

NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

I. INSTITUTIONAL NEWS

The Labour Movement Library and Archive (ABA), Copenhagen

The ABA was founded in 1909 after discussions in the Danish labour movement and at the Scandinavian labour congress in 1907. At this congress the labour movements in Scandinavia decided to build up institutions which could support them in their day-to-day struggle and at the same time collect the historical material of and on the movements. Actually such an institution had already been founded in Stockholm in 1902. As the German SPD archive and the International's archive into which Camille Huysmans put much work shows this was a development not unknown in the European labour movement of the time.

The founders of the new institution were the collective social democratic labour movement represented by the Social Democratic Party and the Danish TUC – today the Labour Cooperative Movement, the Labour Educational Movement and the Trade Union Council of Copenhagen are also on the Board. These organisations own the institution and pay about 70 per cent of its expenses. The balance is paid by the state as the ABA has become part of the Danish Scientific Research Library System, and similarly the archive has an important function among archives available to the public.

The institution was given the task of collecting material under the following categories

- (1) all material by and on the political, trade union, and cooperative labour movement in Denmark;
- (2) important publications by and on the Internationals and the political, trade union, and cooperative labour movements in other countries;
- (3) socio-political literature published in Denmark and abroad.

This has resulted in an archive which holds the files of the Danish TUC since 1898 (and of its forerunner since c. 1885), most of the national trade unions and of many local unions, the files of the Social Democratic Party since 1871 (although due to political harassment the party soon had to destroy its files and only from the 1890s and onwards are they extensive), and the other socialist parties represented at some time or other in Parliament: the Socialist People's Party, the left-wing Socialist Party and the Communist Party. The latter was signed over to the ABA in 1989/90, and since then microfilms of some of the most important holdings from the period 1919–1940 which are in the Comintern archives in Moscow have been obtained through the Danish Communist Party.

Other important archives are those of the social democratic and communist youth organisations from 1907 and onwards, the labour cooperative movement, the labour sports movement, small oppositional socialist groups, several cultural organisations and quite a number of different local labour organisations. This latter collection is both extensive and important – there are about 7,000 handwritten protocols. The private archives of political and trade union leaders as well as some of the archives of ordinary party activists – especially those on the left wing of the

movement – are to be found in the ABA. The internationally most important ones have been listed in Chris Cook and Geoff Pugh (eds.), *Sources in European Political History*, Vol. 1 (London, 1987).

The picture archive today holds about 120,000 photos (including the separately kept picture archive of the closed down communist daily *Land og Folk*) and a number of drawings. Over 3,000 persons from the Danish and international labour movement are registered in the collection. There is also a considerable collection of pictures and photos of strikes, places of work, housing, and others which illustrate social conditions. About 5,500, mostly Danish, posters but including some from the Spanish Civil War form another collection. This also goes for the about 600 banners etc. At its seventy-fifth anniversary the ABA published a beautifully illustrated book of about 200 banners of the Danish labour movement together with their histories. An audio-visual collection is part of the archive.

The library contains approximately 80,000 books and pamphlets and some 5,000 discontinued periodicals, year books and trade union bulletins in addition to approximately 1,000 current ones. ABA endeavours to achieve a 100 per cent coverage of the literature concerning the trade union, political, social, economic, and cultural conditions of the Danish working class. A central part of this literature is made up of the publications of the working class organisations.

In its purchasing policy for non-Danish literature the library primarily concentrates on the development and history of the Labour Internationals and the labour movement's central political and trade union organisations in the major countries. Efforts are made to acquire the protocols, periodicals and other publications of these organisations. In this field the collection is comprehensive. Historical and political studies published by these organisations or their publishing houses are also acquired.

Furthermore, as far as possible books are purchased which develop Marxist/socialist theories in fields like economics, sociology, literary criticism, culture and philosophy. Some books are also bought which have their main emphasis on the general social economic and political development of the country in question, or which treat special problems such as national, ethnic and religious conflicts etc. on which the labour movement must take a stance. Great importance is attached to the literature published by or in connection with the labour movement. Scholarly theses that are thought to be of general importance or which may turn out to be decisive in determining the direction of discussions are acquired. A similar purchasing policy is followed for periodicals. Books and periodicals are acquired irrespective of their political leanings. As long as the publishers/authors define themselves as belonging to the labour/socialist movement, their publications are eligible for inclusion. This means that the library holds social democratic, communist of various strands, socialist, anarchist and syndicalist publications – as can be seen e.g. in the bibliography on Trotskyist serials by Wolfgang and Petra Lubitz (Munich, 1993).

Whereas in its first sixty years the ABA used most of its time to build up the various collections, in the last twenty years much time has been devoted to a more professional approach to the contents of the collections and their usability for writing history. This has led to the publication of a series of bibliographies (eight volumes of which one edited by Marianne B. Hansen *et al.*: *Foreign Language Literature on the Nordic Labour Movements*, Copenhagen 1992 is of international interest) and some other publications.

Of course the ABA still is and wants to be part of the labour movement. That has been and is the *raison d'être*. But society has developed since 1909 and the labour movement today is much broader than it was eighty years ago. The labour movement in its endeavours to change society into a better place for human beings, in short socialism, has to make use of scientific research. Even though the universities in general are not hostile to the labour movement any more – partly a result of the student revolt of the late sixties – there is still a necessity of independent scholarly work in relation to what the labour movement and its different factions are looking for. In this connection the ABA plays a role, partly as a result of its own (part-time) researchers' work and partly as a source of inspiration for other researchers.

In this endeavour the ABA works closely together with the independent scholarly Society for the Study of Labour History which over the past twenty-three years has published many of the best results of the historical research done at the universities. In 1982 the Workers' Museum was established in Copenhagen and the co-operation with the museum has been intensive and will remain so in the future. That also goes for the co-operation with the labour movement archives and libraries in Helsinki, Oslo, and Stockholm, which among other things has led to the publication of the above-mentioned bibliography and a survey of the four libraries' holdings of the International Trade Secretariats' publications. The ABA is also affiliated to the International Association of Labour History Institutions and has contributed to the support of the Internationale Marx-Engels-Stiftung.

The address of the ABA is Nørrebrogade 66-68, DK-2200 København N.

Gerd Callesen

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

François Quesnay

The Society "Les Amis de François Quesnay" and the Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques are organizing an international conference on the occasion of the tercentenary of Quesnay's birth that will take place in June 1994 at Versailles, France. The following themes will be discussed:

"Quesnay and science": methods and theories of Quesnay and his contemporaries in the fields of surgery and medicine, agronomy and economics, philosophy and metaphysics, mathematics, etc.

"Physiocracy, agriculture and agronomy": Physiocratic methods of calculating yield-capacities, contemporaneous agronomic knowledge and practices, etc.

"Quesnay and economic analysis": Physiocratic theses and their contemporaneous critics: studies of the fiscal system, value and price, protectionism vs. free trade, crafts, etc.

"Social and political practices of the Physiocrats": beginnings of the institutionalization of economics; spreading of the doctrine; lobbies, etc.

For further information, contact Christine Théré, Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques, 27 rue du Commandeur, 75675 Paris Cedex 14, France. Tel. -33-1-42 18 21 84; Fax -33-1-42 18 21 99.

International and Comparative Labor History

The Program Committee of the North American Labor History Conference invites paper and panel proposals for a conference on the international and comparative dimensions of labour history, to be held 13–15 October 1994, at Wayne State University in Detroit. The organizers are particularly interested in constructing sessions around the substantive and methodological issues of what might be called the “internationalization” of the division of labour and working-class organization. They would like to provide a forum for comparative historical work on the working class, working-class political organization, and labour movements. They also encourage the presentation of findings of comparative and collaborative projects in round table or panel format. Panel and paper proposals (including a 1–2 page précis and curriculum vitae for all participants) should be submitted by 1 March 1994 to: Professor Elizabeth Faue, Department of History, 3094 Faculty of Administration Building, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202, USA. Tel. -313-577 69 86.

The Victorians and Race

The Victorian Studies Centre and the History of Art Department of the University of Leicester are jointly organizing an international interdisciplinary conference on “the Victorians and Race”, 8–9 July 1995. Topics include: Race and representation in art, theatre and literature; race and social theory; race and gender; race and ethnicity; immigration; British and Irish races; ethnic experiences. Offers of papers (including an abstract of not more than 200 words) should reach the organizer no later than 1 April 1994. For further details contact Dr Shearer West, Department of History of Art, University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH, England. Tel. -533-52 28 66; Fax -533-52 22 00.