

NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

I. Institutional News

Institut für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung

The archive of the Institute for the History of the Labour Movement (*Institut für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung*), based in what used to be East Berlin, is a specialized archive on the history of the German labour movement. Its written material fills some 6 kilometers of shelves, and there are also collections of audiovisual material such as photographs, records, tapes and films. The archive, in other words, looks after highly valuable documentary material on the history of the German people. Should its upkeep in future exceed the resources of the institute and the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), to which the institute belongs as an autonomous institution, then this heritage would be in the gravest danger.

The targeted gathering of archive material on the history of the German labour movement and the organization of the archive was begun towards the end of 1949 in conjunction with the foundation of the Marx Engels Lenin Institute, later the Institute for Marxism-Leninism, by the party executive of the Socialist Unity Party (SED). The early days were fraught with problems. Much of the documentary material on the German labour movement had been scattered as a result of twelve years of nazi dictatorship. Many documents had been damaged or even destroyed during the Second World War. Highly valuable archive documents had been buried in the ground, immured in cellars or hidden in attics. A wealth of valuable material belonging to the different organizations of the labour movement had been taken abroad, in particular to those countries where German antifascists and officials of the labour movement went into exile. There was also a shortage of trained and experienced archivists who could have taken the organization of the archive in hand.

A decision by the secretariat of the SED central committee on 8 April 1963 marked a turning point in the archive's development. Providing for 'guidelines for the organization of a uniform party archive structure', the decision established, among other things, the central party archive as a separate department within the Institute for Marxism-Leninism; it also made the archive solely responsible in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) for the acquisition, preservation and cataloguing of (a) archive material concerning the organizations of the German labour movement in the period before 1945 and the SED central committee and its central educational institutions, (b) written material by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, (c) unpublished material by leading personalities of the German labour movement and members and candidate members of the SED politburo, and (d) collections of memoirs, reminiscences, photographs and records.

As a result of the social changes in the GDR in late 1989 the Institute for Marxism-Leninism was wound up on 4 January 1990. The presidium of the PDS, the successor to the SED, resolved on the same day to set up the Institute for the History

of the Labour Movement, to which the archive was attached as a department. There followed a complete reorganization and reassessment so as to allow the institute to fulfil its task as a place of study of the history of the German and international labour movement and of Marx and Engels. New guidelines on the use of the archive, effective from 1 April, guaranteed broad public access to the collections. Among the key innovations is the introduction of rules governing the disclosure of archive material. In principle the public has unrestricted access to material which has already been selected for publication. Other written archive material is freely available if it is older than thirty years. Documents referring to specific persons may be made available to the public if the person in question has been dead for at least thirty years. (If it is impossible or impracticable to establish the year of death, then disclosure will be allowed 110 years after the person's year of birth.) A reduction of the thirty-year rule is possible with the permission of the person concerned or his or her estate.

The archive is heavily patronized. In 1989 a total of 950 German and foreign researchers availed themselves of its facilities. In the same year 280 researchers made use of the photographic, sound and film archives. In the first three months of 1990 the number of readers trebled in comparison to the corresponding period of the previous year. This surge of interest in the archive has put a great strain on its reduced resources – it has lost a number of staff – and it has been able to cope only thanks to the strong commitment of the remaining staff members.

The archive contains material covering the period from the emergence of the first workers' organizations in the 1830s to the present day. The most recently acquired material consists of the documents of the PDS extraordinary congress in February 1990.

(1) On Marx and Engels

The Marx-Engels collection is among the archive's most valuable. It consists of 90 original documents concerning Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and members of their families, which contain interesting information on the lives of these major thinkers of the modern labour movement. The collection also includes well over 10,000 photocopies of documents by Marx and Engels supplied by other archives holding the originals (in particular the central archive of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Moscow).

(2) On the history of the SPD until 1945

The history of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and its affiliated mass organizations is documented in a collection which is in part very detailed. But on the whole this collection has major gaps. Material on Lassalle's General German Workers' Union (ADAV) is fairly complete, with 118 files dating from the period between 1862 and 1872. Material on the SPD consists of around 100 files containing documents dealing with the activities of the party executive and the central party apparatus from the period between 1867 until 1945. Documents from the SPD central executive committee from the period between June 1945 and April 1946 form a separate collection. It consists mainly of unpublished material from members of the central executive committee donated to the archive after their deaths.

Over the years the material on the social democratic movement in Germany has been complemented with material from the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) and the Socialist Workers' Party (SAP) as well as other mass organizations. In 1987–88 the archive received, simultaneously with the archive of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Bonn, a complete microfilm copy of the SAP archive held by the Labour Movement Archive in Oslo, Norway. The collection of over 30 files on social-democratic organizations includes documents relating to the General German Trade Union Federation (ADGB), the Labour and Socialist International (LSI), the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY), International Friends of Nature (IFN) and the National Banner Black-Red-Gold (*Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold*). The foundation and development of the First International is documented in a collection of 70 files, most of them very interesting and some very comprehensive. Among the archive's most valuable recent acquisitions on the history of the Second International has been a collection of around 800 documents concerning the International Socialist Bureau, including many letters by Camille Huysmans.

(3) On the history of the KPD

The historical archive of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) consists of over 5,000 files. The collection contains sorted material from the KPD central committee and the party's regional and local branches from its foundation in December 1918 until April 1946. It includes shorthandwritten minutes of party conferences and central committee meetings; minutes of the decisions taken at meetings of the politburo and the secretariat of the KPD central committee; drafts, memoranda, notes and correspondence from the departments of the party secretariat; and documents from the parliamentary group, regional-parliamentary groups and election committees. In addition there are many draft papers, letters, notes and other written material from leading party officials such as Ernst Thälmann, Heinrich Brandler, Wilhelm Pieck, Franz Dahlem, Hermann Remmele, Heinz Neumann, Philipp Dengel, Hugo Eberlein, Wilhelm Florin, Fritz Heckert, Paul Merker, Ernst Schneller, Walter Ulbricht and Clara Zetkin. The material on the history of the KPD is complemented by extensive files on the activities of subsidiary organizations, such as the Communist Youth Organization of Germany (*Kommunistischer Jugendverband Deutschlands*, KJD), the Union of Red Front-Line Soldiers (*Roter Frontkämpferbund*), Red Aid of Germany (*Rote Hilfe Deutschlands*, RHD), the Red Women's and Girls' Federation (*Roter Frauen- und Mädchenbund*, RFMB), the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition (*Revolutionäre Gewerkschaftsopposition*, RGO) and the KPD central legal organization.

The source material on the history of the communist movement is further complemented by an informative collection of photocopies from the Moscow central party archive on the KPD delegation to the Comintern from the period between 1919 and 1943; a 2,000-file collection of pamphlets and leaflets; extensive and in part very comprehensive material on the activities of the Free Germany committee in the Soviet Union and the Free Germany movements in the western countries, including France, Britain, Mexico, Sweden and America; a 250-file collection on the 'national revolutionary war of the Spanish people, 1936–39', which contains very extensive material on the contribution by German antifascists to the International Brigade. The largest new acquisition on the history of the KPD has been a collection of 16,500

microphotographs from the Comintern collection of the Moscow central party archive which comprises material on debates on KPD strategy and tactics within the Comintern's various executive bodies.

The smaller collections on the history of the KPD, which the archive acquired mainly through donations and systematic compilation work, cover among other things the activities of the workers' amateur radio organizations, the Association of Friends of the Soviet Union (*Bund der Freunde der Sowjetunion*), the German Workers' Choirs' Association (*Deutscher Arbeiter-Sängerbund*), the Anti-Fascist Combat Union (*Kampfbund gegen Faschismus*), the Union for Red Sporting Unity (*Kampfgemeinschaft für Rote Sporteinheit*), the Association of Proletarian-Revolutionary Writers (*Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller*), the Federation of Proletarian Free Thinkers (*Verband proletarischer Freidenker*), the Federation of Communist Students of Germany (*Kommunistischer Studentenverband Deutschlands*, KSVD), the Communist Student Faction (*Kommunistische Studentenfraktion*, Kostufra), and communist splinter groups like the KAPD, KAG, KPD-O, the *Leninbund*, and others.

(4) On the history of the SED

The collection of material from the central committee of the SED spans the period from 1946 to the dissolution of the party at the end of 1989. It contains at the moment more than 60,000 files from almost all departments of the central party apparatus and the central educational institutions. These include the shorthand-written minutes of party conferences and meetings of the party executive and central committee; minutes of decisions taken at the meetings of the central secretariat, the politburo and the secretariat; the shorthand-written minutes of specialist working meetings and conferences; drafts, memoranda and notes from almost all departments as well as from the commissions set up by the politburo, the central revision commission and the secretariats of members and candidate members of the politburo. The archive was much enriched in February 1990 when the whole of the former internal archive of the SED politburo was allocated to it. However, the documents accompanying this material sadly showed that the historically most valuable material had been destroyed by the minister for state security. Erich Mielke, on the orders of party leader Erich Honecker.

(5) Unpublished material

The archive currently looks after unpublished posthumous material from around 270 leading personalities of the German labour movement and the SED. The collection consists in the main of manuscripts of speeches and essays, notes, diary entries, excerpts, letters and other written material which the leaders in question produced in the course of their political activities and were bequeathed to the archive after their deaths. (Visual material was transferred to the photographic archive.) These documents complement in many ways the material from the mass organizations of the labour movement and offer excellent sources for biographical studies.

Most extensive is the unpublished material by August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin, Ernst Thälmann, Wilhelm Pieck, Otto Grotewohl, Walter Ulbricht and Franz Dählem. Less extensive but still very valuable is the material by Anton Ackermann, Viktor Agartz, Otto

Buchwitz, Friedrich Ebert junior, Emil Eichhorn, Gerhard Eisler, Kurt Eisner, Max Fechner, Wilhelm Florin, Fritz Gäbler, Georg Handke, Fritz and Wilma Heckert, Adolf Hennecke, Stefan Heymann, Edwin Hoernle, Friedrich Karl Kaul, Willy Kerff, Käte Kern, Bernhard and Wilhelm Koenen, Werner Lamberz, Bruno Leuschner, Eugen Leviné, Rudolf Lindau, Karl Litke, Hermann Matern, Paul Merker, Theodor Neubauer, Albert Norden, Alfred Oelßner, Fred Oelßner, Arthur Pieck, Heinrich Rau, Hans Rodenberg, Elli Schmidt, Ernst Schneller, Otto Schön, Albert Schreiner, Fritz Selbmann, Georg Stibi, Paul Verner, Jacob Walcher, Hans Warnke and Erich Weinert (from his time as president of the Free Germany committee). Among the smaller collections of less than 20 files each are those of Etkar André, Fritz Apelt, Martha Arendsee, Bernhard Bästlein, Karl Bathke, Karl Bittel, Heinrich Deist, Erwin Eckert, Eugen Ernst, Wilhelm Firl, Rudolf Franz, Gustav Gundelach, Richard Gyptner, Josef (Sepp) Hahn, Wilhelm Herzog, Max Hoelz, Hans Kahle, Johann Knieff, Ferdinand Lasalle, Hans Litten, Julian Marchlewski, Franz Mehring, Gustav Noske, Anton Plenikowski, Kurt Raphael, Anton and Aenne Saefkow, Paul Schwenk, Werner Seelenbinder, Gustav Sobottka and Walter Vesper.

(6) Miscellaneous collections

The miscellaneous collections form an important element in the archive's collection as a whole. In terms of quantity, the collection of over 2,500 memoirs and reminiscences of veterans of the labour movements is the largest and most informative within this category of source material. It includes reports of experiences of specific historical events as well as detailed life stories, extending to over 300 pages in some cases. The authors are primarily former leading officials of the KPD (members of the politburo, the central committee and parliament, and regional secretaries), the SPD (members of the central executive committee, parliament and regional parliaments, and regional secretaries), activists in the antifascist resistance, and victims of stalinist mass persecutions of the 1930s and 40s in the Soviet Union who were able to return to Germany after the Second World War. Most of these memoirs are of fundamental importance to the study of the history of the labour movement because they provide insights on events and contexts which often cannot be gleaned from other sources. There are also numerous memoirs and reports from people who took a leading part in the revolutionary struggles in the Soviet Union in 1917–20, the German revolution of 1918–19, the antifascist resistance of 1933–45, and the social development of the GDR in the first years after 1945.

Among the miscellaneous collections are the following: a large collection on the Association of Victims of the Nazi Persecution (*Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes*, VVN) dissolved in the early 1950s; a collection of documents on the workers' and soldiers' councils of the November revolution of 1918–19; documentation on the Kapp putsch of 1920; material from the antifascist democratic movement in the prisoner-of-war camps in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Britain, France and America; a collection of hand-written manuscripts by, among others, Rudolf Breitscheid, Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Dietz, Friedrich Ebert (the first Weimar president), Ludwig Feuerbach, Ferdinand Freiligrath, Alexander von Humboldt, Heinrich Heine, Heinrich Mann, Erich Mühsam, Willi Münzenberg,

Robert Owen, Paul Singer and Georg Weerth and others; and collections on the French Revolution and the Paris Commune.

Of great importance is also the very large collection of pamphlets and leaflets of the most varied provenance. It comprises material from the SPD, the KPD, almost all other organizations of the labour movement and the Free Germany committee in the Soviet Union as well as leaflets distributed by the Red Army during the Second World War, and leaflets airdropped by the British and Americans at the front or over Germany. The most recent collection of documentary material of this kind compiled by the archive deals with the social upheavals in the GDR between October 1989 and March 1990.

(7) On the history of the labour movement in the Federal Republic

The archive possesses extensive source material on the development of the KPD in the former western zones of occupation and from September 1949 in the Federal Republic of Germany, in particular documents concerning the activities of the central committee of the KPD and the regional branches. The party's own documentation is in many ways complemented by a number of other extensive collections, such as one on the 'proscription of the KPD' (over 200 files). The collection and especially unpublished material, including documents from Viktor Agartz, Wilhelm Agartz, Willi Bohn, Erwin Eckert, Gustav Gundelach, Hermann Nuding, Max Reimann (recently bequeathed), Karl Schabrod, Richard Scheringer and Walter Vesper. Some material was acquired on the basis of depositary agreements.

(8) Pictorial, sound and film documents

The photographic collection is the largest of its kind in the former GDR on the history of the labour movement. It contains around 150,000 photographs covering the period from the early 1840s until March 1990. It is subdivided into the main periods in the history of the German labour movement and includes material on the *social situation of working people, the state of productive forces, and the organization and struggles of the labour movement*. In addition to the thematic collection there is also a collection of photographs of leading and well known personalities of the labour movement. Particularly extensive is the material on Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, August Bebel, Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Ernst Thälmann, Wilhelm Pieck, Clara Zetkin, Otto Grotewohl, Walter Ulbricht and Erich Honecker.

The sound collection includes in the main tape recordings of SED party conferences and meetings of the central committee and recordings of the recollections of veterans of the labour movement. There is also a relatively small collection of gramophone records of speeches of leaders of the labour movement from the time of the Weimar Republic and since 1945 and of working-class songs and marches.

The film collection includes in the main documentary films from the struggle of the KPD in the Weimar Republic and the period after 1945. They record, among other things, mass demonstrations of the Association of Red Front-Line Soldiers, solidarity actions of the Red Aid of Germany and speeches at public meetings by Ernst Thälmann and Clara Zetkin. The documentary films since 1945 record primarily foreign visits by Wilhelm Pieck, Otto Grotewohl, Walter Ulbricht and Erich Honecker. Some films were produced for particular anniversaries, such as those of the GDR and the SED or birthdays of Ernst Thälmann and Wilhelm Pieck.

In the past the archive also had a large collection of posters and other memorabilia such as flags, banners, uniforms, concentration-camp clothing, medals and badges. In the mid 1960s this collection was donated to the Museum for German History. In the mid 1970s the archive began to build up a new collection of posters.

A collection of government documents from before 1945 dealing with problems concerning the surveillance and suppression of left-wing organizations and personalities (such as court records and Gestapo documents), acquired in the mid 1950s when they were returned by the Soviet Union, were transferred in May 1990 to the state archive department of the GDR in Potsdam as part of a rationalization of the archive's collections and a redefinition of their scope.

The address of the Institute is: Institut für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung, Wilhelm-Pieck-Strasse 1-3, 1054 Berlin, Germany.

Heinz Voßke

II. Announcements

Men, Women and Labour: Perspectives on Gender and Labour History

The 1991 North American Labor History Conference (Detroit, October 17–19) will focus on gender in labour history. The program committee invites scholars to submit proposals for complete panels or individual papers which are attentive to the differential roles of men and women in labour history and which will approach analytically how gender interacts with the practices of class, workplace, and union. The committee especially encourages papers and panels which incorporate race, ethnicity, and region, as well as gender, in their analysis.

The purpose of the conference is to explore the ways in which gender illuminates, deepens, or contributes to our understanding of labour history and the labour movement. The organizers would like to draw scholars from across disciplines and methodological approaches to examine such questions as how gender might lead to a synthesis of labour history; the role of gendered language, ideology, and representation in the workplace and the labour movement in both historical and contemporary contexts; and how ideas of manhood and womanhood shape labour organizing, definitions of and access to skill, and union leadership.

Proposals should include a cover letter, a one or two page precis for each paper, and the CVs of the participants. Deadline for submissions: March 15, 1991. Please contact: Elisabeth Faue, Department of History, Wayne State University, 3094 Faculty Administration Building, Detroit, MI 48202, USA.

Social Science History Conference

The American Social Science History Association will hold its sixteenth annual conference in New Orleans, Louisiana on October 31 – November 3, 1991. Anyone interested in organizing a session should send a proposal no later than 15 February 1991. The proposal should outline the subject of the session, briefly describe the format (including tentative paper titles), and provide the names, departments, and

institutional addresses of all participants. Session organizers should include their telephone and bitnet numbers as well.

Sessions at the SSHA conference last two hours and organizers of sessions should ensure that the format they propose should leave ample time (at least 45 minutes) for discussion among people attending the session. A panel organized around papers, for example, should include no more than three twenty-minute papers and one comment.

In addition to other topics, the program committee is especially interested in proposals that address: race and ethnicity, historical geography, and comparative/global perspectives.

Proposals concerning labour history should be sent to: Elizabeth Faue, Department of History, Wayne State University, 3094 Faculty Administration Building, Detroit, MI 48202, USA.

Rhetoric of Social History

A Scholars Workshop on the Rhetoric of Social History will be held at the University of Iowa, June 21 – July 2, 1992. National Endowment for the Humanities Fellows and other participants from a variety of disciplines will contribute papers and take part in a two-week workshop examining the ways through which social historians address, cultivate, engage, and seek to persuade their audiences. The deadline for paper proposals is March 1, 1991.

Codirectors are Jeffrey Cox, Shelton Stromquist, and Linda K. Kerber. For a detailed description and application forms, write to Project on Rhetoric of Inquiry, W700 Seashore Hall, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242, USA, or call 319-335-2290.

Ancient Medicine in Its Socio-Cultural Context

The Classics and Ancient Civilization Department of Leiden University intends to organize an international congress promoting an integrated approach to problems of disease and medicine in Antiquity. Topics include: patients and diseases, medicine, and doctors and the medical professions. Paper proposals should be submitted before May 1, 1991. All correspondence to Dr H. F. J. Horstmanshoff, Department of Ancient History, Leiden University, PO 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands.