This debate becomes important for the study of the North American working class when we remember that poverty and poor working conditions were the common experience of the majority of immigrants, who in other respects had little in common, not even a language.

In addition to these tendencies in North American scholarship historians

overseas have began to specialize in American labor and ethnicity in greater numbers. This has been documented by national conferences in France and Italy, by numerous Soviet publications, by fundamental studies of unions in capitalist societies (Poland), by institutes for migrations and ethnicity (Yugoslavia), and most recently by the international Bremen symposium, to be followed by a similar conference organized by the editor and the editorial board of *Labor History* and including Latin American and Asian scholars.

Our Labor Newspaper Preservation Project is to be handled internationally in order to use the advantage of scholars' locations in the original cultures of the emigrants. This gives us a possibility to institutionalize our cooperation which had only a rudimentary existence before the Bremen symposium. The increasing availability and accessibility of the important newspapers is of course only a stepping stone for international comparative studies.

As to the quantity of the materials to be covered by our project I can offer only an educated guess on the basis of the following information. Figures for the total foreign-language publications are available for the period 1884 to 1920 (Park), 1930, 1940, 1950 and 1960 (Fishman), 1940 (Chyz), 1970 and 1975 (Wynar). Figures are also available to me for the total foreign-language radical publications in 1919 (Dept. of Justice) and for the radical and labor press in German, 1845 to 1940s. For Canada there are three bibliographic volumes of the journal "Canadian Ethnic Studies" published by the Ethnic Studies Center at the University of Calgary. Based on this information and on additions made by participants at the Bremen symposium, corrected for the atypical 1919 and German figures, the number of labor periodical publications for the period 1845 to 1976 would stand somewhere between 650 and 1500.

Scope of the Project

The chronological limits, 1845 and 1976, are explained by the publication of the first non-English-language labor paper in 1845 (German) and by Wynar's bibliography (second edition) of ethnic newspapers published in the United States today. The most important period for us will be that of the "new immigration," 1884-1924. There were only very few labor periodicals published in non-English languages before 1884. The foreign-language press passed its high mark as to total number of papers published in 1917 and of dailies in 1930. After passing of the quota laws in 1921 and 1924 immigration almost came to a standstill. Ayer's Directory, less complete than Wynar's Encyclopedic Dictionary, lists a mere 14 labor publications in its foreign language section for the United States and Canada in 1976.

Immigrant labor newspapers that changed from a native language to English will be included for a certain period of time after the change took place. This seems necessary because the transitory period is one of great importance for the study of the respective ethnic group. In order that this extension will not make the project unwieldy it is suggested that a time limit be set at 10 years after con-

version into English. Basically, this will be less of a problem than it may seem. The majority of papers suspended publication rather than being converted, or, if converted, existed for a few years only. Coordination with the MCA project for English-language newspapers is assured, because I am editing the MCA-series.

Plan, timing, and organization of research

The project should be carried out in a three-year span from 1980 to 1982. In case of problems the time span should not be extended beyond 5 years. The original application for funding should, however, be limited to three years.

Organization of the research would follow the plan of one specialist for each language or language group; one coordinating research assistant working with me; one research assistant in North America for research in governmental archives and to coordinate the microfilming program. At the beginning of the project all language specialists will receive detailed instructions from the coordinators, and—once the coordinating research assistant has gone through the general bibliographies—a list of periodicals of their language mentioned in these finding aids.

At the end of the project there should be a conference of all participants to map research strategies on the basis of the newly acquired materials and to decide upon source publications.

The standards of quality of our project have been outlined above, but I want to mention again our most important models. Bibliography and microfilms should at least achieve the standards of accuracy and information that have been reached by the microform publication of the "American Periodical Series" (University Microfilms, Ann Arbor), by the "Union List of Serials" (Library of Congress) and by "The Warwick Guide to British Labour Periodicals 1790-1970" (Harrison/Woolven/Duncan). The annotation should be at least as good as in Goldwater's "Radical Periodicals" or Arndt/Olson's bibliography of German-language periodicals in the U.S.

Until now the following preparatory work has been completed (some of it not originally related to our project): Bibliographies of periodical publications exist for Czech and Slovak, Finnish, German, Polish, the Yugoslav languages. Newspapers have been collected in Finland, Hungary, Poland, Sweden, Yugoslavia. My own work for German-language labor periodicals has turned up a total of 240 separate titles, about 40 of which seem to have been lost altogether. At present the cooperating libraries, University of Bremen and Kennedy-Institute (library) of the Free University, Berlin-West, have begun an acquisition program.

In addition, I have checked the archives of the Berlin (i.e. Prussian) Chief of Police, who at the turn of the century served as coordinator for the surveillance of anarchists (this includes radicals and labor "agitators") emigrated to or expelled to the United States. This has yielded information on papers in many languages, though unfortunately the files of these papers seem to have been de-

stroyed. These records are now deposited in the archives of the German Democratic Republic. Both the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Postmaster General's Office have answered my requests by sending preliminary information. The respective archives will have to be worked by the North American based research assistant.